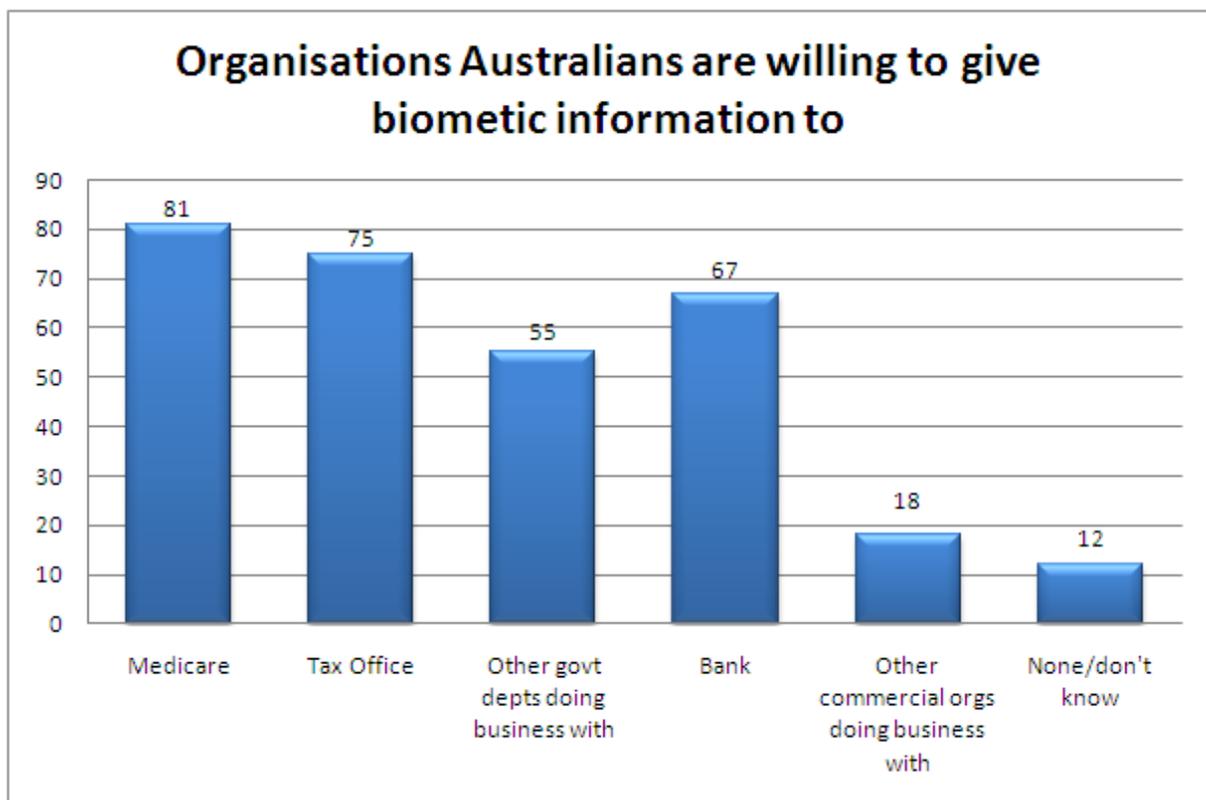# Unisys Security Index

Additional Research: Acceptable use of biometrics for security
Australia – November 2010

