

Good evening Senators, it is good to be before you again to explain the critical work of the Australian Federal Police.

Our operating environment continues to be shaped by converging geopolitical, economic, social, environmental, legal and technological changes.

However, the AFP as always, is up to the challenge, and by leveraging our in-house technological innovation, our international partnerships, legislation and skilled workforce, we continue to protect Australians and Australia's national interests.

In 2022–23, the AFP disrupted serious criminal activity on 221 occasions across 40 countries, including at home.

We have restrained more than **\$352 million in assets**, and **charged 141 people** as a result of child exploitation investigations.

We have also seized **30 tonnes** of illicit drugs and precursors.

But we don't just seize illicit drugs and destroy them – we also identify and charge the alleged kingpins of serious organised crime.

These arrests and charges are significant in our mission to dismantle organised crime and curtail the dangerous and violent consequences of illicit drug trafficking.

In the past few years alone, the AFP has charged a number of high-profile or significant national or international targets.

Some of these targets have been on the radar of the AFP for many years.

The AFP never gives up - and when it does lay charges, many carry serious penalties, including life imprisonment.

I will give you **four** significant examples.

In December last year, the AFP arrested and charged an alleged head of a global drug trafficking syndicate and extradited him to Melbourne from the Netherlands.

The AFP charged the Canadian national, aged 59, after his extradition from the Netherlands.

His extradition was the culmination of a long-running AFP investigation into a transnational organised crime syndicate called **Sam Gor or The Company**.

The matter now remains before court.

A few months before in June 2022, a Chinese-British dual national was charged by the AFP on a charge of conspiracy to traffic commercial quantities of controlled drugs.

We allege the man aged, 68, **is a co-accused of the alleged head of a global drug trafficking syndicate charged in December 2022.**

The man, extradited from Thailand, has appeared in Melbourne Magistrates' Court. His matter remains before the court.

Both of these alleged offenders had been targets of the AFP since 2017.

In August 2022, the AFP charged **a high-profile alleged offender**, after he was deported by Turkish authorities.

Operation Ironside allegedly linked the man, aged 39, to a transnational criminal syndicate operating out of Asia and Europe.

He is facing two charges for allegedly importing cocaine worth about **\$40 million**.

The matter remains before court.

Also, just this month, the AFP dismantled a significant organised crime syndicate and charged five people for their alleged roles over importing 100kg of cocaine transported in the cargo hold of a passenger aircraft that arrived into Sydney from South Africa. These arrests included a wide-range of alleged syndicate members such as the suspected facilitator, coordinator and trusted insiders.

As well as combating transnational serious organised crime, cyber crime and child exploitation, the operating environment for the AFP remains challenging, including with recent world events.

As we know, the world has never been more connected. Human reactions to events overseas can often have a ripple effect in Australia, and that can affect our social cohesion.

Which is why, in relation to the Hamas-Israel conflict, I have established Operation Larimar to coordinate AFP efforts. Operation Larimar has a number of focuses:

- To protect the Australian community and our interests from the threat of terrorist activity and politically-motivated violence, including against AFP members;
- To maintain the safety, security, and dignity of Australian High Office Holders, Federal Parliamentarians, internationally-protected persons and protection interests, including diplomatic missions;
- With our partners, engaging with impacted communities and community leaders around Australia to identify security concerns and assess public sentiment;
- To monitor and understand international developments and translate them into domestic assessments and impacts to inform appropriate planning and response; and,
- To mitigate any threat, risk, or crime identified as a direct or indirect result of the conflict.
- Operation Larimar will ensure any threats are identified, triaged and responded to, with allegations of crimes allocated for investigation.
- The Incident Coordination Centre that handled Operation Rugosa, which was set up to manage the AFP's response to the Voice to Parliament Referendum, is now running Operation Larimar.

As the AFP continues to operate at pace and with precision, it is imperative we continually provide pathways and opportunities for our current members and recruits - the recruits who one day may be sitting here in this place, answering the questions of your successors.

The AFP College in Barton has been the AFP's principal training facility since the organisation's formation in 1979.

Over the past five years, almost 1300 members have graduated from the College, ready to protect the Australian community, full well knowing that the job they do, may put their own life at risk.

The AFP is a small police force, with just 4308 sworn officers, supported by 3587 specialist members. Our footprint may be small but the work we do is integral to keeping Australians safe. And to be frank, the AFP undertakes operations unique to our capability, skills and experience.

Despite the danger, the complexity of crime, and the demands of the job, the AFP continues to inspire a new generation who aspire to wear our uniform.

Some of our recruits truly represent multi-cultural Australia, including migrants or children of migrants. This is close to my heart. We must connect, represent and look like those who we protect because that's how we can better build a bridge to community.

Police forces connected to their communities receive better intelligence and information, and can better reach in with education messages that help protect the community from cybercrime, child exploitation, foreign interference and more. It's symbiotic – we exist to protect each other, because the police are the community and the community are the police.

I want to congratulate every recent AFP graduate and encourage others to join us

I also want to thank all AFP members who come to work every day to protect the community,

We cannot always tell the community how we have kept them safe. But we can tell them that we are dedicated to keeping them safe, because we are.

Thank you committee members, and I look forward to answering questions, particularly on how the AFP has undertaken significant operations and actions to protect Australians and Australia's interests.