ASPI
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1 December 2025

Committee Secretary

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence & Security

Parliament of Australia, via pjcis@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

Review of Admin & Expenditure no.24 (2024-25) – Australian Intelligence Agencies

Further to the call for submissions to the annual review of the administration and expenditure of Australian intelligence agencies for 2024-25 ['the review'], please find below a brief submission. This submission is made as an individual. While I do so in my professional capacity as Head of the Statecraft and Intelligence Policy Centre at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), it is important to clarify that ASPI does not itself have institutional positions, including on the matters under consideration in this review.

Given the annual review process is principally an opportunity for the committee to hold closed door hearings with National Intelligence Community (NIC) agencies and receive classified submissions about their (non-operational) work, it is unusual for submissions to be received from external sources, in contrast to the committee's legislative reviews. However, it is not unheard of. The 2020-21 review received four such external submissions, for instance.

ASPI's Statecraft & Intelligence Policy Centre is the only research institution of its kind in Australia, focused on practical policy research related to the NIC. In that vein, my principal contribution is to highlight the particular relevance to the review's considerations - and the potential utility - of the findings of a research report published by ASPI earlier this year: *Match-fit for the global contest?: Innovation, leadership, culture and the future of Australia's National Intelligence Community*. A copy of the report is attached.

Match-fit? was based on a range of semi-structured, qualitative interviews with former and current Australian national security officials, industry representatives, and those with comparable experience of the UK's national security system. The interviews focused on questions of leadership, technology, risk and experimentation, culture, partnerships, and future intelligence production. Importantly the onus was on innovation at a capability and organisational, rather than operational, level.

The report found that agencies must adapt as international contest intensifies. Even with recent transformational investments, the business model of the NIC is being challenged, including how the NIC collects and analyses intelligence, and provides the material impactfully to busy customers. Meeting this challenge requires technology solutions, effective partnerships and, crucially, persistent and sustainable innovation.

Of particular relevance to the review, the research underpinning the report's findings, including the interviews undertaken with serving and former NIC officials, were undertaken during, and reflected upon, the review period.

Also, of note, the report identified the primary factors for successful innovation within the NIC as:

- Culture;
- Leadership;
- Workforce;
- Knowledge and learning;
- Organisational structures and environments; and,
- Collaboration and communications.

It is my view that these factors also serve as a useful model for the committee's review of the organisational performance of NIC agencies.

In addition, the report's findings and recommendations in relation to 2024 Independent Intelligence Review recommendations concerning national security technology and the policy-intelligence interface are particularly relevant to the committee's stated interest in 'implications of [agency] responses to the 2024 Independent Intelligence Review'.

I hope the report proves useful to the committee in its consideration of agency submissions and aids with the committee's conduct of its hearings with agencies.

Kind regards,

Chris Taylor

Head, Statecraft & Intelligence Policy Centre, Australian Strategic Policy Institute