



Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Identity Crime

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.02 am): Identity crime is an issue of international concern and a significant problem in Queensland. Just yesterday the federal Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, released Australia's first comprehensive Cyber Security Strategy, which includes initiatives to help Australians protect their identities. Here in Queensland, the Bligh government is moving quickly to protect Queenslanders and their identities from criminal activity. Every day Queenslanders use their credit and debit cards at the supermarket, at the service station, at the ATM and at a thousand other places. We all use these services assuming that our personal information and our financial records will be secure. The sad reality of course is that there are those in the community who would seek to steal this personal information to access our bank accounts and otherwise misuse our identity.

Identity crime covers a wide range of criminal conduct including the unlawful use of stolen credit card details to make purchases over the phone or internet or the assumption of another person's name to conduct financial transactions or conduct business. The mechanics of such operations can involve the attachment of an external electronic reader over card entry points on ATMs such that the machine functions normally but the external device reads, copies and stores card information or sends it to a laptop via bluetooth transmission. Simultaneously, false keypads or cameras may be installed on the machine to record an individual's personal identification numbers.

Later this week the Bligh government intends introducing amendments to the Criminal Code to outlaw the possession of equipment used by identity thieves. These amendments will provide Queenslanders with greater protection from identity theft. Currently under the Criminal Code it is an offence to obtain or deal with identification information with the intent to commit an offence. For example, it is an offence to obtain or use another person's credit card details by skimming an ATM or EFTPOS machine. This amendment bill will strengthen these existing measures by creating a new offence making it unlawful to possess equipment for the purpose of obtaining or dealing with identification information. The proposed amendments will require that it must be proved that the items were possessed for purposes of committing an identity theft offence. The Bligh government is determined to protect people from this highly intrusive and costly form of crime.