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Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security

Review of the National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Bill 2017

Issue date: 7 June 2018

Bipartisan support for new foreign interference laws

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security has today released its bipartisan advisory report on a Bill to strengthen Australia's espionage and foreign interference laws.

The Chair of the Committee, Mr Andrew Hastie MP, said that the significant and unprecedented new measures in the Bill required careful consideration by the Committee.

"During its inquiry, the Committee received compelling evidence that Australia is facing an unprecedented threat from espionage and foreign interference, and that current laws are not adequate to deal with this threat." Mr Hastie said.

"Unchecked, espionage has the potential to significantly reduce Australia's long-term security, and foreign interference could undermine our democracy and threaten the rights and freedoms of our people."

"The Committee has therefore accepted that there is a pressing need to strengthen and modernise current espionage and foreign interference laws."

"The new laws will also provide law enforcement and prosecutors with new tools to respond to the theft of trade secrets on behalf of foreign state actors. This type of economic espionage has the potential to substantially diminish Australia's economic wellbeing and international competitiveness." Mr Hastie added.

Taking into account evidence received from participants in the inquiry, the Committee's report includes a range of recommendations aimed at ensuring the Bill is

- clear and unambiguous in its terms,
- proportional and appropriately targeted to the threat, and
- enforceable.

The Committee has made 60 recommendations in total, including most importantly that the Bill be passed.

The [Bill](#) repeals existing criminal offences and introduces a range of new offences into the *Criminal Code* in relation to espionage, foreign interference, theft of trade secrets, sabotage, and secrecy of Commonwealth information. The Bill also amends a range of existing offences.

Further information about the review can be obtained from the Committee's [website](#).



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