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**SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES
22 MARCH 2021
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OPENING STATEMENT**

- Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to offer some brief opening remarks.
- ASIO's role is to protect Australia and Australians from threats to their security. This includes threats of terrorism, espionage and foreign interference.
- ASIO is taking a forward leaning proactive role in discussing these threats publicly because we strongly believe awareness is the first line of defence.
- In that spirit, last Wednesday, I presented my second annual threat assessment. The assessment outlined the threats we face.
- Australia's security environment remains complex, challenging and changing.
- In terms of threat to life, the terrorism threat level remains at **PROBABLE**.
- In terms of threats to our way of life, espionage and foreign interference remains at an unacceptably high level.
- Agility and ingenuity are at the core of ASIO's operations.
- We need to out-imagine and out-manoeuvre sophisticated foreign adversaries that are effectively unconstrained by law, ethics and resources.

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- We need to know what security aware and tech-savvy extremists are plotting.
- Given the evolving nature of the threats we face, ASIO continues to review our capabilities, powers and resources to ensure they are fit for purpose and proportionate to the challenges we face.
- This is particularly important as we emerge from the COVID crisis. Hostile foreign governments are seeking intelligence about our medical and economic recovery. We have already seen key export, technology and research industries being targeted.
- ASIO stands ready to detect and disrupt these threats, so security will underpin recovery.
- As I said last week, spies and terrorists should know this: we are looking for you.
- And for the rest of the Australian community: we are looking out for you. ASIO is your security service.
- Thank you, Chair. I welcome your questions.