



Geospatial Intelligence Pty Ltd (GI) is a small business that has been in operation since 2002. We are a wholly Australian owned and employ 16 people (of whom, four are Australian Defence Force veterans). Whilst we do not manufacture goods, we provide defence and security products and services. Our client base includes the Commonwealth of Australia and a small number of overseas governments. Since 2018, we have had an entry in the *Australian Military Sale Catalogue* published by the Australian Defence Export Office.

We would like to make a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth for the *Inquiry into Supporting Australia's Exports and Attracting Investment*. We argue that whilst the government makes policies to facilitate Australian Defence-related exports, the slow machinery of bureaucracy often stymies it in practice. We would like to use our example to illustrate a case in point.

In June 2018, Geospatial Intelligence Pty Ltd was approached by the Deputy Military Attaché of a country with which Australia already has military relationships, who wanted to know what training we could provide in the use of satellite imagery surveillance, geospatial analysis and use of Uninhabited Air Vehicles (UAVs) in military operations.

GI has previous experience in delivering a similar training program to the Australian Defence Force in 2009–2012 and to a Foreign Government in 2015–2016. We maintain a training syllabus in all aspects of geospatial and imagery analysis, and key personnel have experience in UAV operations. This new opportunity was a good fit for the capabilities of our company.

To comply with Australian regulations, we submitted our training syllabus and some training materials to Defence Export Controls (DECS) on 10 July 2018, to determine whether they were controlled under Defence and Strategic Goods List.

Note that previously, in 2014, GI submitted to DECS a version of these same training materials, that we delivered to the previous Foreign Government. The materials were found to have no requirement for approval to be exported or supplied.

GI maintained a dialogue for six months with the country, and the Australian Defence attaché stationed at the Australian Embassy, from June to November 2018, whilst we waited for our submission to be approved by DECS. The bottom line is that the DECS assessment took nine months and as a result the opportunity was lost.

A timeline of GI correspondence with DECS is as follows:

Date Email Sent	GI Correspondence	Date Email Reply	DEC Response
10/07/2018	Initial submission of materials	10/07/2018	Automated acknowledgement of receipt
20/08/2018	Query to the status of the application	20/08/2018	Application is currently at the risk assessment stage. A high volume of applications means it is not possible to provide an exact estimate of the timeframe.
		25/09/2018	Application requires further consultation with one or more Australian government



			agencies. Should be completed within 35 days.
		7/11/2018	Continuing consultation relating to this case. Can GI provide copies of the training materials?
21/11/2018	Copies of the training materials sent to DECS	21/11/2018	Acknowledgement of receipt of extra materials.
15/02/2019	Application has taken over seven months to process. Please advise the status of our application.	15/02/2019	Application needs one more piece of consultation with another agency.
		5/04/2019	Assessment finalised. Goods and services do not require a permit.

This project was an opportunity to grow our company by exporting our skills and talent. However, the slow machinery of bureaucracy could not respond in time for us to get export approval. Industry often must be agile and responsive to market requirements, yet the Commonwealth, and its employees, does not seem to appreciate the time sensitivity of these opportunities