

# What we do

ASIO is Australia's national security intelligence service.

Our main responsibility is collecting, analysing and reporting intelligence on threats to security. The [Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979](#) defines security as the protection of Australia's territorial and border integrity from serious threats, and the protection of Australia and its people from espionage, sabotage, politically motivated violence, the promotion of communal violence, attacks on Australia's defence system, and acts of foreign interference – whether directed from, or committed within, Australia or not.

ASIO does not investigate lawful protest activity or purely criminal activities. We are not a law enforcement body and have no powers of arrest, but we cooperate closely with law enforcement agencies when there is a criminal link. Our investigations generally focus on detecting the intentions and activities of terrorists, people who seek to act violently for political reasons and people who seek to clandestinely obtain sensitive Australian information. Most of our resources are aimed at preventing a terrorist attack in Australia, countering terrorist-related activity, warning of security threats and countering espionage and foreign interference against Australia.

We also provide [security assessments](#) and [protective security advice](#). For example we conduct security assessments on people holding or seeking national security clearances; on some people wanting to enter or stay in Australia; and on people who want access to sensitive areas or goods, such as air and maritime port restricted zones. Protective security advice is provided to government agencies. We also provide advice to the private sector through our [Business Liaison Unit](#).

ASIO is also responsible for the collection of foreign intelligence in Australia, at the request of the Minister for Foreign Affairs or the Minister for Defence.