



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Immigration  
and Multicultural Affairs**

**PALMER PROGRESS**

**IMPROVED IDENTITY  
VERIFICATION**

A new approach to identity verification is ensuring the integrity of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs' client identification processes.



The department's National Identity Verification and Advice Section (NIVA) has implemented new standard operating procedures for managing cases involving onshore clients whose identity cannot be immediately established. The coordinated early-warning system, which has been in place since May 2005, ensures that a thorough investigation of a client's identity is carried out and continues until their identity has been resolved.

After referral to NIVA, if a case of unresolved identity needs to be escalated, DIMA officers are required to provide a progress report every seven days. Of the 312 cases referred to NIVA for information or action so far, 193 (or 62 per cent) have been resolved.

Technology is also helping the department to clear up issues of identity. Facial recognition software is used to check that a person declared as 'missing' by law enforcement agencies is not detained in an immigration detention facility.

The system compares a photograph of a missing person against a database of images of current and former detainees since 2003 in less than a second.

In addition to missing person checks, the system can also reveal if a person is using a false identity. The software has recently proved successful highlighting one individual who had previously been detained under another identity.

A 24-hour service for checking an individual's immigration status has also been made available to police nationwide. The service, which began in February 2006, enables police to rapidly check whether someone is lawfully in the community and to date has received more than 2500 enquiries.

**For more information go to [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)**