

Should ministerial arrangements for domestic security be changed?

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The recent increase in Australia's terrorism alert, reported prime ministerial concern over national security arrangements, major increases in counterterrorism funding and operational success against people smuggling have raised a new question in Canberra: are our arrangements for managing domestic security optimal? This paper examines this question as a debate. While both authors reject the idea of a US-style Department of Homeland Security, they have different views about whether our current ministerial arrangements for domestic security should be changed.

Presenting the case for change is ASPI senior analyst David Connery. He gives five reasons why change is needed, before proposing a new split in which a Minister for Security and Resilience takes over responsibility for enforcing Australia's domestic security and emergency management laws.

Peter Jennings, ASPI's executive director, presents a case for the status quo, arguing that the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSC) is more important in ensuring coordinated security policy than the division of responsibilities among its ministers.



Prime Minister Tony Abbott chairs a cabinet meeting in Canberra, 30 January 2014. AAP Image/Alan Porritt

'It's time'—Changing the political structure for domestic security in Australia

David Connery

The Prime Minister has options to enhance the government's ability to coordinate domestic security policy, and to ensure that accountabilities align with responsibilities in the legal, security and emergency management space. One is to group existing agencies with responsibilities for domestic security under a Minister for Security and Resilience, while leaving the Attorney-General to be the Commonwealth's first law officer.

A US-style Department of Homeland Security, however, would be a step too far: it would create a significant bureaucratic empire that would be distracting right now and wouldn't improve outcomes.

The current split of responsibilities

Australia faces a broad range of domestic security challenges, including terrorism, organised crime, border protection, cyber-based threats and natural disasters. Central to the Australian Government's efforts to deal with these challenges are three ministers with overlapping and complementary responsibilities: the Attorney-General, the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection and the Minister for Justice. An abridged list of their responsibilities is in Table 1.

There are some anomalies in the division of responsibilities, especially between the Attorney-General and the Justice Minister. They include a split in responsibilities for law making, a separation of capability development and policy from the operational agencies, and a separation of responsibility for intelligence agencies that have some overlapping roles. In the case of oversight, the Justice Minister is responsible for both the anti-corruption watchdog and the institutions that it's meant to watch (while the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity operates independently of the minister, the minister can affect its resource allocations). There's also a separation between people smuggling and people trafficking, between Justice and Border Protection. But there are deeper imperatives that go beyond the allocation of portfolios and add substantially to the case for new ministerial arrangements in the domestic security field.

Why is change needed?

While the current focus on terrorism has brought the question of ministerial arrangements to the surface, there are five main reasons—which will endure regardless—why change is needed.

First, Australia is set to have a new law enforcement minister by mid-2015 when the Australian Border Force is established. While the authorities of this new agency are still unclear, Minister Scott Morrison has already said that it'll have law enforcement functions at the border. So Cabinet will gain a second minister with responsibilities for law enforcement, in addition to the minister with day-to-day responsibilities for a number of agencies, who already sits outside Cabinet. This sounds like a lot of ministers with overlapping roles.

The second consideration is about clear lines of authority. Under the current split, the Minister for Justice is responsible for day-to-day activities of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Crime Commission, but he reports to the Attorney-General. The question is, when does 'day-to-day' responsibility start and end? In addition, these arrangements mean that agency heads really have two ministers to report to—that's two ministers to brief, and two ministers who may see things differently. The current arrangement therefore introduces complexity, which could be avoided, into the ministerial arrangements.

The third consideration is about representation. In the current arrangements, the Minister for Justice doesn't get a seat in Cabinet, and so doesn't routinely get a say when his or her agencies are discussed. Nor is this minister a member of the NSC. So he or she must implement policy that they don't get a say in (for example, the employment of the AFP on overseas operations).

Fourth, Australia will experience a lengthy period during which domestic security challenges will be central to the national agenda. It's not just about terrorism, though. There's also a need to consider how government and others can work together to maintain the internet as a useful tool of commerce, entertainment and organisation. There are major and growing concerns about the penetration of organised crime into society and the economy. And, while people smuggling has receded over the past 12 months, change to the conditions prevailing today could see a resumption of the trade. Sustained ministerial focus will be needed to manage these emerging challenges.

