

Summary of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security's meeting with Civil Society Groups – 13 November 2019

Participants

On 13 November, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS) convened a second meeting with representatives from a number of Civil Society Groups. The meeting was attended by the Inspector-General, senior staff from the IGIS office and representatives from the Joint Councils for Civil Liberties, the Human Rights Law Centre, the Law Council of Australia and the Australian Privacy Foundation.

Purpose

The purpose of meeting with Civil Society Groups is to provide a forum where:

- Civil Society Groups can access relevant and credible unclassified information about the work of the IGIS and Australia's intelligence and security agencies;
- the IGIS can hear the views of those who work with people directly affected by the work of intelligence or security agencies; and
- differing perspectives about issues relevant to the work of the IGIS in overseeing Australia's intelligence and security agencies can be discussed.

Participants in the group accept that:

- the IGIS can share only unclassified information;
 - meetings operate under 'Chatham House Rules' and that a short summary of each meeting will be published on the IGIS website;
 - there is significant benefit for all in sharing and understanding their different views.
- The purpose of the meeting is understanding; it is not necessary that there be a consensus on an issue.

Topics Discussed

IGIS staff provided an update to participants on some of the current areas of focus for the office including recruitment and preparations for the anticipated expanded jurisdiction of the office. IGIS staff sought feedback from participants about the IGIS website, and ideas of what information would be useful on an updated igis.gov.au website.

Participants discussed topics of interest from the recently published IGIS 2018–2019 Annual Report. These included the number of complaints received by the IGIS in relation to visa and citizenship applications (pp54–55) and the 2018 Inquiry into the unauthorised interception of telecommunications by the Australian Signals Directorate (p24).

IGIS staff also provided a brief on approaches to oversight and public transparency of intelligence agency operations in other jurisdictions following recent attendance by IGIS staff at the United Nations International Intelligence Oversight Forum and Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Council meeting.

Next Meeting

Participants identified complaint processes and common jurisdiction with the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman as potential topics for discussion at a future meeting. The next meeting is anticipated in the first quarter of 2020.