



The Evolution of Australia's Intelligence Services over the last decade

Intelligence community growth has not been solely a product of responding to the tragic events of September 11 and Bali. Rather, these events highlighted that globalisation had fundamentally changed the security environment, and that the intelligence community required more resourcing – across the full range of collection, analysis and assessment functions – to effectively operate in an increasingly complex and fast moving security environment; and to provide an appropriate measure of national security risk mitigation.

The growth of Australia's intelligence community, while significant, has been carefully managed. Several independent reviews of the community since 2001 have ensured the community developed in a manner that supports an efficient and effective response to contemporary security challenges.

A key focus of intelligence reform within Australia's intelligence community, and indeed among our close partners, has been on strengthening information sharing, interoperability and coordination arrangements. There have been a wide range of initiatives introduced in the last decade (NSA, NICC, CTCC, CSOC, NTAC etc) which improved the community's ability to work together, and the community has embraced in principle and in practice the need to work more closely as an integrated intelligence capability.

ASIO has a unique role within Australia's intelligence community. It is the only agency tasked with investigating, assessing and providing advice on high-consequence threats which, if not countered, could potentially cause grave harm to Australia's people, institutions and interests.

ASIO's growth, while substantial, has been in accordance with a carefully constructed plan put together by Mr Allan Taylor AM in his 2005 Review of ASIO Resourcing. The Organisation's growth has been necessary to meet the demands of a complex and evolving threat environment.



ASIO is more accountable and more closely scrutinised than at any other time in our history.

The 2011 Review will provide an important opportunity to consider Australia's intelligence needs over the next 10 to 15 years and to develop a roadmap to build the effective, enduring and accountable intelligence apparatus required to meet those needs.

The need for growth in the intelligence community

There can be no doubt the tragic events of September 11, 2001 and the bombings in Bali highlighted to the Australian Government, and other governments around the world, the need to increase investment in the intelligence services to help mitigate the increased risk and threat of terrorism.

But the growth in intelligence resourcing was more than just a 'reaction' to these events.

September 11 forced intelligence communities around the world to acknowledge that globalisation, which had accelerated rapidly following the end of the Cold War and brought benefits to many around the world, had also fundamentally changed the security environment.

- Individuals and groups had become empowered by advances in technology and communications and acquired through them capabilities previously reserved for nation states.
- Distinctions between what was 'domestic' and what was 'foreign' had become less relevant in the face of global communications and travel.
- And the internet and advances in technology saw an explosion in the volume of information freely available to individuals and governments.

For intelligence communities, the message was clear:

- traditional security challenges had not diminished but there were new threats to deal with; and



- the task of responding to both traditional and 'new' security challenges had become considerably more complex.

Development of the intelligence community since 2001

Growth in Australia's intelligence community has indeed been significant since 2001, but has not gone unchecked.

A number of independent reviews have been conducted that examined the operations and effectiveness of the intelligence agencies:

- the Flood Review in 2004 examined the operations of the foreign intelligence community in light of the Iraq WMD intelligence failure;
- the Taylor Review in 2005 comprehensively assessed ASIO's capability against the post-11 September threat environment;
- the Street Review in 2007 reviewed the Australian Federal Police's interoperability with its national security partners (including ASIO); and
- the Smith Review in 2008 examined Australia's homeland and border security arrangements, including intelligence coordination arrangements;

Furthermore, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) provides a report to ministers each year assessing the performance of the intelligence community.

These reviews have served to ensure that the intelligence community stays 'on track' and continues to grow in a manner that supports an efficient and effective response to contemporary security challenges.

That is not to say there isn't need for further evolution. The security environment continues to evolve and the intelligence community will need to continue to change and adapt to ensure it remains effective.



Building a more integrated intelligence community

Intelligence reviews – both within Australia and overseas – have repeatedly emphasised that information sharing, interoperability and strong coordination among agencies are critical elements of an effective intelligence response to complex, transnational security challenges.

- Strengthening these elements – information sharing, interoperability and coordination – has formed the core of the intelligence reform agenda both within Australia and among our closest partners.

Australia's intelligence community has taken a number of important steps in these areas since 2001.