The final reason is philosophical. Having the same minister as the advocate for our freedoms and our security presents a challenge. That was demonstrated recently when the Attorney-General advocated the repeal of section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act based on arguments for freedom of speech, while arguing for metadata retention and criminalising speech that advocates terrorism. If a democracy is about contesting ideas, then ideas as important as security and liberty need to be contested in Cabinet. That contestability is not as strong as it could be.

A new split would create optimal ministerial arrangements

The proposal (which has been discussed before by Anthony Bergin) is to unify the efforts of Australia's numerous domestically focused security agencies under a Minister for Security and Resilience. This realignment would be based on a simple principle: one minister develops and administers the law, and the other enforces it and builds community resilience. The proposed split, which sees the immigration functions also subsumed into the portfolio of the Security and Resilience Minister, is shown in Table 2. This change to ministerial responsibilities would leave the Attorney-General to focus upon the role of first law officer (and, in this Cabinet, Arts Minister).

There are three main reasons for this split.

The first is accountability. As the discussion above shows, it's possible that the minister currently responsible for law enforcement won't be a party to decisions affecting his responsibilities, that the Attorney-General may need to argue conflicting positions about security and freedoms, and that there's potential for divided responsibilities. This new arrangement seeks to clarify those responsibilities and separate them so that one minister is clearly responsible for major security agencies.

Creating coherence is a second important reason. Currently, there are splits that don't really make sense. For instance, the Attorney-General retains responsibility for security intelligence, while the Justice Minister is responsible for criminal intelligence. Why the split? Both are highly sensitive areas, and some functions overlap between the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and the Australian Crime Commission, such as in border threats and now terrorism. Other anomalies are mentioned above. Broadly, it doesn't make sense for one minister to develop policy that another implements, or to have two ministers overseeing agencies with overlapping roles.

Third, the Minister for Security and Resilience could direct and coordinate all law enforcement agencies—police, intelligence, information, border force and research. This would help to ensure that the needs and responsibilities of all agencies are harmonised, starting with research, policy and capability development and extending to operations. Change will probably be easier to implement across the relevant agencies when they're answering to one boss. Also, inter-ministry coordination won't necessarily need to be a feature of change in technical law enforcement or domestic intelligence areas. That's an advantage that should be welcomed.

Resilience is a critical property of our society: leadership is needed

While the 'separation of powers' principle works well for law and security, it doesn't address the resilience functions that the Attorney-General and the Justice Minister currently share.

Table 1: Current division of responsibilities among relevant Commonwealth ministers

Attorney-General	Minister for Justice	Minister for Immigration and Border Protection
Law and justice, including:	The following matters within the Attorney-General's portfolio:	Matters dealt with by the department:
- administrative and constitutional law	- classification	- entry, stay and departure arrangements for non-citizens
- administrative support for royal commissions and certain other inquiries	- criminal law and law enforcement, including:	- border immigration control
- alternative dispute resolution	---crime prevention	- citizenship
- bankruptcy, copyright	---criminal offences	- ethnic affairs
- courts and tribunals	---criminal procedure and enforcement powers	- customs and border control other than quarantine and inspection.
- cultural affairs, including movable cultural heritage and support for the arts	---cybercrime	Legislation administered by the minister:
- Defence Abuse Response Taskforce	---fraud and anti-corruption policy	- <i>Aliens Act Repeal Act 1984</i>
- freedom of information, privacy	---federal prisoners	- <i>Australian Citizenship Act 2007</i>
- human rights	---illicit drugs	- <i>Australian Citizenship (Transitionals and Consequentials) Act 2007</i>
- international law	---international crime cooperation casework (extradition, mutual assistance and international transfer of prisoners, excluding national security casework)	- <i>Customs Act 1901</i>
- law reform	---organised crime	- <i>Customs Administration Act 1985</i>
- legal assistance	---people trafficking	- <i>Customs Depot Licensing Charges Act 1997</i>
- legal services to the Commonwealth	---proceeds of crime and anti-money laundering	- <i>Customs Securities (Penalties) Act 1981</i>
- legislative drafting	- Commonwealth emergency management	- <i>Customs Tariff Act 1995</i>
- marriage and family law	- natural disaster relief, recovery and mitigation policy and financial assistance, including payments to the states and territories and the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment.	- <i>Customs Undertakings (Penalties) Act 1981</i>
- management of government records	The following agencies within the Attorney-General's portfolio:	- <i>Customs (Tariff Concession System Validations) Act 1999</i>
- native title	- Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity	- <i>Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946</i>
- personal property securities.	- Australian Crime Commission	- <i>Migration Act 1958</i>
National security, including:	- Australian Federal Police	- <i>Migration Agents Registration Application Charge Act 1997</i>
- counter-terrorism law and policy	- Australian Institute of Criminology	- <i>Migration (Health Services) Charge Act 1991</i>
- critical infrastructure protection (including cybersecurity)	- Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC)	- <i>Migration (Sponsorship Fees) Act 2007</i>
- protective security policy	- CrimTrac Agency.	- <i>Migration (Visa Application) Charge Act 1997</i>
- telecommunications interceptions.		- <i>Migration (Visa Evidence) Charge Act 2012</i>
Agencies and organisations		Agencies
- Australian Security Intelligence Organisation		- Department of Immigration and Border Protection (including Australian Customs and Border Protection Command).
- Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions		
- Australian Government Solicitor		
- Office of Parliamentary Counsel		
- High Court of Australia		

