



Protective Security and ASIO-T4

What is T4?

Protective security focuses on securing human, information and physical resources. ASIO-T4 (T4) is the primary body that discharges ASIO's legislative responsibility to provide protective security advice to Ministers, authorities of the Commonwealth and other persons determined by the Attorney-General.

T4's services are utilised extensively by the Commonwealth, and selectively by State and Territory governments (such as for special events and critical infrastructure) and the private sector. T4 maintains a purpose-built facility to carry out training, testing, and some certification tasks.

The basis of T4's activities

T4's activities are derived from paragraph 17 (1) (d) of the ASIO Act. This paragraph does not limit ASIO's protective security advice responsibilities to matters contained within the definition of 'security' in section 4 of the ASIO Act. This sub-section was added to ASIO's legislative functions in 1986 as a response to recommendations by the Hope Royal Commission, recognising the broader utility of the protective security advice that ASIO can provide.

In practice, the vast majority of T4's advice is directed towards protection from espionage, sabotage and politically motivated violence.

As part of ASIO's Protective Security Branch, T4 provides independent evaluation of the adequacy and efficacy of the security of Commonwealth government departments and agencies, provides



advice on protective security risks and countermeasures, and evaluates security products for government use. In line with a determination of the Council of Australian Governments, T4 undertakes biennial protective security risk reviews of 'vital' critical infrastructure. It also, under the authority of the Australian Government Protective Security Manual, is a certification authority for premises handling Top Secret material, and conducts Technical Surveillance Countermeasures ('sweeping') services.

As part of ASIO, T4 is able to draw extensively upon the raw and assessed security intelligence from ASIO intelligence sources — both domestic and international — and to leverage sensitive technical partnerships with close foreign partners. This allows T4 to provide high quality, comprehensive and timely intelligence-led advice compared to similar bodies without access to such information. T4 works closely with ASIO's National Threat Assessment Centre and Critical Infrastructure Protection Directorate.

T4's protective security advice

T4 provides protective security advice to clients on a cost-recovery basis. Advice to State and Territory governments and private sector clients is provided on the same basis with approval from the Attorney-General.

T4's protective security advice largely comprises:

- functional recommendations directed towards achieving operational security objectives consistent with requirements of the Protective Security Manual and/or mitigating security vulnerabilities and risks – such as in the case of nationally vital critical infrastructure. These recommendations may address any number of physical, personnel, information or administrative risks;



- inspection and certification of the physical security of sites in Australia handling Top Secret material;
- technical surveillance counter-measures testing within Australia ('sweeping').

Clients typically use T4 security recommendations as the basis to engage private industry security consultants to develop detailed, prescriptive technical and procedural protective security solutions.

Testing, training and policy contribution

T4's activities in testing, training, and policy fall within two key streams:

- product testing and evaluation; and
- protective security training and policy contribution.

Product research and testing forms the basis of T4's contribution to the inter-Departmental Security Construction and Equipment Committee (SCEC), which endorses for Commonwealth deployment, physical security products which may be used in protecting classified and non-classified assets. To this end, T4 tests and evaluates products, makes recommendations to SCEC, and produces the Australian Government's Security Equipment Catalogue.

- The catalogue lists approved security products for government use that have been evaluated by T4.

T4's protective security training and policy contribution roles involve close liaison with the Attorney-General's Department, Protective Security Policy Committee and, as noted above, SCEC.

- These bodies have assigned T4 a number of protective security training and policy responsibilities through the Australian Government Protective Security Manual.



- This includes training and accrediting SCEC-endorsed private sector consultants, providing technical physical security training to Agency Security Advisers, issuing protective security advisories and ongoing review of product effectiveness.