National security: a quick guide to key internet links

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This Quick Guide provides links to key websites with information on national security arrangements and issues.¹

Federal government agencies and websites

- **Australian national security website**—provides information on what governments are doing to protect Australia’s national security; outlines relevant legislation and the roles of federal and state and territory agencies in countering terrorism; and provides links to key publications relating to national security. It also has a list of organisations identified as terrorist organisations under the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) and associated regulations, with links to statements of reasons and the Australian Government’s listing protocol.

- **Department of Home Affairs**—the lead department for national security policy. The department’s national security page links to information on countering violent extremism; critical infrastructure resilience; data retention and telecommunications interception and surveillance; cybersecurity; and regulated materials such as plastic explosives and chemicals of security concern.

- **Australian Security Intelligence Organisation**—Australia’s security intelligence agency. Its role is to identify, investigate, and provide advice on threats to security including espionage, sabotage, attacks on Australia’s defence system, acts of foreign interference and serious threats to Australia’s territorial and border integrity.

- **Australian Federal Police**—national security functions include preventing and countering terrorism in Australia and overseas, aviation security and policing and protective security.

- **Office of National Assessments**—responsible for collecting, analysing and providing advice on information (including open source) relating to international matters of political, strategic or economic interest to Australia. It is also responsible for coordinating and evaluating Australia’s foreign intelligence efforts.²

- **Australian Secret Intelligence Service**—Australia’s overseas secret intelligence collection agency. Its main functions are to collect and distribute across the Australian Government foreign intelligence that may affect Australia’s interests, carry out counter-intelligence activities and engage with overseas intelligence and security agencies.

- **Australian Signals Directorate (ASD)**—provides the national security community with foreign signals intelligence and cyber capabilities, including support for Australian Defence Force operations. ASD became a statutory agency in July 2018, formally incorporating the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC), which leads Australian Government efforts on cybersecurity matters.

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¹ This update reflects recent machinery-of-government changes relevant to national security, and expanded functions for some Commonwealth agencies, as at the date of publication. Implementation of recommendations in the 2017 Independent Intelligence Review will entail further changes that will be reflected in a subsequent update.

² As at the date of publication, the Office of National Intelligence Bill 2018, which proposes to change the name and expand the functions of the Office of National Assessments, was before Parliament.
• **Critical Infrastructure Centre**—part of the Department of Home Affairs, the Centre assists owners and operators of critical infrastructure facilities to identify and manage national security risks such as sabotage, espionage and coercion. It also manages the [Register of Critical Infrastructure Assets](#), created to give the Australian Government better visibility of who owns, controls and has access to particular assets.

• **Attorney-General’s Department page on national security**—provides information on policy and legislation covering areas such as espionage, foreign interference, and counter-terrorism, and the Protective Security Policy Framework.

### Parliamentary and other oversight bodies

• **Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security**—reviews and reports on Bills relevant to national security; certain existing national security legislation; the administration and expenditure of the six agencies that comprise the [Australian intelligence community](#) (AIC); other matters relevant to those agencies as referred by the relevant Minister or a House of Parliament; the operation and effectiveness of the mandatory data retention regime; and regulations proscribing terrorist organisations. It does not review intelligence priorities, operational methods or particular operations.

• **Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security** (IGIS)—inquires into and reports on the activities of the agencies comprising the AIC to ensure that they comply with Australian laws and any directions or guidelines given by the responsible Minister, are proper, and are consistent with human rights. [Public reports](#) are published for some inquiries, and all are summarised in the IGIS’s [annual reports](#).

• **Independent National Security Legislation Monitor**—reviews and reports on the operation, effectiveness and implications of federal counter-terrorism and national security legislation.

### Select research organisations and think tanks

• **Australian Strategic Policy Institute** (ASPI)—established in 2001 as an independent think tank and receives funding from the Australian Government. ASPI produces [analysis and commentary](#), hosts [events](#) and maintains a blog, *The Strategist*, covering a range of strategic policy issues.

• **Lowy Institute for International Policy**—an independent think tank that provides research and analysis on a wide range of foreign and strategic policy, defence and security issues. Lowy produces a number of [publications](#) and regularly comments on key issues via its blog, *The Interpreter*.

• **National Security College** at the Australian National University—conducts and commissions [research](#), hosts [public seminars](#), and issues [podcasts](#) on current and emerging national security issues.

• **Institute for Regional Security** (formerly the Kokoda Foundation)—a think tank with a mixture of private and public funding. Its publications include the journal, *Security Challenges*.

• **Brookings Institution**—a United States-based non-profit public policy organisation, Brookings produces a range of publications, organised by topic on its website, with the ‘Defense and Security’ page the most relevant for national security issues.

• **Center for Strategic and International Studies**—a United States-based think tank focusing on international relations and global security issues. Its range of publications can be viewed by topic, with the ‘Defense and Security’ page the most relevant for national security issues.

• **Chatham House**—a United Kingdom-based think tank that specialises in energy, environment and resources, economics, international security and international law. Its range of publications can be viewed by topic, with the ‘International Security’ page the most relevant for national security issues.

• **Jane’s Terrorism and Insurgency Centre**—in addition to ongoing analysis of terrorist activities around the world, this resource contains a database of comprehensive profiles of terrorist organisations which can be provided to senators, members and their staff on request.

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