

Admin, LACO

From: Tim Prenzler
Sent: Sunday, 8 April 2018 1:26 PM
To: Standing Committee, Community Development & Justice
Subject: Inquiry into the protection of crowded places in Western Australia from terrorist acts

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to make the following submission to the Inquiry in relation to point 5 of the terms of reference: 'security licensing, registration, and assurance processes in Western Australia'.

There appears to be very little information publicly available at an inter-jurisdictional level about security industry licensing, quality and assurance in Australia and internationally.

The most recent information that I can find for Australia is from two ASQA reports:

ASQA. (2017). A Review of issues related to unduly short training. Melbourne: Australian Skills Quality Authority.

ASQA. (2016). Training in security programs in Australia. Melbourne: Australian Skills Quality Authority.

These reports were critical of a lack of specified training hours in all regulatory systems in Australia, including Western Australia. As with most other systems, the Western Australian training programs were also reported to have inadequate staffing, teaching facilities, and assessment processes and standards.

The only other national review of security industry regulatory systems that I am aware of, since the COAG security industry training reform agreement of 2008, was published by myself and a colleague seven years ago:

Sarre, R., Prenzler, T., & de Caires (2011). Private security and public interest: Exploring private security trends and directions for reform in the new era of plural policing. Sydney: Australian Security Industry Association Limited.

This study described the 'the Western Australian industry [as], arguably, the most tightly regulated security industry currently in Australia' (p. 36). This was based primarily on the coverage of security occupations by licensing; and the advanced level of some reported probity checks, including finger printing, drug testing, firearms inspections, and inspections by dedicated compliance officers.

However, the Sarre et al. (2011) study was unable to obtain key impact data on regulatory systems, including for Western Australia.

On the 20th March this year I engaged in an internet search of Austlii (the legislation database), and the Western Australia Police website and 2017 annual report, to attempt to obtain answers to key questions related to quality assurance in security industry regulation in Western Australia. The findings may have been limited by my search methods. It is possible that this information is available elsewhere on the public record. The information that I thought should be available, but which I could not find, is listed as follows:

1. Prescribed training hours, training methods, assessment procedures, and assessment integrity procedures for practitioner licences.
2. Quality assurance processes for training courses.
3. Training requirements for agent licences.
4. Details on methods of compliance monitoring.
5. Data regarding compliance over the long-term, such as complaints and outcomes, licence applications and denials, licence revocations, prosecutions, intelligence, practitioner and client surveys, and media reports.
6. How criminal history checks are conducted: primarily how often checks are conducted, whether or not they are national, and checks on persons who have been outside the country in preceding years.

7. How complaints are investigated and adjudicated.

8. Stakeholder input into the regulatory process, such as through an Advisory Board.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Regards

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