As part of the Unisys Security Index, we regularly survey Australians on a range of additional security issues. As part of the November 2010 release we examined the willingness of Australians to use biometrics to verify a person's identity in different scenarios and with various organisations.
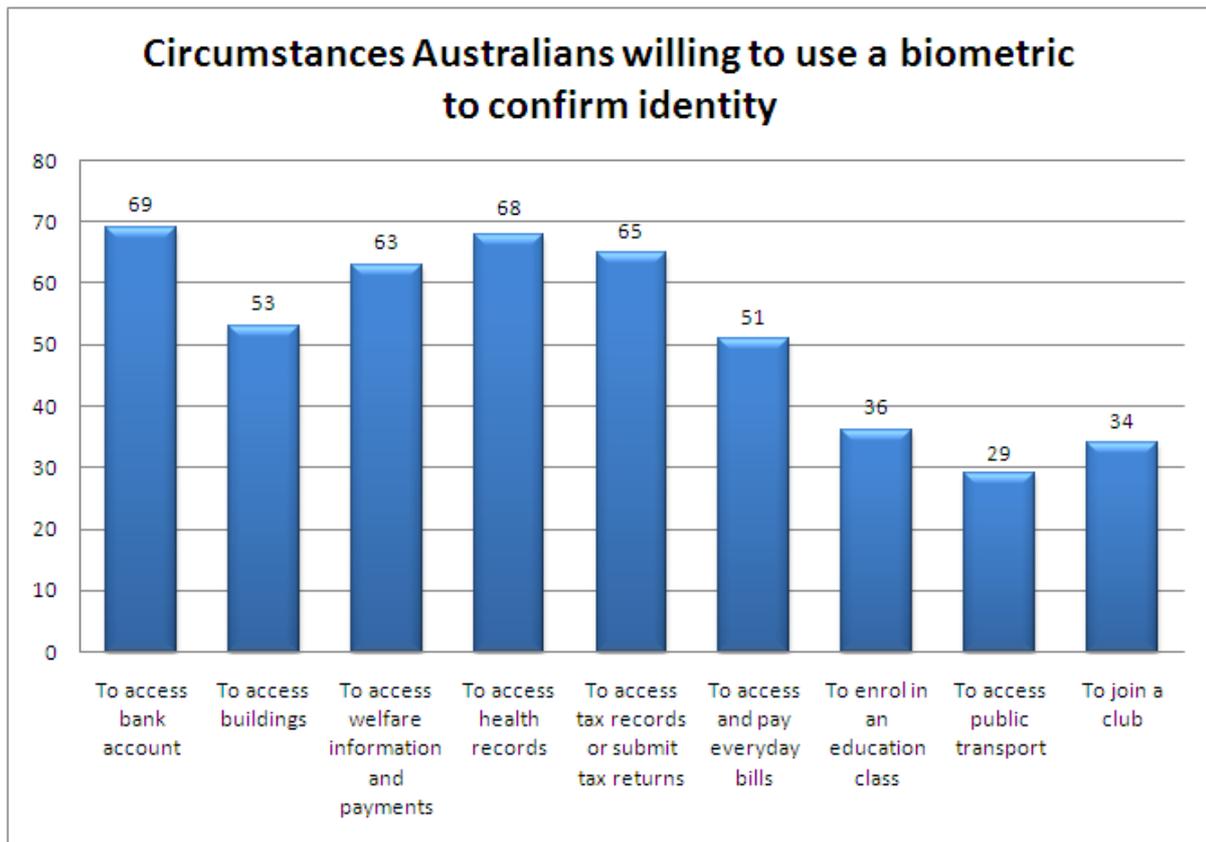
The research found that at least three-quarters of Australians would be happy for Medicare (81 percent) and the Australian Tax Office (75 percent) to use biometrics, such as voice pattern recordings, fingerprints and iris scans, to prove their identity when accessing services.

Chart 1 – Organisations Australians are willing to give biometric information to

More than half of the Australian population is willing to use voice recordings, eye scans or fingerprints to prove their identity to access bank records (69 percent), health records (68 percent), welfare payments (63 percent) and access tax records or submit tax returns (65 percent).

But fewer supported the use of biometrics to enrol in education classes (36 percent), board public transport (29 percent) or join a club (34 percent).

Circumstances Australians willing to use a biometric to confirm identity

Category	Value
To access bank account	69
To access buildings	53
To access welfare information and payments	63
To access health records	68
To access tax records or submit tax returns	65
To access and pay everyday bills	51
To enrol in an education class	36
To access public transport	29
To join a club	34

Chart 2 – Circumstances Australians are willing to use a biometric to confirm their identity

These findings suggest that support for biometrics varies depending on how critical people feel it is to prove their identity to access a particular service or protect the personal information contained in it.

Most Australians are willing to use biometrics when accessing sensitive financial or health records but not supportive of using it to facilitate entry to a club or public transport.

Background

These results represent findings of one of two additional questions asked alongside the October 2010 Unisys Security Index. The Unisys Security Index is a bi-annual global study that provides insights into the attitudes of consumers on a wide range of security related issues. Conducted in Australia by market research firm Newspoll, the Unisys Security Index provides a regular, statistically robust measure gauging levels of concern about various aspects of security. The survey on which the latest Australian Unisys Security Index is based, was conducted nationally between 17-19 September 2010 by Newspoll using a nationally representative sample of 1,202 respondents aged 18 years and over. All results have been post-weighted to Australian Bureau of Statistics data. The study measures consumer perceptions on a scale of zero to 300, with 300 representing the highest level of perceived concern. For more information on the Unisys Security Index including additional resource material visit: www.unisyssecurityindex.com.au.

Respondents were asked:

In which of the following circumstances would you be willing to use a biometric, such as a recording of your voice, a scan of your eye or a fingerprint, to confirm your identity?

1. To access your bank account
2. To access buildings
3. To access welfare payments and information
4. To access your health records
5. To access your tax records or submit tax returns
6. To access and pay your everyday bills
7. To enrol in an education class
8. To access public transport
9. When signing up to join a club
10. None/don't know

If a centralised body was established, which of the following organisations would you be willing to allow to access your personal biometric information in order to confirm your identity with them?

1. Medicare
2. The Tax Office
3. Other government departments you have dealings with
4. Your bank
5. Other commercial organisations you have dealings with
6. None/don't know

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