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THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN INTELLIGENCE DOMAIN – A MULTI DIMENSION EXAMINATION

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Abstract

In the complex and interconnected post 9/11 world the roles and functions of intelligence have evolved beyond being a secret capability of governments focused on national security needs. Intelligence has become recognised as a critical function necessary to support decision making across the full breadth of government and corporate activity. The concept of an intelligence community being purely national security centric and bounded by secrecy has become limited. Intelligence in support of decision making has become a far broader domain than previously believed. This paper investigates the degree of intelligence embedded-ness across government agencies and departments at the federal, state and local levels. Findings reveal that in excess of 75 discrete intelligence capabilities were identified, categorized by theme before being stratified into a three tier hierarchal intelligence domain map. Many of these categories were not in support of national security per se, but rather in support of broader government decision making.

Keywords

Australian Intelligence Domain, Intelligence, Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Intelligence is a function historically associated with national security and defence and for at least the last 30 years the wider law enforcement domain. However intelligence as a function in the modern context is embedded in a far broader range of institutions extending beyond national security and law enforcement to take in governance, compliance and regulation. Moreover the private sector also utilises intelligence and in many instances maintains in house intelligence capabilities. In the Australian context there is a clearly defined intelligence community consisting of; the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS), the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD), the Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO), the Australian Geospatial-intelligence Organisation (AGO) and the Office of National Assessments (ONA). In addition to those agencies designated as the intelligence community there is a wide range of agencies in the national security and law enforcement domains that maintain and operate embedded intelligence capabilities and functions all of which are clearly understood and recognised as being part of a broader Australian Intelligence Domain. This includes but is not limited to; the Australian Defence Force (ADF), the Australian Crime Commission (ACC), the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS), the various police services and various state based crime commissions. These organisations would be included for the most part in any serious discourse on the Australian intelligence domain. However, to limit the discourse on the Australian Intelligence Domain to this relatively small constituent body ignores a large and operationally diverse element of the wider Australian Intelligence Domain that exists outside of national security and law enforcement.

Intelligence is defined in many ways, and it is generally agreed that intelligence refers to a product, a process or an agency (Treverton, Jones, Boraz, & Lipsy, 2006; Walsh, 2011; Warner, 2002). However there is no universally accepted singular definition. Definitions may be specific to an agency for the purpose of delimiting its focus and function. Definitions are also used to exclude the function from specific environments.

For the purpose of this study intelligence was operationally defined as:

Intelligence is a label used to identify an agency or function within an organisation tasked with the collection and analysis of information and subsequent development of intelligence products to support decision making.

WHY MAP THE AUSTRALIAN INTELLIGENCE DOMAIN?

The intelligence literature is dominated by a discourse focused on two primary areas, national security and to a lesser extent intelligence in the law enforcement and policing domain (Johnson, 2012; Jerry H Ratcliffe, 2009; Richards, 2010; Warner, 2002). However, in recent years acknowledgment of a broader intelligence domain has begun to emerge. Gill and Phythian (2006) argue that the range of actors involved in the intelligence domain has grown to include many beyond the state whilst failing to articulate exactly whom they refer to in terms of function and capability. More recently, Walsh (2011, p. 34) has drawn attention to what he sees as the ongoing evolution of intelligence practice and newly or more recently emerged domains of intelligence practice citing corrections and bio security as examples. Quarmby and Young (2010) refer to regulatory intelligence bringing into the intelligence domain, fisheries, taxation and social services and those public sector organisations with regulatory and compliance functions. For more than 20 years now intelligence practice has been evolving and the contemporary intelligence domain has grown to consist of much more than the explicitly deemed intelligence community.

Defined intelligence communities are acknowledged in most countries and for the most part represent the national security intelligence apparatus of government ("Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2011," 2011; Omand, 2010). However the expanding intelligence domain means an expanding demand for intelligence analysts and intelligence officers. In response to this increasing demand universities have been establishing a range of intelligence specific programs at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. In the U.S. approximately 20 universities operate programs directly supporting the national intelligence community, 10 of those universities being Centres of Academic Excellence and funded by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) (Breckenridge, 2010; Campbell, 2011). In Australia there are a number of specific intelligence programs offered at undergraduate and postgraduate level. An example of such a program is the Edith Cowan University (ECU) Bachelor of Counterterrorism, Security and Intelligence which aims to specifically prepare students for careers in the broader security and intelligence domain. However, only a very small percentage of graduates from the program are likely to be competitive for positions in the deemed intelligence community. Mapping the Australian Intelligence Domain will assist course planners and graduates to identify potential intelligence career opportunities beyond those six named agencies constituting the AIC.

