



STATEMENT BY THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT PROVIDING A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE INQUIRY INTO CYBER RESILIENCE

As Chair of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, the following statement is made on progress of the Committee's inquiry into Cyber Resilience.

Cyber resilience matters have received considerable attention in recent times, and are critical to the security and well-being of the Parliament and the broader Australian community.

The Committee adopted its inquiry into cyber resilience on 12 February 2019, following the release of Auditor-General's Report No. 53 (2017-18).

Under section 8 of the *Public Accounts and Audit Committee Act 1951*, the duties of the Committee include:

- examining all reports of the Auditor-General that are tabled in each House of the Parliament; and
- reporting to both Houses of the Parliament, with any comment it thinks fit, on any items or matters in those reports, or any circumstances connected with them, that the Committee thinks should be drawn to the attention of the Parliament.

The Committee held a public hearing for this inquiry on 21 March 2019 and heard from the three audited agencies: the Department of the Treasury, Geoscience Australia and the National Archives of Australia. The Committee received written submissions from all three agencies.

In its report, the ANAO recommended that Geoscience Australia and the National Archives establish a plan and timeframe to achieve compliance with the Top Four mitigation strategies under the cyber security framework.

Both Geoscience Australia and the National Archives agreed to this recommendation.

At the public hearing, the Committee heard from Geoscience Australia and the National Archives regards to work underway to address this recommendation.

The ANAO concluded that Treasury was compliant with the Top Four mitigation strategies.

The Committee's terms of reference for this inquiry also include the cyber resilience of the Department of Parliamentary Services.

On 18 February 2019, the Prime Minister made a statement in the House of Representatives, noting the "Australian Cyber Security Centre had recently identified a malicious intrusion into the Australian Parliament House computer network".


As DPS has overall responsibility for cyber security across the Parliament, the Committee intends to invite the department to a future public hearing.

DPS has already provided a submission to the inquiry.

In the Auditor General's Report No. 53 it was also recommended the Attorney-General's Department, the Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Signals Directorate work to improve compliance with the *Protective Security Policy Framework*.

The Committee notes that the *Protective Security Policy Framework* and the *Information Security Manual* have recently been updated, following the publication of this Audit Report.

It is the intention of the Committee to invite these oversight agencies to a future public hearing to discuss this and other matters.



The Committee conducted a previous inquiry into cyber security matters in Report 467, *Cybersecurity Compliance*, and made a number of recommendations relevant in that report that are also relevant to this current inquiry.

The Australian Government yesterday provided a Government response where it has fully agreed to six of the eight Committee's recommendations in Report 467 and partially agreed to the remaining two.

Of particular interest is the Government's agreement that the Attorney-General's Department and ASD in consultation with the Department of Home Affairs report annually to the Commonwealth's cyber security posture to Parliament.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Committee expects to continue its inquiry into Cyber Resilience and hold further public hearings over coming months.

The Committee remains strongly of the view that effective cyber resilience across Commonwealth agencies is a matter of critical importance to the Parliament and the Australian people and deserves constant review.

Senator Dean Smith
Chair
11 April 2019

