

Submission to the Australian Government Consultation on Horizon 2 of the 2023-2030 Cyber Security Strategy

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1. Introduction

The Cyber Leadership Institute (CLI) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to Horizon 2 of the Australian Cyber Security Strategy.

CLI is a global leadership platform, founded in Australia and now serving cyber, risk, and technology leaders across more than 80 countries. Our flagship Cyber Leadership Program has already equipped thousands of professionals to influence boards, executives, and governments by translating cyber risk into business value.

Our work focuses not only on technical resilience but on developing leaders who can influence, inspire, and embed cyber accountability at every level of an organisation.

We believe that the Government's ambition to make Australia the most cyber secure nation by 2028 will only be realised if Horizon 2 prioritises the human, cultural, and leadership dimensions of cyber security alongside the technical.

2. General Observations

Technology is necessary but insufficient

Global data consistently shows that cyber incidents often succeed not because of a lack of tools but because of basic cultural and behavioural failures: weak accountability at leadership levels, poorly communicated risk, and fragmented responsibility. Horizon 2 should focus on strengthening leadership capacity as much as investing in systems and infrastructure.

Leadership and culture are force multipliers

Australia's cyber security workforce will never be large enough to rely on technical specialists alone. Every senior leader, from CEOs to business unit heads, must understand and own cyber risk in their decision-making. Embedding cyber into corporate culture delivers compounding benefits that no single technical investment can replicate.

CLI programs are already proven and scalable

Over the past decade, CLI has delivered structured leadership programs across every region of the world. The challenges are universal: how to communicate risk to non-technical leaders, how to secure board support, how to design strategies that show value. Our experience proves that the same frameworks, when delivered in an accessible and digital-first format, are effective across cultures, industries, and geographies. Australia does not need bespoke training built from scratch; it should leverage proven global approaches and adapt them minimally where necessary.

3. Priority Areas for Horizon 2

3.1 Workforce Development and Leadership Capacity

- **Proposal:** Accelerate leadership development for emerging CISOs, technology leaders, and mid-career professionals.
- **Rationale:** Australia's cyber workforce shortage is well-documented, but the leadership shortage is even more acute. Many organisations may have capable technical managers but lack cyber leaders who can influence boards, design business-aligned strategies, and drive transformation.
- **CLI Contribution:** CLI already runs globally recognised programs that address this gap, with no need for redesign. These programs are scalable, digital, and proven across more than 80 countries. Government should focus on enabling broader access rather than commissioning new bespoke content.

3.2 Culture and Human Risk

- **Proposal:** Treat human risk as a national priority within Horizon 2, with measurable objectives around cultural maturity.
- **Rationale:** Most breaches stem from preventable errors, lapses in judgment, or misaligned incentives. If leadership culture does not prioritise accountability, technical controls will always lag.
- **CLI Contribution:** CLI specialises in cultural transformation and senior stakeholder influencing. Our work demonstrates how organisations can shift from "cyber is IT's problem" to "cyber is everyone's responsibility." Embedding this mindset at scale will accelerate Horizon 2 goals.

3.3 Supporting SMEs and Mid-Tier Organisations

- **Proposal:** Provide accessible pathways for SMEs and mid-tier organisations to achieve meaningful cyber maturity.
- **Rationale:** These organisations often form part of critical supply chains yet lack the resources to build mature internal cyber functions. They need leadership capacity, not just tools.
- **CLI Contribution:** CLI's scalable online programs are already designed for global reach and affordability. They can immediately uplift leadership capability across SMEs without tailoring or reinvention. This is more efficient than developing new bespoke programs for Australian SMEs.

3.4 Metrics and Accountability

- **Proposal:** Horizon 2 should include leadership-focused metrics that track cultural maturity, executive engagement, and board-level ownership.
- **Rationale:** Measuring technical control coverage alone does not reflect true resilience. Boards need to see metrics that link cyber to risk reduction, operational resilience, and customer trust.
- **CLI Contribution:** CLI's STRIKE framework provides practical models for demonstrating cyber's business value. This approach is already in use across multiple regions and industries, and could be readily adopted within the Australian context.

4. Opportunities for Co-Design

CLI can contribute immediately to co-design efforts by:

- Sharing case studies from global industries that successfully embedded cyber into culture and leadership.
- Providing a tested, digital-first model for scaling leadership training across geographies and sectors.
- Partnering with Government to pilot the integration of leadership-focused metrics into national frameworks.

Importantly, we emphasise that effective solutions do not need to be reinvented.

Programs that already succeed in more than 80 countries can be deployed here with minimal adaptation, ensuring Horizon 2 achieves results quickly, cost-effectively, and at scale.

5. Conclusion

The Cyber Leadership Institute strongly supports Horizon 2's ambition. Achieving it requires more than technology investment. It requires leadership capacity, cultural maturity, and a national mindset that cyber is a core business risk, not a technical problem.

CLI stands ready to support the Government with proven, globally recognised programs that can be rapidly deployed in Australia. Our contribution lies in bridging policy ambition with practical, scalable solutions that are already delivering measurable impact worldwide.

Submitted by: [REDACTED], Cyber Leadership Institute

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