The objective of this study was to identify and describe the depth and breadth of intelligence embedded-ness in Australian agencies and organisations in order to map the Australian intelligence domain (AID) beyond the traditionally acknowledged Australian Intelligence Community.

Method

Data to support this research was gathered by interrogating the public organisational charts of government agencies, supplemented with data gathered from job advertisements collected at intervals between 2009 -2013. Agency organisation charts were accessed via the Australia Government portal at <http://australia.gov.au/directories/australian-government-directories/government-by-portfolio> between March 2013 and September 2013. Organisation charts were examined and where the term intelligence was identified with a functional role the agency or organisation was added to the domain map. Additional data was obtained by accessing the various government jobs portals such as, <https://www.apsjobs.gov.au/> and undertaking job searches utilising two terms "intelligence" and "analyst" job descriptions were reviewed and in those cases where the job was an intelligence function the recruiting agency or organisation was added to the domain map.

Analysis

Seventy three agencies and functions were initially sorted into ten thematic domains. The ten domains were; oversight, Australian intelligence community, defence, law enforcement, border control, anti-corruption, regulation and compliance federal, regulation and compliance state, other and education and research. The data was then stratified into a hierarchical model consisting of, national security, law enforcement and regulation and compliance accordant to the context of their listing.

A critical limitation to this study was the significant variability of the publically available agency organisation structures. The high level nature of many of these documents meant that in many cases no evidence of an intelligence capability could be discerned. Whilst advertisements for intelligence positions augmented the organisational structure data a complete map of the Australian Intelligence Domain is not yet possible. Furthermore the change of government and subsequent structural changes to federal departments has created some short term anomalies in the data.

FINDINGS: DESCRIBING THE AUSTRALIAN INTELLIGENCE DOMAIN

It is assessed that the Australian Intelligence Domain consists of between 75 and 100, possibly more, agencies and distinct functional areas distributed throughout the architecture of the federal and states government and in some cases local government. The intelligence focus of these agencies and functional areas ranges from; national security, law enforcement, anti-corruption, to regulation and compliance. In the context of the contemporary security environment there is a significant crossover and intersection of function and responsibility for security issues that spans all levels of government. The transnational bisects the national, international overlaps the domestic and the global intersects with local issues. Moreover there is significant variability in terms of capability, resourcing and personnel across the domain from the large, well-resourced and highly focused AIC community agencies to small cells of one or two individuals. Peripheral to the domain yet relevant is the oversight function of the AIC undertaken by the IGIS. Also on the periphery but relevant to the domain are the intelligence discipline areas located in Australian universities and institutions such as DSTO.

Thematic description of the domain

The rationale for ten thematic domains emerged as the data was being collected, however it should be acknowledged that it was also significantly influenced by the primary investigators *a priori* knowledge of and professional experience in the domain. Data used to inform the themes was derived from organisational data relating to functions and objectives of the organisation in which the intelligence capability was situated. This data was then considered within the context of the literature culminating in the ten thematic domains. A brief description of each thematic domain follows together with a table listing the agencies determined as being located in the described thematic domain.

Theme one the Australian Intelligence Community; this thematic domain is the most easily recognised and clearly bounded domain. Consisting of six agencies with a primary function collecting and producing intelligence on behalf of and for the Australian government and clearly defined in legislation ("Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2011," 2011).

Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS); Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO); Australian Signals Directorate (ASD); Australian Geospatial Intelligence Organisation (AGO); Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO); Office of National Assessments (ONA).

Table One: Theme Australian Intelligence Community

Theme two Defence; this thematic domain is also clearly bounded and consists of the three armed services, the Defence Department and the Defence Security Agency. Whilst the primary defence function is war fighting defence maintains and operates significant intelligence assets including functions, units and roles.

Army; Navy; Air Force; Department of Defence (DoD); Defence Security Agency (DSA).

