

29 January 2018

Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Energy Networks Australia – Response to Security of Critical Infrastructure Bill 2017

Dear Committee Secretary,

Thank you for the opportunity for Energy Networks Australia to make a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security regarding the Security of Critical Infrastructure Bill 2017.

Energy Networks Australia is the national industry association representing the businesses operating Australia's electricity transmission and distribution, and gas distribution networks. Member businesses provide energy to virtually every household and business in Australia.

Many network service providers are owned wholly or partly by foreign entities. Foreign investment in Australian energy networks delivers valuable benefits for Australia's economy and community, in supporting economic growth, creating employment opportunities, and supporting Australia's competitiveness in global markets.

Energy Networks Australia recognises that security and resilience of critical infrastructure is necessary to support Australia's society, economy and future prosperity. As such, we understand that the intent of the Bill is to strengthen the Government's capacity to manage the national security risks of espionage, sabotage and coercion arising from foreign involvement in Australia's critical infrastructure, whilst minimising the regulatory impact on asset owners.

Energy Networks Australia appreciates the practical measures outlined in the Bill, including the expectations for the critical infrastructure register and the Ministerial 'last resort' power. Due consideration to 'the costs that would be likely to be incurred by the entity in complying with the direction' is particularly welcome, given the already significant regulatory reporting which energy network service providers undertake.

The inclusion of gas networks supplying at least 100,000 customers – a change since the draft exposure version of the Bill – is noted.

Energy Networks Australia looks forward to working with the Australian Government to inform the process development for provision of required information to the Secretary, as well as the undertaking of security assessments (if warranted).

Should you have any additional queries, please contact our Senior Program Manager – Asset Management, Heath Frewin on (02) 6272 1555 or hfrewin@energynetworks.com.au

Sincerely,



Andrew Dillon

Chief Executive Officer