



New Parliamentary inquiry into the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security today commenced an inquiry into the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014.

The Bill implements many of the bipartisan recommendations made by the Committee in Chapter 4 of its 2013 *Report of the Inquiry into Potential Reforms of Australia's National Security Legislation*. Chapter 4 included 22 recommendations on reforms to legislation governing the Australian Intelligence Community, including the *Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979* and *Intelligence Services Act 2001*.

The Explanatory Memorandum to the Bill states it will enhance the capability of intelligence agencies by:

- Modernising ASIO's statutory employment framework,
- Modernising and streamlining ASIO's warrant-based intelligence collection powers,
- Strengthening ASIO's capability to conduct covert intelligence operations, with appropriate safeguards and oversight,
- Clarifying and improving the statutory framework for ASIO's co-operative and information-sharing activities,
- Enhancing the capabilities of IS Act agencies,
- Improving protection of intelligence-related information, and
- Renaming of Defence agencies to better reflect their roles.

The purpose of the inquiry will be to scrutinise whether the Bill appropriately implements the recommendations agreed by the Committee last year and to assess the balance of national security and safeguards proposed in the Bill. Committee Chair, Dan Tehan MP, welcomed the referral stating 'It is vital that security laws keep pace with rapid developments in technology.'

'The Committee recommended in its 2013 report that draft legislation be subject to parliamentary committee scrutiny. The Committee therefore welcomes the opportunity to assess the Government's response,' Mr Tehan said.

Members of the public are invited to make submissions to the inquiry. Submissions should be received no later than **Wednesday, 30 July 2014**. Public hearings will be held in August. The Committee intends to report by 8 September 2014 in order that the House may consider the Bill in the Spring sittings.

Submitters should note that the issue of data retention does not fall within the scope of this inquiry.

Further information about the inquiry, including the Committee's 2013 report, can be accessed via the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/pjcis>. The Bill and Explanatory Memorandum can be accessed via http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation.

For media comment, please contact the Office of the Chair, Dan Tehan MP, on 6277 4393 (Parliament House) or 03 5572 1100 (Electorate).

For inquiry information, please contact the Committee Secretariat on 02 6277 2360 or email pjcis@aph.gov.au.