Table Two: Theme defence

Theme three law enforcement; this thematic domain was more difficult to bound as there are a variety of agencies that might be described as having law enforcement functions. Having considered the agencies and functions identified in the data it was determined that this thematic domain would be limited to the eight federal and state police agencies and the ACC. Each of these agencies has the primary function of law enforcement and in order to provide that function each agency maintains a significant intelligence capability. This is also in keeping with the literature where law enforcement intelligence is more generally examined and written about with in a context of intelligence led policing or criminal intelligence (Carter, 2005; Jerry H. Ratcliffe, 2008; Jerry H Ratcliffe, 2009; Sheptycki, 2004)

Australian Crime Commission (ACC); Australian Federal Police (AFP); Qld Police (QPOL); NSW Police (NSWPOL); Vic Police (VICPOL); Tas Police (TASPOL); SA Police (SAPOL); WA Police (WAPOL); NT Police (NTPOL).

Table Three: Theme law enforcement

Theme four anti-corruption; anti-corruption commissions of various types have been established in a number of states over the last twenty years. These commissions for the most exist to investigate and eliminate corruption either in law enforcement agencies or more broadly across government. This thematic domain is somewhat difficult to bound, given that in some cases these agencies have also a remit to investigate and prosecute serious crime suggesting that they might have been a fit for thematic domain three. However given the unique statutory establishment of these bodies they were incorporated into a singular domain. Eleven agencies have been situated in this domain.

WA Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC); Qld Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC); Independent Commission Against Corruption NSW (ICAC); NSW Crime Commission (CC-NSW); Vic Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC); Police Integrity Commission NSW (PIC); Export Finance & Insurance Corporation (EFIC); Integrity Commission Tasmania (IC-Tas); Independent Commission Against Corruption SA (ICAC); Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI).

Table Four: Theme anti-corruption

Theme five border control; this thematic domain consists of the intelligence functions situated within three agencies primarily responsible for managing Australia's borders.

Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS); Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS); Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP).

Table Five: Theme border control

Theme six consists of the regulatory and compliance functions of government at the federal level. This domain consists of the intelligence functions embedded in a wide variety of agencies consisting of 15 federal agencies.

Australian Tax Office (ATO); Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA); Department of Human Services (DHS); Office of Climate Control (OCC); Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA); COMCARE; Department of Employment (DoE); Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC); Department of Social Services (DSS); Department of Agriculture (DoA); Australian National Charity Regulator (ACNC); Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC); Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority (APRA); Crimtrac; Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC); Office of Transport Security (OTS).

Table Six: Theme federal regulation and compliance

Theme seven consists of the regulatory and compliance functions of government at the state level. This domain consists of the intelligence functions embedded in a wide variety of agencies consisting of 20 state agencies.

Corrections Vic; Corrections NSW; Corrections Qld; Corrections Tas; Corrections SA; Corrections WA; Court Security WA, Office of the Sheriff NSW; Department of Transport Qld; Department of Sustainability & Environment Vic; Office of Racing Integrity Vic (ORI-Vic); Consumer Affairs Vic (CA-Vic); Fair Trading NSW (FT-NSW); Fisheries Vic; Fisheries WA; Department of Health WA; Department of Finance WA; Office of State Revenue Qld; Mineral Resources Branch NSW; NSW Food Authority.

Table Seven: Theme state regulation and compliance

Theme eight consists of the intelligence functions embedded in three federal agencies that do not sit logically with any thematic domain space. Those functions are located within DFAT, the DPS and the Bureau of Meteorology.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT); Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS); Bureau of Meteorology (BOM).

Table Eight: Theme miscellaneous

Theme nine education and research; this is a difficult domain to populate due to the fact that labelling of education and research relevant to intelligence may not be readily identifiable. At this point it populated with four universities and the DSTO.

Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO); Edith Cowan University (ECU); Charles Sturt University (CSU); Macquarie University; Murdoch University; Australian National University (ANU); Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT).

Table Nine: Theme education and research

The final and tenth them is that focused on oversight of the intelligence function and consists of a single agency, the IGIS.

Table Ten: Theme oversight

Hierarchical stratification

When considering intelligence from a hierarchically stratified perspective three stratum were identified. At the top of the hierarchy is the national security domain space. The intelligence literature for the last twenty years has primarily focused on the roles and functions of intelligence within the national security context. Nationally and internationally investment in intelligence is principally focused on the national security objective.