Attorney-General (cont)	Minister for Justice	Minister for Immigration and Border Protection
- Federal Court of Australia, Family Court and Federal Circuit Court of Australia		
- Administrative Appeals Tribunal		
- Australian Financial Security Authority		
- Australian Human Rights Commission		
- Australian Law Reform Commission		
- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner		
- National Archives of Australia		
- 21 arts institutions, organisations and training bodies.		

Table 2: Broad allocation of responsibilities between the Attorney-General and the Minister for Security and Resilience

Attorney-General	Minister for Security and Resilience
Policy areas:	Policy areas:
- all law: administrative, constitutional, criminal, international, national security, marriage and family, native title	- national security (including counterterrorism) policy and capability
- administrative support for royal commissions and certain other inquiries	- crime prevention, illicit drugs strategy, federal prisoners
- alternative dispute resolution, legal assistance	- critical infrastructure protection (including cybersecurity)
- bankruptcy, classification, copyright	- cybercrime, organised crime, people trafficking and smuggling
- courts and tribunals, criminal procedure and enforcement powers	- fraud and anti-corruption policy, proceeds of crime and anti-money laundering
- cultural affairs, including movable cultural heritage and support for the arts	- international crime cooperation casework (extradition, mutual assistance and international transfer of prisoners, excluding national security casework)
- freedom of information, privacy, human rights, law reform	- immigration
- legislative drafting and legal services to the Commonwealth	- Commonwealth emergency management, including natural disaster relief, recovery and mitigation policy, and financial assistance, including payments to the states and territories and the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment
- personal property securities.	- societal resilience, including countering violent extremism
Agencies, organisations and COAG committees:	- protective security and transport security policy
- Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity	- telecommunications interceptions.
- Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions	Agencies, organisations and COAG committees:
- Australian Government Solicitor	- Australian Border Force
- Office of Parliamentary Counsel	- Australian Crime Commission
- High Court of Australia, Federal Court of Australia, Family Court and Federal Circuit Court of Australia	- Australian Federal Police
- Administrative Appeals Tribunal	- Australian Institute of Criminology
- Australian Financial Security Authority	- Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
- Australian Human Rights Commission	- Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC)
- Australian Law Reform Commission	- CrimTrac Agency
- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	- Department of Immigration and Border Protection
- National Archives of Australia	---including national security coordination, emergency management, critical infrastructure resilience and transport security policy
- arts institutions and training bodies	- Co-chair, Law, Crime and Community Safety Council.
- Co-chair, Law, Crime and Community Safety Council.	

Sources: Attorney-General's Department website, Justice Minister's website, Administrative Arrangements Order of 18 September 2013.

In performing the resilience role, the new minister would lead the national focus on disaster mitigation, adaptation and response efforts, including in areas such as insurance, building codes and first-responder communication. The minister would also manage the interaction between security and social harmony by overseeing programs that help law enforcement and other agencies to work with vulnerable communities.

