

AFP forced to mobilise against 'specific threats' to politicians over weekend, commissioner says

By political reporter [Matthew Doran](#)

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Australia's top cop has revealed his officers spent the weekend investigating threats made against politicians, as concerns about violence directed towards parliamentarians intensify.

Several federal politicians have voiced fears for their safety in recent weeks, particularly since the murder of British Conservative MP Sir David Amess and the increase in violent rhetoric at pandemic protests across Australia.

Last week a gallows was taken to a rally at Victoria's state parliament, with the crowd chanting slogans about hanging Premier Daniel Andrews.

Australian Federal Police Commissioner Reece Kershaw said a review of politicians' safety was underway.

"We've seen what's happened in the UK and the US, so we take it very seriously, the security of MPs," Commissioner Kershaw said.

"Even on the weekend, we had to mobilise a number of resources based on specific threats against different members of parliament.

"So we know that the environment has changed rapidly due to a number of factors and, as I said, we will be making sure we do as much as we can to keep our parliamentarians safe."

Commissioner Kershaw did not comment on whether those who had received threats over the weekend were federal, state or territory politicians.

He said the AFP worked with local police forces, as well as domestic spy agency ASIO and other intelligence agencies, to assess the severity of threats and plan protection for politicians.

"At the same time, our MPs have to be able to carry out their job and do what they've been elected to do, so we're very mindful of that as well," he told reporters in Canberra.

Threats against MPs not new

Police protection for politicians is not a new phenomenon in Australia.

Key points:

- Police are investigating threats made against politicians following a violent protest in Melbourne
- The AFP commissioner said police had responded to specific threats made to MPs over the weekend
- Police are also reviewing their safety measures for members of parliament

Aside from the Prime Minister, a number of senior ministers have had security details for many years, including Treasurer Josh Frydenberg.

Victorian crossbench MP Andy Meddick had reported threats to his safety during the debate over the state government's pandemic powers, and his daughter alleged she was attacked on a Melbourne street while spray painting over an anti-vaccination poster.

"Clearly the events that have taken place at protests are absolutely unacceptable," Home Affairs Minister Karen Andrews said.

"Violence is not something that any Australian thinks is OK, quite frankly.

"So even if you have a difference of opinion with someone, there is no way that you should act out any violence against that individual."

[Mr Andrews and the federal opposition have accused the Prime Minister of "doublespeak"](#) for condemning the violent rhetoric while also noting he understood the frustration of protesters.

Threats have been made against the lives of WA Premier Mark McGowan and his family in recent months.

He said his electorate office had also been targeted by people opposed to vaccinations.

"There's been death threats, there's been threats to rape my staff, there's been people trying to bomb my office, someone tried to turn up with an armoured car with a machine gun on the top," Mr McGowan said last week.