Law enforcement intelligence represents the second rung in the intelligence hierarchy. In recent years this has been demonstrated by the increasing body of literature focused on law enforcement and policing functions of intelligence. Terrorism and organised crime have helped to lift the profile of intelligence in the wider law enforcement domain, together with a deliberate move to reduce the gap between national security agencies and the law enforcement function of government.

At the base of the intelligence domain hierarchy is the compliance and regulatory domain space, this is still an emergent field only recently coming into the intelligence literature.

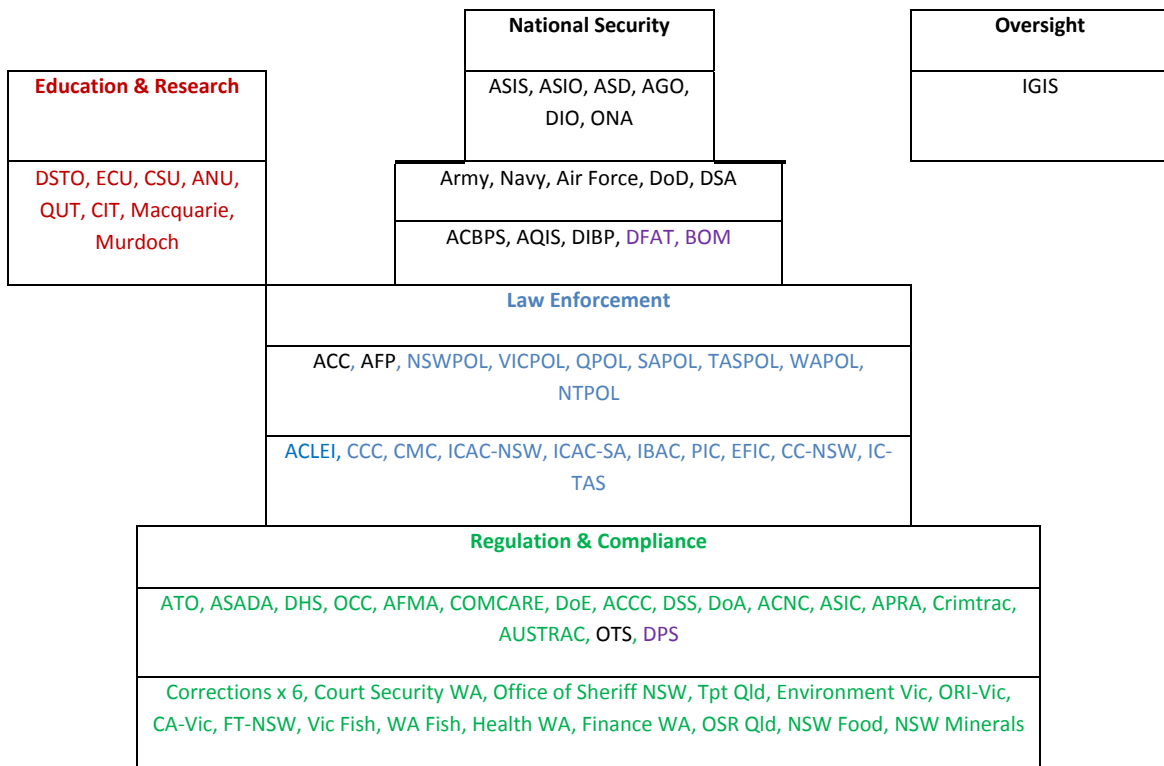


Table Eleven: Stratified intelligence hierarchy

It should be noted this hierarchal stratification of the Australian Intelligence Domain is, in the first instance, a convenient stratification and is yet to be tested against the views and perspectives of representatives of the domain space.

DISCUSSION

Identifying the intelligence functions and organisations operating in the national security and law enforcement domains spaces is relatively simple. This is due in part to the maturity of the function, and more often than not it being of sufficient criticality to be identified clearly in the organisational structure. Moreover intelligence practice in these domain spaces is well represented in the literature (Gill & Phythian, 2006; Marrin, 2011; Jerry H Ratcliffe, 2009; Treverton et al., 2006; Walsh, 2011) However, this is not always the case in the regulatory and compliance space. In the regulatory and compliance domain at both federal and state level there are agencies in which it might have been expected intelligence functions would be identified yet no evidence emerged. For example in the area of child protection it might be expected that an embedded intelligence function would be easily discovered however, this was not the case in any of the state agencies tasked with responsibility for child protection. In many of the organisations in this domain space the intelligence function consists of one or two staff often embedded in other functional areas, as such they do not get identified in publically available organisational structures. Further work is required to acquire the missing data that will enable a comprehensive domain map to be completed. Notwithstanding the incomplete nature of the domain map it does provide a baseline for examination of the domain.

