



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL  
HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP**

**AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INDUSTRY  
ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

**SECURITY 2009 CONFERENCE**

***CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY***

**SYDNEY**

**MONDAY, 24 AUGUST 2009**

First, may I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we meet on – and pay my respects to their elders, both past and present.

- Chair, Mr Rod Cowan, Cowan Communications;
- Mr Ged Byrnes, President of the Australian Security Industry Association Limited;
- Mr Jordon Peters, Manager, Integrated Systems Division, ADT Security;
- Ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning and thank you, Rod for your welcome.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to address this year's conference.

I note the theme of collaboration and communication is one that complements the Government's national security framework entirely.

The last 12 months have been challenging on a number of fronts and have demonstrated that Australia is not immune from overseas threats and events.

It has also shown that we need to be constantly prepared and vigilant.

For that reason, Governments must be considered and proactive in managing the complex interplay of national and global events.

There is no greater responsibility of Government than to protect the safety and security of its citizens.

The Government, however, is not alone in this responsibility.

Not surprisingly, many actions and policies pursued by Government are likely to impact on the private security industry. Indeed, some of the Government's objectives require your active support.

I am pleased to say that the industry is rising to meet these challenges.

## **Australia's National Security Framework**

Last December the Prime Minister outlined the Government's vision for national security in Australia's first National Security Statement.

The statement expands the definition of national security to include threats that go beyond terrorism and maintaining our territorial borders.

Appropriately, we now also include serious and organised crime, electronic attack and natural disasters.

The National Security Statement also specifically acknowledges that,

*"climate change represents a most fundamental national security challenge for the long term future".*

Climate change poses the risk of unregulated population movements, declining food production, reductions in farm land, and violent weather patterns with resulting catastrophic events. There are also potential impacts on critical infrastructure, together with health threats such as global pandemics and the spread of infectious disease.

To counter this suite of challenges, the National Security Statement promotes a strong partnership between Government and industry in order to safeguard Australia.

Current arrangements for protecting Australia's critical infrastructure, for example, are generally regarded as a significant improvement on past efforts, and highlight the success of this partnership approach.

We must, however, continue to build on and strengthen this strategy.

As such, I recently released the Rudd Government's Discussion Paper on National Security Legislation for public consultation.

The proposed amendments contained in the Discussion Paper are designed to achieve an appropriate balance between the Government's responsibility to protect Australia, its people and its interests and instil confidence that our laws will be exercised in a just and accountable way.

The Government is committed to ensuring the focus of Australia's national security and counter-terrorism laws remains on preventing an attack from occurring.

### **All Hazards Approach / Resilience**

Last month's bombings in Jakarta, which tragically killed three Australians, remind us that terrorism remains a real threat.

Similarly, recent successful counter-terrorism prosecutions show that terrorism is not something that can just happen overseas.

Terrorism, however, is not the only threat to Australia.

The Government's new national security priorities present a holistic view of security aligned with our belief in an 'all hazards' approach to achieving organisational as well as national resilience.

The key to this is being sufficiently prepared to respond to and recover from crises – regardless of their cause.

This is an important task for business – particularly in this age of increasing globalisation and interconnectedness.

Resilience for an organisation is more than simply preventing a range of identifiable risks. It's about being able to continue to meet key objectives in the face of significant, disruptive circumstances. That also means understanding and managing the many

interdependencies within and between industries, Governments, communities and individuals.

Resilient organisations are those that have well established connections to 'partner' organisations.

This is where mechanisms such as the Trusted Information Sharing Network (TISN) come into their own. TISN creates an environment sanctioned by regulators for competitors to collaborate in order to develop solutions on security, emergency management and business continuity matters.

## **Private Security Industry and Organised Crime**

I mentioned earlier that serious and organised crime now falls within Australia's national security policy framework.

Elements of the private security industry have always played a key role in supporting national security by helping to secure critical assets and facilities.

The very nature of the industry, however, with its access to firearms, licensed premises, major events and a range of public and private assets provides both an incentive and an opportunity for organised crime to infiltrate and exploit its activities and operations.

As you would be aware, since late 2007 the Australian Crime Commission has been conducting an intelligence operation into the industry.

The operation is providing us with a national picture of the nature and extent of criminal infiltration together with insights into current and potential vulnerabilities.

These findings are being shared with relevant State and Territory agencies so they too have relevant information in developing policy, regulatory and law enforcement responses.

I should emphasise that most legitimate private security operators and staff usually operate with absolute integrity and often fully comply with all our laws.

Nevertheless, the Australian Crime Commission has identified issues of criminality affecting the industry – principally the exploitation of the cash economy and unlawful business practices.

The Government's view is that a combined regulatory and law enforcement approach is likely to be most effective in combating organised crime offences.

To that end, at the meeting of the Council of Australian Governments earlier this month, Ministers agreed to a coordinated national effort to effectively prevent, investigate and prosecute organised crime activities and target the proceeds of organised criminal groups.

As part of this, the Commonwealth Government introduced significant reforms into Parliament as part of a comprehensive response to combat serious and organised crime.

Specifically, the amendments will:

- strengthen criminal asset confiscation regimes;
- introduce unexplained wealth provisions that require individuals to demonstrate their wealth was legally acquired;
- enhance police powers to investigate organised crime by implementing laws for controlled operations that allow law enforcement agencies to infiltrate criminal organisations and provide protection for undercover officers;
- extend criminal liability to all individuals who jointly commit an offence; and
- broaden the list of criminal offences for which appropriate telecommunications interception powers will be available.

These measures will target the perpetrators and profits of organised crime and will provide our law enforcement agencies with the tools they need to combat the increasingly sophisticated methods used by organised crime syndicates.

## **Improving Security Industry Standards**

Last year, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) also agreed to adopt a nationally consistent regulatory approach to the private security industry.

For the 'guarding sector', this means implementing standards that focus on improving the trustworthiness, competence and skills of security personnel.

All jurisdictions have agreed these reforms will come into place in 2010, and will apply to both new and existing licence holders.

The States and Territories are also looking at whether national minimum standards need to be applied to the industry's 'technical' sector. We will know more about their thinking on this issue by the end of the year.

Finally, COAG has also agreed that all Governments need to consider a national registration or licensing system for the private security industry. This will be examined next year.

It should be emphasised, however, that it's not just Governments which recognise the need to drive improvements in the industry.

The Australian Security Industry Association Limited (ASIAL) has long championed better standards and the safeguarding of public interests, and I commend it for rigorously enforcing this.

Indeed, I am advised that over 10 percent of applicants for Association membership are rejected because they cannot meet these standards.

Importantly, everyone has a role to play in improving standards.

## **Conclusion**

The expanded range of issues included in the national security framework, coupled with uncertainties in our security environment, demand that we remain constantly vigilant.

To ensure the private security industry continues to play its important role, we must do all we can to improve industry standards.

This means increasing confidence and trust in the industry and its personnel by removing criminal elements.

It means increasing the competencies and skills of security staff.

And it means increasing the performance standards demanded by customers and delivered by businesses.

These are challenges for everyone, Government and industry alike.

I am confident that ASIAL and its members will continue to play a crucial role in helping achieve these objectives on behalf of the Australian community.

On behalf of the Association, it's my great pleasure to declare the Security 2009 Conference officially open.

Thank you.