

Major General Paul Symon AO (Retired)

Former Chief Spy Master & Keynote Speaker

A key defender of Australia from unseen enemies. Paul Symon, AO was the Director-General Australian Secret Intelligence Service 2017- 2022.

Paul was educated in Melbourne at Scotch College. In 1979 he attended the Royal Military College Duntroon, graduating in 1982 as senior cadet and Sword of Honour winner.

A 35-year military career followed his graduation Duntroon, culminating in the rank of Major General.

Paul commenced his officer role in Royal Australian Artillery and progressed through the officer ranks with appropriate leadership roles. He was identified by the Army as an excellent leader, a well-considered thinker and excellent communicator.

His final appointments in Defence were as Deputy Chief of the Army and Director of the Defence Intelligence Organisation.

As a Brigadier, in 2006 Paul was appointed Australian Commander Middle East. This gave him national command responsibility for all personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Prior to that, in 2003, he was senior military adviser for the Regional Assistance Mission in the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). Paul was also appointed Australia's senior military officer in East Timor in the months preceding the ballot for East Timor's independence in 1999. His team found themselves negotiating with senior militia and Falantil, as well as the Indonesian military, during a period of high tension and duress. Prior to that, he served with the United Nations in Southern Lebanon and on the Golan Heights.

Paul was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (AM) for his service in East Timor. He subsequently became a recipient of the Officer of the Order of Australia (AO).

Paul holds two Master's degrees. One from the University of New South Wales and one from Deakin University.



In mid-2015, Paul left the military and joined the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He was subsequently appointed as Director-General of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) from 18th December 2017, a position he held until his retirement in 2022.

ASIS is Australia's foreign intelligence collection agency. It collects and distributes secret foreign intelligence, information which would be otherwise unavailable to Australia, to protect Australia and its interests. ASIS obtains its intelligence from foreign sources, outside Australia's borders. To do this, ASIS relies on "human intelligence" - information that comes directly from people.

Paul's background in both leadership roles and in Australia's Secret Intelligence Service makes him uniquely qualified to pass commentary on Australia's social, economic, and political standing. He is perfectly qualified to identify current and potential threats to our way of life. Most importantly Paul knows what we must do to protect ourselves politically and economically when there are so many threats from outsiders through numerous avenues of assault.

Paul Symon is an excellent orator and he enjoys it! Paul is happy to take briefs and tailor his presentations to ensure key corporate messages are highlighted.

Paul lives in Canberra and is married to Kate. He has two adult children.

Paul Symon Speaks About

- The law and Australia's intelligence community
- China, the US, and Taiwan
- Australia's national security - challenges and opportunities
- Movies and geopolitics - pulls in the latest Chinese blockbuster ('Born to Fly' and 'Lincoln' plus James Bond and John Le Carre)
- Leadership

[VIEW SPEAKER'S BIO ONLINE](#) 