



**THE HON KAREN ANDREWS MP
MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS**

Ref No: MS22-000202

Senator James Paterson
Chair
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
pjcis@aph.gov.au

Dear James

I am writing to refer the Security Legislation Amendment (Critical Infrastructure Protection) Bill 2022 (the SLACIP Bill) to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (the Committee) for inquiry and report. This is pursuant to Recommendation 8 of the Committee's Advisory report on the Security Legislation Amendment (Critical Infrastructure) Bill 2020 (SLACI Bill 2020) and Statutory Review of the *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018* (Advisory Report). Recommendation 8 of the Advisory Report is as follows:

3.54 The Committee recommends that Bill Two be amended in consultation with key stakeholders, released for feedback and with further consultation on incorporated amendments based on that feedback, prior to being reintroduced to Parliament.

Once reintroduced, Bill Two should be referred to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security for review, with a concurrent review of the operation to date of the amendments to the Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018 resulting from Bill One.

Terms of Reference

I request that the Committee consider the terms of the SLACIP Bill and report to each House of Parliament, the Prime Minister, the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Defence, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Communications and me, by 25 March 2022 to allow for passage of the SLACIP Bill during the Autumn 2022 sittings. Subject to your agreement the Committee should, as far as possible, conduct its inquiry in public.

Background to the referral

The SLACI Bill 2020 was introduced in the House of Representatives on 10 December 2020. The Attorney-General referred the SLACI Bill 2020 to the Committee in December 2020. The Committee tabled its Advisory Report on 29 September 2021.

In the Advisory Report, the Committee made 14 recommendations, including that the SLACI Bill 2020 be split and the urgent elements of the critical infrastructure reforms be legislated in the shortest timeframe possible. Government amendments were introduced to

carve out non-urgent elements from the SLACI Bill 2020. Following this, the *Security Legislation Amendment (Critical Infrastructure) Act 2021* received the Royal Assent on 2 December 2021.

Government has now prepared the SLACIP Bill, which includes the remaining elements of the critical infrastructure reforms from the SLACI Bill 2020 and some minor technical amendments.

In developing these reforms, my Department has consulted extensively with industry, states and territories and Commonwealth counterparts through a series of Town Hall meetings, conferences, bilateral engagements and roundtables, as well as through the formal circulation of an Exposure Draft of the Bill for six weeks consultation.

The SLACIP Bill amends the *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018* (SOCI Act). The SLACIP Bill introduces two key measures to the SOCI Act:

- A new obligation for responsible entities to create and maintain a critical infrastructure risk management program, and
- A new framework for enhanced cyber security obligations required for operators of systems of national significance (Australia’s most important critical infrastructure assets).

The Government has made over 70 amendments to the SLACIP Bill, reflecting feedback received through consultations including submissions to the Exposure Draft of the Bill and those submissions provided to the Committee during the inquiry process.

The SLACIP Bill is designed to further uplift the security and resilience of critical infrastructure assets and systems of national significance, ensuring these assets are safeguarded and protected from the threats posed by all-hazards including natural hazards and cyber attacks.

I take this opportunity to thank the Committee for its consideration of the SLACIP Bill and I look forward to the Committee’s report.

I have copied this letter to the Prime Minister, the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Defence, the Attorney-General and the Minister for Communications.

If you require further information, the relevant contact in my office is [REDACTED] who is available on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

KAREN ANDREWS