With such a major realignment of responsibilities, it would be worth considering two new assistant minister appointments in a Security and Resilience portfolio. One could be responsible for disaster management and community harmony. Their responsibilities would include political-level leadership that builds community harmony and counters violent extremism, as well as acting as the intermediary for long-needed changes to the way we manage disaster mitigation and recovery. A second assistant minister might lead the resilience aspects of cyber policy. They could help to ensure that the whole-of-government process to develop and implement a national policy is supported by the national security community and is cognisant of its needs.

Redistributing some of the responsibilities currently held by the Attorney-General, Justice Minister and Minister for Immigration and Border Protection to the Cabinet-level Minister for Security and Resilience, who would also be a member of the NSC, is not just a reaction to a heightened concern about terrorism. It's principle-based and aimed at promoting accountability and coordination in our national security arrangements. Support for the minister in key policy development and stakeholder engagement tasks from two assistant ministers would also promote action on some difficult issues, especially in the key areas of emergency management and cybersecurity. This change would be cost-neutral and could be implemented with minimal legislative change (essentially limited to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act). It's certainly time, and timely, to make these changes.

Don't break what's working well

Peter Jennings

When it comes to the roles of Cabinet ministers, David Connery and I would probably agree on a number of key points. First, it's useful to regularly review whether the right ministers have the right responsibilities to shape policy in the national interest. Second, the changing shape of national security challenges makes it even more urgent that ministerial responsibilities are kept up to date. Failing to do that can leave gaps in Australia's national security armour. Finally, as governments reshape cabinets and ministries it's easy enough to overlook emerging or even longstanding policy areas and for portfolios to become unwieldy.

The last days of the Gillard government saw regular reshuffles, which led to an unwieldy inner cabinet of 20 ministers, some holding multiple and unrelated portfolios; some portfolios having no departments; and some departments with confused lines of reporting to several ministers. Tony Abbott's first ministry simplified roles and accountabilities, for example by allocating one portfolio per minister in most cases, but the line-up has been criticised for failing to include a science portfolio, either in Cabinet or the wider ministry. The reality is that all cabinets try to balance political and personal alignments, state and regional representation and individual capabilities. Cabinets work best when strong leaders keep a tight policy focus but allow healthy debate. The quality of a cabinet is invariably more important to the life of a government than any one individual member of it.

Accepting the importance of the subject and the value of debating it, I disagree, however, with David's claim that ministerial arrangements for domestic security should be changed and a new Cabinet ministerial position be created for security and resilience. In my view, there's no compelling case for a large-scale change of ministerial portfolios relating to national security. Some smaller changes are warranted, but those are more concerned with the public service's support of Cabinet.

Thinking about new Cabinet positions

I suggest that four key guidelines should inform thinking about the role of Cabinet ministers in national security.

Cabinet should be kept small and changes should be made cautiously

Cabinet is simply a high-powered committee, and good committee processes will produce better Cabinet outcomes. If Cabinet membership is too large, it will become cumbersome, at risk of factionalising and slow decision-making. Paul Kelly's book *Triumph and demise* ties the disintegration of Kevin Rudd's prime ministership to the collapse of effective Cabinet processes.¹ A key to the success of the NSC under the Howard government was that membership was limited to six ministers², many of whom were in their positions for the life of the government. A general organising principle should be that NSC membership is kept small and, if possible, that ministers are given time to learn their portfolios and get comfortable with their decision-making responsibilities.

Ministerial workloads are necessarily substantial

There's no question that ministerial workloads are heavy, as David shows in listing, for example, the many responsibilities of the Attorney-General. However, senior ministers would be unlikely to accept lesser authority for fewer responsibilities. It's important that ministers are not overloaded with work, but allocating tasks to junior ministers and parliamentary secretaries can create breathing space. Ministers need to make sure that their approach is appropriately strategic and not mired in details that officials can handle. In short, governments are well advised to keep their capable ministers busy and not resort to a larger number of ministers with fewer tasks.

In national security, it's impossible to vest authority in one minister

The complexities of international security are such that many portfolio interests are engaged in responding to military, terrorism, diplomatic, cyber and other challenges. The portfolio responsibilities represented in the NSC make it possible for an aggregated

government approach to shape security policy. It's that critical collective decision-making capability that, we hope, makes good policy. Attempting to draw all necessary authorities into one minister's portfolio will fail and, most likely, overload the minister in question. National security decision-making benefits from having a number of critical minds applied to the task at ministerial level, rather than relying on one individual to carry the intellectual weight of making difficult decisions. The NSC, rather than individual ministers, is the essential unit for measuring government's capacity to handle security effectively.