IMPLICATIONS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The number of intelligence functions and capabilities identified as being embedded in such a broad cross-section of the federal and state levels of government suggests a need to rethink what constitutes the Australian Intelligence Domain. It is clear within the Australian context that whilst national security and law enforcement represent the apex of an Australian hierarchy of intelligence there is intense growth at the base in the domain of compliance and regulation. This growth at the base presents challenges and opportunities to a nascent intelligence profession. How to educate and develop a critical mass of intelligence analysts to populate these emerging capabilities and functions? Also, how might a community be established in order to maximise opportunities for collaboration and cooperation across the full breadth and depth of this domain?

Analyst development & education

In a report commissioned by the Assistant Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Education and Training on the future of intelligence analysis, Lahneman (2006) identified a crucial need for the development, education and professionalization of the analytical workforce of the USA. That report, recommend the utilisation of a national intelligence university system to, ensure that all analysts and managers meet key education and development goals throughout their career. The USA has long recognised the need for and role of universities in developing intelligence capacity particularly in the national security domain space (Breckenridge, 2010; Campbell, 2011; Marrin, 2009). However, in the Australian context there is no evidence in the literature of a strong professional development link between the university sector and the national intelligence domain. This may be reflective of a historically small intelligence domain in Australia. It may also be reflective of the fact that AIC and defence have always maintained comprehensive in house professional development and training programs. Law enforcement maintains a limited in house professional development program for intelligence analysts also. However, professional development in the regulatory and compliance domain appears to be far more limited, if existent at all. This would appear to suggest an opportunity for universities both in terms of development of postgraduate professional education and developing career opportunities for undergraduates seeking to enter the intelligence domain space. Anecdotal evidence suggests that currently the regulatory and compliance sector depends on attracting trained personnel from law enforcement and defence.

Communities, collaboration and cooperation

An increased awareness of the breadth and depth of Australian intelligence capabilities by exposing intelligence producers and consumers to a fully mapped intelligence domain may enable better exploitation of Australian intelligence capacity. Thematic and hierarchical depictions of an intelligence domain are inherently deceptive suggesting clear lines of demarcation in terms of responsibility or focus however this is unlikely to be the case in today's networked global environment. The Australian government in its 2013 guide to national security document (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2013, p. 10) clearly identified a range of functions classified as national security and a range of agencies with aligning responsibilities and functions. In the intelligence functions this included in addition to the AIC and defence capabilities the ACC, AFP, ACBPS, DAFF, Department of Infrastructure and Transport, Department of Health and Ageing, Immigration, DFAT and PM&C. Whilst it may be argued that the primary intelligence function of some of these agencies is not national security focused the government has recognised the potential contribution to national security. It is likely that a similar argument could be made in relation to grouping those intelligence capabilities across the domain that might contribute to targeting organised crime. Effective intelligence sharing can only occur if and when agencies are aware of just who is looking at what and why. A detailed map of the Australian Intelligence Domain offers that opportunity.

CONCLUSION

The Australian Intelligence Domain consists of a large and diverse set of agencies and functional areas situated within government departments federal and state. Whilst national security and law enforcement continues to be the primary focus of the domain, intelligence support to the regulatory and compliance functions of government have grown and are continuing to grow, to now represent a significant component of the domain. This continued growth of the domain will see an increased demand for graduates educated with more than the required graduate attributes of communication, teamwork, critical appraisal skills, ideas generation and cross cultural awareness. Whilst the AIC, defence and to a lesser degree law enforcement have the capacity to recruit a generalist graduates and develop them in house the compliance and regulatory environment lacks that capacity. Universities and the tertiary sector have an opportunity to step up and provide appropriately educated graduates whom can step into an analyst role in the compliance and regulatory environment to function effectively from day one.

Mapping the Australian Intelligence Domain will contribute to understanding of intelligence in an Australian context. It will contribute to better collaboration and cooperation across the breadth and depth of Australian intelligence. Moreover it will contribute to better informed debate and scholarly research into and of the Australian Intelligence Domain.

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