

## **AFP Commissioner Opening Statement**

### **March/April 2022 Budget Estimates**

- Good morning chair and Senators.
- The Budget handed down in March provides some much-needed investment in the AFP to help keep Australians safe and protect our way of life.
- Transnational serious organised crime threatens our national security, our economy and the lives of our loved ones.
  - Make no mistake: we have an enduring battle with Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, Mexican cartels, Italian organised crime and those who target Australia from offshore.
- The number of convicted terrorist offenders who pose a threat to the community on release from prison, continues to grow.
  - The tools and resources required by the AFP to protect the community from devastating harm needs to grow with it.

### **TSOC and funding**

- We will receive **\$142.2m over four years** to enhance the AFP's specialist operational, intelligence, collection and criminal asset confiscation capabilities.
- This investment in our capabilities will enable us to leverage legislation – such as the SLAID Act – to combat the organised crime threat both here and abroad.
- The government's investment sends a clear message that Australia is not a safe haven for unlawful activity.

### **New National Policing Museum**

- I am personally very excited that work will shortly commence on the first National Policing Museum, to be established here in Canberra, funded solely through confiscated proceeds of criminal activity.

The \$4.4million will allow us to work with our state and territory partners to showcase Australia's policing history at the local, national, and international level. It will commemorate the service of our officers, and promote an

understanding of the work we do, support our collective crime prevention efforts, and build community trust and confidence in police.

### **JPC3 (launched with previous cyber funding)**

- Last week, the Minister for Home Affairs and I officially opened the AFP-led Joint Policing Cybercrime Coordination Centre: the JPC3. This new hub, housed within our Sydney headquarters, will enable state and territory law enforcement, Commonwealth agencies and the private sector to coordinate Australian policing responses to high-volume cybercrime.
  - The JPC3 will significantly bolster the AFP's capability and capacity to respond to cybercrime threats as part of the \$89 million provided under Australian's Cyber Security Strategy 2020, and help us to work ***even more closely than before*** with the Australian Cyber Security Centre.

### **HRTTO funding and CT**

- Since the early 2000s, the AFP has investigated, prevented and disrupted terrorism in an ever-evolving threat environment.
  - We have seen complex coordinated attack planning shift towards lower-tech threats that are more quickly executed but just as devastating.
  - We've seen growth and change in motivations and groups and we have adapted our joint agency approach accordingly.
  - I am grateful for the continual review by successive Parliaments of our legislative framework, to ensure that as the environment evolves and police adapt to changes, our powers do as well.
- We are now firmly in a new phase: Not only are we actively investigating a range of religiously and ideologically motivated threats, we are also dealing with the increasing cohort of terrorists convicted over the past two decades who are now eligible for release from prison.
- We are watching world events with interest:
  - Recent attacks in New Zealand and the UK were carried out by convicted terrorists who were recently released from prison.

- In Australia since 2019, **14** convicted terrorists have already finished serving their sentence. And a further **54** terrorists are due for release in the next two decades.
  - **18** of those will be in the **next four years**.
  - There are still **30** individuals before the courts, and more still who are subject to our active investigations.
- We are steadfast in our commitment to keeping Australians safe.
- The AFP will continue to work with partners to deliver the **High Risk Terrorist Offender framework** - with **just over \$25 million** funding provided for the AFP at MYEFO - including implementation of the new Extended Supervision Order scheme.
- The Budget has provided an additional **\$19.8 million** funding to consult with States and Territories to establish a new **National Convicted Terrorist Offender Register**, which requires new legislation and will be administered by the AFP.

#### **Post-COVID risks: human trafficking**

- Terrorism is a borderless crime but so is human trafficking, which is likely to increase as borders re-open.
- We are particularly concerned the pandemic increased **human trafficking and modern slavery** risks for individuals in vulnerable circumstances, including financial hardship, family violence, and those who fell out of touch with their communities during school and workplace closures.
- For the first time in Victoria, the AFP laid a charge last month for an **exit trafficking offence**.
  - The alleged conduct, which occurred in 2014, involved a man who deceived a woman into travelling to Sudan so he could cancel her visa so she could not return to Australia.
  - If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of 12 years' imprisonment.

- Our partnerships with industry and non-government organisations are critical, and together we are committed to enhancing awareness of warning signs and risk factors, to shine a light on this criminality.

### **Election Issues**

- As you may recall, our last appearance before this Committee focused on ongoing effort to ensure the **safety and security of parliamentarians**, and the **integrity of the federal election itself**, in this very unique year.
- We take these tasks incredibly seriously:
  - We are working with state and territory policing partners, and across the Commonwealth to ensure appropriate security arrangements are in place.
  - In the past fortnight we have charged further individuals who allegedly harassed and threatened a parliamentarian online, with more under active investigation.
- And yesterday afternoon, we announced the AFP will set up a major incident coordination centre with a specialised investigative taskforce to help ensure the security of high-office holders and parliamentarians during the 2022 Federal election.
  - The Taskforce sends a strong message to the community that the AFP is dedicated to protecting democracy, protecting high-office holders and will not hesitate to identify and arrest those who break the law.
  - Our Taskforce will work hand in glove with the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce, led by the Australian Electoral Commission. We are also embedded within that Taskforce, to ensure seamless information sharing and timely action.

### **Closing**

- Finally, I would like to acknowledge and pay my respects to the Committee and Parliament for the tragic loss of Senator Kimberley Kitching on 10 March.
- I now welcome your questions.