The system isn't broken

Finally, governments should apply a stringent test: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Counterterrorism policy is clearly difficult and requires tough trade-offs in balancing personal liberties with collective security. Assessing the real extent of threats and applying long-term and immediate mitigating strategies will always generate strong debate. That said, Australia's counterterrorism machinery is competent, well funded, clearly closely managed by government and able to take necessary steps when immediate problems are identified. The system can well be improved, but seems far from being broken. Creating new ministerial positions that require changes to organisational reporting and accountabilities shouldn't be attempted at a time of greater concern about terror threats.

Responding to the case for change

Having set out a broad rationale for approaching change cautiously and for maintaining a bias towards keeping the status quo, I'll address briefly the case that David makes for establishing a new Minister for Security and Resilience. He advances five key reasons for change. Here, I won't repeat David's arguments from his paper, but simply provide five comments.

New law enforcement powers in mid-2015 will create a lot of ministers with overlapping roles

This could indeed be a problem, but the key point is to make sure that there's clarity in the new legal framework that will determine the powers of the Australian Border Force and how it relates to the AFP and other agencies. There is time—although not much of it—to make sure that the new law enforcement mechanisms are appropriately developed. The problem should be fixed by good legal drafting, not with an additional minister.

There should be clear lines of authority

This is certainly important, but there's nothing unusual in having portfolio responsibilities divided between senior and junior ministers, as is the case in the Defence, Foreign Affairs and Attorney-General's portfolio. One way to add clarity is to review, update and publicise the split of administrative responsibilities between portfolio ministers. Potential overlaps will always exist, and it remains in the authority of the senior Cabinet minister to make the final policy call within the portfolio. The NSC, it must be remembered, also creates a shared accountability of all ministers for the final decisions reached.

Representation should be at the right level

David observes that the Justice Minister doesn't sit in Cabinet or attend the NSC and argues that the weight of the issues in question should locate a Cabinet-level Minister for Security and Resilience in the NSC. The counter-argument is that the Attorney-General, as the senior portfolio minister, represents the Justice Minister's issues in the NSC and Cabinet. It's also easy enough to co-opt ministers to attend the NSC when issues relevant to them are discussed, and this is often done.

Sustained ministerial focus is needed to manage emerging national security challenges

This is certainly correct, but I argue that the NSC should be the focal point of attention, rather than looking at the roles of individual ministers. A key question should be ‘What can be done to strengthen the machinery of national security policymaking?’ My answer (to be addressed in another ASPI publication) would be to redesign the role and responsibilities of the position formally known as the National Security Adviser, which met a quiet demise in late 2013.³

Having the same minister advocate for our freedoms and our security presents a challenge

This is an interesting point, and one worth thinking about, but ultimately not persuasive. It’s a reality of government that ministers must oversee and resolve potentially conflicting priorities in their portfolios. In Defence, for example, the minister is the final arbiter of defence export controls as well as export promotion. The Defence Chief Audit Executive manages fraud control and investigations and is ultimately as responsible to the minister, as is any part of the organisation that might be under review. In short, the expectation is that ministers must come to a balanced view of what constitutes the right policy outcome, even when there are conflicting priorities reflected by different parts of their portfolios.

The proposal to split powers currently held by the Attorney-General into an arrangement in which one minister advocates for freedoms and another advocates for security is potentially highly risky. It creates a situation in which the structural role a minister is asked to perform will create policy deadlock. The expectation of Cabinet is that it will settle on intelligent policy outcomes after all competing perspectives have been taken into account. The essence of this role is set out in the current *Cabinet handbook*:

As a forum, the Cabinet seeks through discussion and consultation to resolve disputes and build consensus around often difficult and controversial issues. The decisions of the Cabinet are understood to be collective, not of individual ministers, and Cabinet solidarity requires all ministers to take responsibility for them and support them.⁴

Conclusion

For completeness in responding to David’s proposal, a few smaller points should be briefly addressed. While a case could be constructed for a Minister for Security, the ‘resilience’ part of the portfolio doesn’t strike me as being of equal value. There’s no obvious link between ‘disaster resilience and community harmony’, and the latter quality seems to me to reflect more a cultural aspiration than a decision-making, resource-allocating ministerial job. The case is surely still to be made on whether there’s a rational ‘community harmony’ portfolio role, leaving aside whether it should sit in the NSC.

