



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

Secretary

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1 February 2023

Mr Julian Hill MP
Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade - Defence Subcommittee
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Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Mr Hill

As requested in your letter of 20 December 2022, I am writing to provide a submission from the Attorney-General's Department in response to evidence received by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT) – Defence Subcommittee as part of its Inquiry into the Defence Industry Security Program.

The department offers the information below in response to the Subcommittee's request for information about the closure of the Protective Security Training College (PSTC).

1. When and why the Attorney-General's Department's protective security training was disbanded.

The PSTC closed on 31 July 2017, following the recommendation from a Functional and Efficiency Review of the Attorney-General's Department's to "Close the PSTC and transition provision of its services to private sector providers".

The PSTC provided a range of nationally accredited training in protective security management to staff from Australian Government entities and State and Territory agencies. However, the PSTC was one of many Registered Training Organisation (RTO) providers of accredited protective security training in Australia, and it was determined that the courses and qualifications offered by the PSTC could be sourced from a range of such providers.

Prior to closure, the PSTC actively engaged with other RTOs and RTO representative associations involved in protective security training, and provided Training and Assessment Strategies to interested RTOs that wished to undertake protective security training in a style previously delivered by the PSTC.

2. *Any continuing oversight by the Attorney-General's Department on the standard of protective security training offered by the government and the private sector.*

The Attorney-General's Department has responsibility for the development, implementation and monitoring of the Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF), which requires non-corporate Commonwealth entities to ensure appropriate protective security training for staff and contractors (as outlined below). The Attorney-General's Department receives reporting from entities on their implementation of the PSPF requirements but does not have a separate oversight role in relation to the standard of protective security training provided or procured by entities.

PSPF policy 2: *Management structures and responsibilities* mandates that the accountable authority of each non-corporate Commonwealth entity 'ensure personnel and contractors are aware of their collective responsibility to foster a positive security culture, and are provided sufficient information and training to support this'. PSPF policy 2 also mandates that:

- entities provide personnel, including contractors, with security awareness training at engagement and annually thereafter (Requirement 3)
- entities provide personnel, including contractors, in specialised and high-risk positions with specific security awareness training targeted to the scope and nature of the position (Requirement 4).

The PSPF requires each non-corporate Commonwealth entity to report annually to their portfolio minister and the Attorney-General's Department on their implementation of these requirements. The consolidated PSPF Assessment Report for 2021-22 is available on the PSPF website at: <https://www.protectivesecurity.gov.au/publications-library/protective-security-policy-framework-pspf-assessment-report-2021-22>.

The Australian Public Service Academy, as part of the APS Essentials course, offers a training module on security awareness to ensure participants understand and apply sound security management practices in their roles as public servants.

3. *The outcome on the level of protective security training, and skills of contract managers and defence and security industry.*

Under the PSPF, the Department of Defence is responsible for ensuring appropriate protective security training for its contract managers and Defence Industry Security Program members that is relevant to the needs of those personnel. While the Attorney-General's Department monitors implementation of PSPF requirements through annual PSPF reporting, it does not have detailed oversight of, and is not able to provide advice on, specific outcomes and skills delivered by training for contract managers and defence and security industry participants.

Yours sincerely



Katherine Jones PSM