

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION

Question No. 93

Senator Brandis asked the following question at the hearing on 12 February 2013.

Referring to the new Australian Cyber Security Centre announced by the Prime Minister on 23 January in her address on National Security:

1. Was ASIO consulted over this announcement?
2. When and why did ASIO decide that a new cyber security centre was needed?
3. Was ASIO also consulted over the 2013 Defence White Paper?
4. Given the vital input by ASIO into the Defence White Paper on the issue of cyber security, why is it that the White Paper, dated 11 December 2012, just a few weeks before the Prime Minister's National Security statement, makes no mention of a need for a new Cyber Security Centre, in fact noting that the existing Cyber Security Operations Centre has developed a 'comprehensive understanding of the cyber threat environment' and that it is able to 'coordinate responses to malicious cyber events that target government networks'?
5. How will the new Australian Cyber Security Centre announced by the Prime Minister on 23 January differ from the Cyber Security Operations Centre which former Defence Minister Senator Faulkner announced on 15 January 2010?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

1. ASIO was consulted over this announcement and strongly supports the initiative.
2. The new Australian Cyber Security Centre is a government decision. As such, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet is best placed to answer this question.
3. ASIO has been consulted over the Defence White Paper, including on cyber threats, noting the Paper is currently in draft form.
4. While ASIO is a contributor to the draft White Paper, the final detail and recommendations of the Defence White Paper remain with that Department.
5. ASIO believes the new Australian Cyber Security Centre will provide a greater scope and scale for the investigation and analysis of cyber threats. It will also coordinate enhanced government engagement with the private sector. It builds upon the work of the Cyber Security Operations Centre.