Creating two junior minister positions as well as that of a senior minister could not be cost free, even if it were accepted that the only costs were higher ministerial salaries, additional private staff allocations and secure office fit-outs. The more substantial cost, of course, would be in the time needed to change administrative and regulatory frameworks and to service new ministerial requirements for policy advice.

Although David makes a good case for the additional Cabinet position, I’m ultimately not persuaded that it’s a sensible or necessary policy move. The added burden of administrative complexity is too great, and the current system isn’t sufficiently flawed to make the changes worthwhile. If it really is the case that the Attorney-General’s position is overcommitted, one simple way to manage the workload more effectively would be to hand the Arts portfolio to another minister. The test of the right approach to national security is how well the NSC works, rather than how well any one minister performs. I’ll offer some thoughts in a future ASPI paper about how the policy machinery supporting the NSC could be strengthened to support ministers in their work.

A final word

David Connery

Peter and I have offered cases for and against the proposal to change the division of responsibilities among the two Cabinet ministers and the junior minister with current responsibilities for domestic security. We've done so to provide a fuller explanation of the issues than has been offered in the media so far, and to get beyond the straw man that was the proposed US-style Department of Homeland Security. Nobody seriously thinks that Australia will follow that model. But the submerged issue of ministerial responsibilities in domestic security is a live one, in our view.

Peter offered me the chance for a rejoinder, so I'll take it. We certainly agree that the key body for managing national security is the NSC. There's no doubt that this arrangement has served Australia well over the past 20 years, and it's likely to continue to do so. One property that makes it effective is its flexibility, which is especially demonstrated in its ability to co-opt members. We need to conceive of the Prime Minister as the 'minister for national security' due to the very expansive nature of national security today, largely because it has external and internal dimensions that involve many policy areas—defence, foreign affairs, law enforcement, emergency management, aid and finance, and often others such as energy, trade and social services.

But the main issue of this paper concerns ministerial arrangements for domestic security. Peter has offered a robust defence of the status quo and, as always, provides practical and realistic explanations of the way things really work in a cabinet environment. My only points are these. First, an additional minister's not needed: it's about redistributing portfolios to achieve greater unity of effort in domestic security and to create a clear distinction between the minister who makes the law and the minister who enforces it.

The second concerns the 'resilience' aspect of the role. If I'd simply called that 'emergency management', there might be less to discuss. But the point is that we need to do more than manage emergencies. We need to be proactive about dealing with the natural hazards and social challenges that might harm our society. In the case of the latter, we've seen how recent community outreach concerning counterterrorism laws required 'special' efforts by both the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General. I'd suggest that more meetings like this should occur, but understand that neither senior minister has the time to meet every interest group in the community. A junior minister could help ease that burden and increase the frequency of political contact with the community on these issues. Given the important role of law enforcement agencies in meeting these challenges, I've suggested that they be grouped under the Security Minister.

If you have a view, we invite you to submit it to our blog, *The Strategist* (www.aspistrategist.org.au). We think this is a debate worth having.

Notes

- 1 Paul Kelly, *Triumph and demise: the broken promise of a Labor generation*, Melbourne University Publishing, 2014. Kelly quotes then Minister Tony Burke saying 'In the end we stopped making decisions at cabinet. The official business of cabinet took no time and then we'd have a political discussion but with no agenda, no direction, no decision' (p. 153).
- 2 The Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Treasurer, ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence and Attorney-General. John Howard claimed in his autobiography that 'The consistency and discipline the Howard Government displayed regarding Foreign Policy and Defence was due overwhelmingly to the effective way in which this committee operated.' John Howard, *Lazarus rising: a personal and political autobiography*, Harper Collins, 2010, p. 238.
- 3 <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/tony-abbott-dismantles-role-of-national-security-adviser-by-stealth-insiders-say-20131024-2w4do.html>.
- 4 http://www.dpmc.gov.au/guidelines/docs/cabinet_handbook.pdf (paragraph 2, page 8).

Acronyms and abbreviations

AFP	Australian Federal Police
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
NSC	National Security Committee of Cabinet

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