



Australian Security Intelligence Organisation

GPO Box 2176 Canberra City ACT 2601 Telephone 02 6249 6299 Facsimile 02 6257 4501

Office of the Director-General

1 April 2005

eA929958

Mr Owen Walsh
Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



VIA FACSIMILE: 02 6277 5794

Dear Mr Walsh

Inquiry into the National Security Information Legislation Amendment Bill 2005


Thank you for your letter dated 17 March 2005 inviting the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation to provide a submission to your Committee on the provisions of the above Bill.

ASIO strongly supports the provisions of the National Security Information Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 (the Bill).

As you are aware, the purpose of the Bill is to prevent the disclosure of national security information in certain civil proceedings where disclosure is likely to prejudice national security. It is ASIO's submission that such protection is not currently available in present mechanisms. It is crucial that national security information is appropriately protected in both criminal and civil proceedings. The Bill is designed to ensure that protection for specified civil proceedings and it will thus complement the provisions in the *National Security Information (Criminal Proceedings) Act 2004*.

I would be happy to assist the Committee further in its deliberations on the Bill if that would assist. The contact officer in the first instance for this matter is Bronwyn, who can be contacted on 02 6234 1232.

Yours sincerely


Dennis Richardson
Director-General of Security