

Good evening committee members.

In October 2022, Medibank Private was targeted by cyber criminals who illegally obtained and released 9.7 million records containing the personal information of Australians.

The AFP and the Australian Signals Directorate immediately began an investigation to identify the criminals responsible.

Soon after that attack, I released a statement outlining that the AFP believed that those responsible for the Medibank Private cyber breach were in Russia.

Under Operation Aquila, a standing joint operation between the AFP and ASD, investigators, technical officers and intelligence officers worked tirelessly with Medibank Private to collect evidence and construct a picture of the criminal activity that impacted Medibank Private's computer systems.

This enabled the AFP and ASD to evaluate and interpret intelligence, which led to the identification of an alleged offender.

Then, in close consultation with Australian Government partners, the AFP prepared a Statement of Case and evidence, which detailed who the offender was, and the alleged crimes he committed.

Last month, the Federal Government announced financial sanctions and a travel ban on a Russian citizen for his alleged role in the breach.

The US Treasury Department also announced last month that Washington and Britain imposed sanctions on the individual because of the risk he posed.

Treasury's Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Brian Nelson, said the first such coordinated trilateral action with Australia and the United Kingdom, underscored our collective resolve to hold these criminals to account.

The AFP's groundwork, with Commonwealth and international agencies, underpins DFAT's application for the first Australian cyber sanction to be granted.

The AFP thanks DFAT, for their assistance in delivering this milestone, both in the investigation and as the first Australian cyber sanction.

The AFP continues to investigate the cyber attack to identify others responsible, however, we believe a cyber sanction will disrupt the ongoing alleged criminal activity by one of the individuals responsible.

We know that public attribution can destroy the credibility and reputation of cyber criminals. It creates distrust and disrupts their ability to operate effectively in the cybercriminal world. In essence, they are seen by other criminals as too risky to deal with.

Making Australia a hostile environment for criminals is an AFP priority. We often look to criminally charge and put offenders before the court, however, frustrating, disrupting and being unpredictable to criminals has a proven deterrence effect.

In fact, we know some criminals have stopped targeting Australia because the cost of doing business here is not worth the risk. In part, it is because of the AFP's unique capabilities, experience and the Commonwealth laws we have been granted.

Criminals are also witnessing how effective our reach is offshore.

Some of the AFP's international posts have been operating for more than 40 years.

These partnerships protect Australians and Australia's way of life, and also assist state and territory police in their investigations.

An example of how we help state and territory police is the assistance provided to Queensland Police Service in relation to the alleged murder of a young woman on a North Queensland beach in October 2018.

The AFP's Fugitive Apprehension Strike Team, which specialises in finding alleged fugitives throughout the world, worked with QPS to locate a man in India wanted for the young woman's alleged murder.

AFP and AUSTRAC intelligence determined the individual was likely in India's Punjab region. The AFP has been posted in New Delhi since 25 February 2010.

After the announcement of a \$1 million reward, QPS and AFP members based in New Delhi, worked together to extract further intelligence.

Our Fugitive Apprehension Strike Team also provided personnel to a major incident room set up in Queensland.

A Joint AFP and New Delhi Police operation led to the man's arrest in India in November 2022. The man is now before the courts in Australia.

We also regularly provide our unique capabilities to state and territory police.

In November last year, the AFP provided its technology detector dogs to assist our hard-working colleagues at Victoria Police while executing a search warrant relating to individuals who had ingested death cap mushrooms.

Technology Detector Dog Georgia found one USB, a micro secure digital card and a sim card.

Technology Detector Dog Alma found a mobile phone, five iPads, a trail camera, and secure digital card and a smart watch. These were not found during initial searches undertaken by officers.

Also, in March last year, AFP Technology Detector Dog Esther supported the joint AFP/South Australia Police Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team in a victim identity investigation.

Esther singled out three books on a full bookshelf before honing in on one - *The Da Vinci Code*. A cut-out hide consistent with the shape and size of a USB stick was discovered between the book's pages.

Although the device had been removed days or, at most, weeks earlier, officers considered it unlikely they would have located the book without Esther's help.

Our technology detection dogs are exceptional. Dogs conducting detection work sniff between five to 10 times a second, inhaling with one nostril and exhaling through the other. Their smell processing capacity is 40 times stronger than humans, and studies have shown they can find a scent as faint as one part per million.

Our dogs are used throughout the country to assist in a range of operations, including during foreign interference investigations.

Finally, I would like to share how the AFP continues to innovate, including developing investigative techniques with our Pacific neighbours.

The AFP's Timor-Leste Police Development Program supports the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste to deliver policing services that contribute to a stable and secure Timor-Leste.

A recent outcome undertaken by our forensic advisors has been the delivery of affordable alternatives to expensive commercial chemicals.

The entire forensics' budget for some Pacific Island countries is about \$US2000 a year.

So the AFP, with advice from Curtin University, and working with our colleagues in Timor-Leste, developed sustainable and cheaper ways to lift finger prints for law enforcement purposes.

For example, by using local knowledge and local products, we have been able to substitute expensive chemicals with things like charcoal from local timber and betel nut, the seed of a fruit from a local palm, to create fingerprint powder that is just as effective as comparable commercial products.

The innovation is so successful that other Pacific Island countries are considering using the cheaper and sustainable alternatives.

This is just another example of how the AFP's successful innovation culture continues to help law enforcement agencies across the globe, and another reason why the AFP is able to contribute not to just the safety of all Australians, but also contribute to maintaining the rules based international order.

Thank you and I am happy to take questions.