

Information paper on
28 October 2002

**Bills Committee on
Registration of Persons (Amendment) Bill 2001**

Driving Licence Functions and Handheld Smart Card Readers

INTRODUCTION

At the Bills Committee meeting held on 4 October 2002, Members raised a number of questions relating to the driving licence functions and handheld smart card readers. This paper provides the relevant information.

DRIVING LICENCE FUNCTIONS

2. The Transport Department will upgrade its transport licensing computer system VALID III to VALID IV by end 2004 and the Police will introduce their next generation beat radio system as part of the new Command and Control Communications System (CC III) by early 2006. When the VALID IV and CC III are both fully operational, citizens will not be required to carry a driving licence for traffic enforcement purposes (although they will still have the option of getting a physical licence if they wish one).

3. No driving licence data will be printed on the smart ID card or stored in the chip of the ID card. Enforcement by the Police will be carried out through direct checking of data in the backend computer system. The enforcement capabilities of the Police will not be adversely affected. In fact it is already the current practice for the Police to contact their call centre to check the backend system of the Transport Department where necessary. The introduction of VALID IV and CCIII would make the checking more efficient.

4. Members are concerned how citizens would be made aware of the expiry date of their driving licences if such information do not appear on the

smart ID card. With the introduction of the 10-year full driving licence since 1997, Transport Department has decided to send reminder notice regarding licence renewal to holders before expiry. This will be done irrespective of whether the licence holders have opted to retain a physical driving licence or not. Licence holders will also be able to check their own driving licence information in the backend computer system over the Internet by using the e-Cert embedded on the smart ID card to authenticate their identity.

HANDHELD SMART CARD READERS

5. The handheld reader will be equipped with –
- ◆ card slot for reading data in the chip;
 - ◆ LCD display for showing the personal particulars and photo of the cardholder. If the cardholder is a temporary resident, his/her condition of stay and limit of stay stored in the chip will also be displayed;
 - ◆ key-pad for selection of functions;
 - ◆ fingerprint scanner for scanning the cardholder's live fingerprint image which will then be compared with the fingerprint template in the chip to see if it is a successful match (the fingerprint image will not be seen); and
 - ◆ memory for logging details of inspection performed (for audit trail purpose).
6. Handheld smart card readers will facilitate anti-illegal immigrant operations during which law enforcement officers in the field can use a reader to confirm instantly if a person's permission to stay is valid without holding him up for further checks. Both the Immigration Department and the Police are examining their need for handheld smart card readers, taking into consideration operational requirements, resources implications and further developments in the technological capabilities of the law enforcement agencies such as the introduction of the CC III in early 2006.