

Word count 703

- Good evening Chair and committee members.
- First, I want to acknowledge the senseless tragedy in **Queensland** in late 2022.
- The AFP also acknowledges the motion of condolence by the Parliament and the wreaths laid by the Prime Minister and Attorney-General at the National Policing Memorial.
- We are one police family, and the AFP stands shoulder-to-shoulder with our brothers and sisters in blue at Queensland Police.

- The past year has highlighted how the AFP's **unique international network** significantly contributes to **Australia's first line of defence**.
- While the AFP works closely with state police and other law enforcement agencies, it is important I explain how we are different.
- The AFP is **responsible** for investigating serious Commonwealth offences, such as illicit drug importations, which **undermine our national security, economy and social security systems**.

- The profits from illicit drug importations **are among the tens of millions of dollars** being laundered into our financial systems every day, **further increasing the wealth of organised crime.**
- **This is a reason why the AFP targets criminals importing illicit drugs into Australia.**
- Law-abiding Australians are earning an honest day's living, paying their taxes and being good community citizens.
- **Organised criminals are living large and have no issue with the cost of living.**
- Just this month, we revealed **Operation AVARUS-MIDAS**, which seized more than \$150 million in Sydney property, cash and luxury items. Nine alleged offenders have been charged in Australia.
- **Money is the lifeblood of organised criminals - they cannot exist without it.**
- We know that when law enforcement targets the illegal wealth of organised criminals, some move offshore.
- **But theirs is a false sense of security.**

- One of our points of difference from state police is our international network where we have postings in 33 countries.
- These postings, with our international partners, enable the AFP to pursue offshore criminals who target Australia.
- In our region, the AFP has observed an increase in illicit drugs, such as cocaine and methamphetamine, being sent by Mexican and South American cartels through the Pacific, hoping to capitalise on profits from Australia's drug consumption.
- **I am also concerned about the expansion of outlaw motorcycle groups in the Pacific.**
- The AFP has almost 100 members in Timor-Leste, Nauru, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.
- With our Pacific partners, we are targeting criminals through the **Pacific Transnational Serious Organised Crime Taskforce** and the **Pacific Transnational Crime Network**.
- **We take seriously our responsibility to stop criminals using the Pacific as a maritime drug highway to Australia.**

- **We are also working closely with nations where criminals wrongly believe they can act with impunity.**
- An example of this, is the strong working relationship between the AFP and Turkish authorities, as we target a cohort of Australian citizens who operate their criminality offshore.
- We are thankful for our trusted partnership and our thoughts are with the people of Turkiye and Syria as they continue to confront the devastation caused by last week's deadly earthquake.
- **Finally, I want to outline some recent operations that show how the AFP is at the frontier of fighting crime.**

These include:

- Charging a Canadian national – an alleged head of a global drug trafficking syndicate - for conspiring to traffic drugs into Victoria. He was extradited from Netherlands in December 2022.
- Charging a Chinese-British dual national - allegedly a senior associate for a global drug trafficking syndicate - for conspiring to traffic drugs into Australia. He was extradited from Thailand in June 2022.
- The charging of a Sydney man who allegedly fled Australia while on trial for his alleged role in importing a precursor that could produce more than two million MDMA tablets.

- The charging of a man with six terrorism offences by the AFP Victorian Joint Counter Terrorism Team.
- Charging a high-profile Australian for allegedly importing more than 160kg of cocaine into Victoria in August 2022.
- And we arrested **22 alleged criminals**, wanted in Australia and offshore, after the AFP's highly-skilled Fugitive Apprehension Strike Team tracked them down.
- These are promising results but we are far from done.
- I want to thank all of our members across Australia and offshore as we continue to protect Australians, Australian interests and our way of life.
- Thank you and we are now happy to take questions.