



Howard's access card dumped

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MORE than \$1 billion that would have been spent on introducing a controversial access card for Australians will now be returned to federal coffers, Human Services Minister Joe Ludwig said.

Labor will scrap the Howard government's plan for an access card, which triggered privacy concerns and was compared to identity cards.

It was intended to replace the Medicare card and up to 16 other benefit cards, streamlining access to a range of health and welfare services.

Senator Ludwig said the card would have cost more than expected, without saving as much as it was supposed to. He said the money would be better spent on other policies.

"I'll return almost \$1.2billion to the budget for taxpayers," Senator Ludwig said.

"We are focused on the practical things that will make a real difference, like online services, the co-ordination between agencies, data matching and data sharing, that's what the Rudd Labor government will focus on," he said.

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