- The appointment of the National Security Adviser (NSA) has strengthened national security and intelligence coordination and provided greater strategic direction for the community.
- The establishment of the National Intelligence Coordination Committee (NICC) has improved coordination and engagement across the previously separate foreign, defence, security and law enforcement intelligence domains.
- The recent establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Control Centre (CTCC) within ASIO and the Cyber Security Operations Centre (CSOC) within DSD have strengthened coordination of operational counter-terrorism and cyber security activities respectively.
- The establishment of joint agency bodies such as the National Threat Assessment Centre (NTAC), Joint Counter-Terrorism Teams, and the ACC's Organised Crime Fusion Centre, which allow for the effective integration and assessment of intelligence reporting.
- The development by the National Security Chief Information Officer of a roadmap for integrating national information technology systems by 2020.



- For ASIO, the establishment of agreements and protocols with our close law enforcement and intelligence partners which aim to put in place arrangements to more effectively share information and coordinate our efforts.

The community has embraced, in principle and in practice, the need to work more closely as an integrated intelligence capability. And by developing joint units we are making the most of existing capability rather than creating costly new agencies or duplicating capabilities. But there is always more work to do on this front.

ASIO's growth and accountability

ASIO has a unique role within Australia's intelligence community. It is the agency tasked with investigating, assessing and providing advice on high-consequence threats which, if not countered, could potentially cause grave harm to Australia's people, institutions and interests – principally politically motivated violence and espionage. And unlike other intelligence agencies, ASIO is mandated routinely to collect intelligence involving Australians.

Like other intelligence agencies, ASIO has grown in response to the challenges of the security environment – for ASIO, the challenge of responding to terrorism has been a significant driver of our growth.

The Organisation's growth since 2001 has been substantial. In 2001 ASIO had 618 staff – this is expected to grow to around 1860 staff in 2010/11. But this growth has been in accordance with a carefully constructed plan put together by Mr Allan Taylor AM in his 2005 Review of ASIO Resourcing.

- This review comprehensively assessed ASIO's capability against the then, and projected threat environment.
- Taylor's recommendation to the Government was that ASIO's capability at the time did not match the Government's risk management expectations.



The Taylor review mapped out a five-year plan to build a level of ASIO capability that would better mitigate the risk facing Australia, and match it to resources. This five-year enhancement program has been carefully managed to ensure the organisation has the flexibility to respond to threats in an evolving security environment.

With the end of the Taylor review growth period near, the Organisation has a strategic work program to ensure it is operating as effectively and efficiently as possible to meet its responsibilities, priorities and tasking both within the Organisation and within the broader national security community.

- This program is aimed at preparing ASIO for the future and focuses on strengthening our capabilities, building and managing the workforce and improving business processes and practices.
 - To support this program, ASIO has recently commenced a restructure to better align resources, capabilities and functions.

Recruiting appropriate and high caliber staff is an ongoing priority. We remain focused on achieving soon the growth target of 1860.

- ASIO continues to seek to attract suitable applicants including using online and radio advertising, university careers fairs, and ongoing development of ASIO's website.

ASIO's accountability

Given that our business is concerned with the security of Australia and the safety of Australians, there is legitimate public interest in what we do. The public has a stake in what ASIO does, and how well we do it. But we can't be effective in our responsibility to protect Australia against threats while being an 'open book' to anybody who might wish to read it.

ASIO operates within an extensive oversight and accountability regime. This framework includes:



- close scrutiny by the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS);
- regular reporting to the Attorney-General and National Security Committee ministers on the Organisation's activities, and seeking specific authorisation from the Attorney-General for the use of special powers;
- appearances before the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security and the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee;
- the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor, when appointed;
- publishing a classified and unclassified Annual Report; the latter of which is tabled in Parliament;
- briefing the Leader of the Opposition (required under Section 21 of the ASIO Act) for the purpose of keeping him or her informed on matters relating to security;
- judicial review of ASIO's security assessment process, as well as its broader activities through the Organisation's involvement in court processes such as terrorism prosecutions; and
- independent auditing of ASIO's expenditure by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO).