



Opening statement to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee

2023-24 Additional Estimates – 12 February 2024

Director-General, Chris Moraitis PSM

Thank you chair.

As the OSI enters its fourth year since establishment, we remain committed as ever to our mandate of investigating allegations of war crimes as expeditiously as possible, in what is a complex and challenging operating and legal environment.

Our joint investigation with the Australian Federal Police – known as Operation Emerald – is currently progressing approximately 28 matters. When I last appeared before the Committee in May 2023, we were progressing about 40 matters. I expect that number will continue to reduce this year as our investigations progress and we identify which matters can be substantiated to the high criminal threshold required for the referral of a brief of evidence to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP). We are also supporting the CDPP in progressing the first war crimes prosecution.

As always, we are conscious of the potential impact on the welfare of those affected by our investigations and we understand the importance of this work to Australia's national interest and international reputation.

As stated previously, the sensitive focus of our remit places limits on the amount of information I can speak about publicly, particularly noting we currently have a matter before the courts. I will provide as much detail as possible in order to provide a transparent and appropriate indication of our progress, but I must protect the integrity of our investigations. There is still much to be done— 2024 will be a critical year for the agency.

Thank you.