

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit - Cyber Resilience: Inquiry into Auditor General's Reports Nos 1 and 13 (2019-20)

Opening statement by Attorney-General's Department

Australian governments, organisations and people increasingly invest in information and communication technologies as part of daily life and business. The public expects Australian Government entities to effectively protect the information and resources they hold. Amidst a rapidly-evolving environment, Australia must constantly respond and adapt to emerging methods of cyber-attack from hostile state and criminal actors.

To assist the Committee, I would like to give the following overview of the responsibilities of the Attorney-General's Department in strengthening Australian Government entities information and cyber security arrangements.

Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF)

The Attorney-General's Department is responsible for the Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF). It sets out the minimum mandatory requirements that non-corporate Commonwealth entities (NCCEs) must implement to protect their people, information and assets, both in Australia and overseas.

The Attorney-General's Department works closely with the Australian Cyber Security Centre, the Department of Home Affairs and the Digital Transformation Agency to ensure the PSPF reflects the best cyber security advice for government entities.

2018-19 Whole-of-Government PSPF Assessment Report

Through the PSPF, NCCEs are accountable for the effective management of their security risks, including cyber security risks. NCCEs are required to submit annual reports to their portfolio minister and the Attorney-General's Department, detailing their implementation of PSPF requirements. This enables the Attorney-General's Department to advise the Government on trends in security maturity and areas for improvement.

The 2018-19 PSPF whole-of-government assessment report confirms that information security, especially cyber security, remains an ongoing challenge for NCCEs. It is anticipated this report will be published in the coming months.

Protective Security Guidance

While the Attorney-General's Department prioritises support to entities mandated to apply the PSPF, it also assists a wide range of government entities with guidance to improve their protective security maturity, including state and territory entities.

This support ranges from targeted assistance with specific PSPF queries, to hosting protective security communities of practice and connecting government entities with detailed security awareness material and technical guidance.

I welcome any questions the Committee may have.