

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Joint Public Accounts and Audit

19 April 2024

QoN Number: 1

Subject: Termination of contracts

Asked by: Julian Hill

Question:

Ms Stephanie Cargill: The issue is when someone terminates, the system picks that up and they get terminated. If someone exits early, that is where there is an issue. Unless the person managing the contract tells the system, that is the issue, that's when you need the fall back and the checking step and risk assessment.

Mr Julian Hill MP: Alright. If you could take it on notice, if there is a particular issue between APS staff, I would presume the systems are better at picking up APS staff who leave because you pay them fortnightly, or whatever, as opposed to ABNs. Contractors, consultants and the categories of people who access systems. That's a guess.

Ms Stephanie Cargill: Yes, our issue is contract related.

Answer:

Access to the Department's network is revoked automatically following advice of termination, departure from the Department or account inactivity (30 days). This applies for APS employees and contractors alike.

While the processes remain similar for APS employees and contractors, the likelihood of issues arising from APS staff is reduced due to additional triggers in relation to APS cessation, for example: transfer requests from other agencies; requirements to transfer or pay out leave amounts; performance or code of conduct reviews; and taking of leave in the lead up to resignation. These triggers are not present for the termination of contractors, which requires advice from the contract manager if the contractor leaves the Department prior to the expiry of the overarching contract.

In addition to the above, the Department has further strengthened its control framework with the implementation of detective controls to identify and investigate potential instances where IT systems may have been accessed after termination of an employee or contractor.

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PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Joint Public Accounts and Audit

19 April 2024

QoN Number: 2

Subject: Membership of the Protective Security Board

Asked by: Julian Hill

Question:

Mr Julian Hill MP: Could you maybe give us an update in your response to recommendation 5 of our report last year, where you agreed that a new assurance mechanism would be implemented to begin to address the optimism bias in cyber security reporting. An update about the specifics of this mechanism and how you see it operating and when you think it may start to be rolled out more broadly across the public sector?

Mr Pete Anstee: Sure, thank you chair. Part of my division is administering the PSPF policy updates. So, as you said, we inherited through the MoG, the PSPF last year. Since then, we have implemented a few sorts of governance frameworks to elevate the discussion around the PSPF. Most significant amongst those is the establishment of an agency head and secretary level board called the Protective Security Board. I will get you the full list of the membership, but it's chaired by the Secretary for Home Affairs and includes the relevant secretaries or agency heads from ASD, ASIO, Defence and PM&C. I'll get you the full list, and the relevant agencies that are interested in this area.

Answer:

The Protective Security Board membership comprises:

Role	Member
Chair	Secretary, Department of Home Affairs
Member	Director-General of Security, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
Member	Director-General, Australian Signals Directorate
Member	Secretary, Department of Defence
Member	Commissioner, Australian Federal Police
Member	Director-General of National Intelligence, Office of National Intelligence
Co-Opted Member	Secretary, Attorney-General's Department
Co-Opted Member	Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Co-Opted Member	Deputy Secretary, International and Security Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Co-opted members attend for relevant Agenda Items only.
 Other agency heads will be co-opted as required to address emerging or critical protective security issues.

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PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Joint Public Accounts and Audit

19 April 2024

QoN Number: 3

Subject: Performance measures of the PSPF

Asked by: Julian Hill

Question:

Mr Julian Hill MP: Just to save air time here, could you just take on notice and give us an update in relation to recommendation six of our report last year about the components of the performance measures that you'll be introducing into your performance statement or corporate plan around compliance with the cyber security components of the PSPF? It was directed at AGD but I think you've inherited it as a special gift.

Mr Peter Anstee: We have, but I'll take that on notice.

Answer:

The Department of Home Affairs is progressing this recommendation. An appropriate performance measure is being considered as part of the development of the Department of Home Affairs 2024–25 Corporate Plan. It is anticipated the 2024-25 Corporate Plan will be published in July 2024.