



PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security

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

Issue date: 6 March 2018

Proposed amendments to Espionage and Foreign Interference Bill

The Attorney-General, the Hon Christian Porter MP, has provided the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security with range of proposed amendments to the National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Bill 2017.

The proposed amendments have been published on the Committee's [website](#) (see Submission 40).

In summary, the amendments:

- create separate secrecy offences that apply to non-Commonwealth officers and are narrower in scope than those applying to Commonwealth officers;
- narrow the definitions of 'inherently harmful information' and 'causes harm to Australia's interests', which form part of the proposed secrecy offences applying to Commonwealth officers;
- strengthen the defence for journalists at proposed section 122.5(6);
- limit the definition of 'security classification' to secret and top secret, and remove strict liability;
- limit the proposed espionage offence at section 91.3 to security classified information that is dealt with for the primary purpose of making it available to a foreign principal.

The Committee is continuing its inquiry into the Bill and its proposed amendments, and now intends to present its report to the Parliament in April.

Media enquiries:

Chair, Mr Andrew Hastie MP (Canning, WA) on 08 9534 8044 (Electorate office) or (02) 6277 4223 (Parliament House)

For background information:

Committee Secretariat - Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security –
(02) 6277 2360

pjcis@aph.gov.au

Interested members of the public may wish to track the committee via the [website](#). Click on the blue 'Track Committee' button in the bottom right hand corner and use the forms to login to My Parliament or to register for a My Parliament account.