



Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit  
Protecting Australia's Missions and Staff Overseas: Follow on  
07 February 2018

Opening Statement by the Auditor-General

1. Good morning Chair and Committee Members.
2. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today.
3. Australia's diplomatic posts and staff overseas are exposed to a range of security threats.
4. The ANAO previously reviewed the protection of missions and staff overseas in ANAO Audit Report No.28 2004–05 *Protecting Australian Missions and Staff Overseas*, which was tabled in Parliament in February 2005. This audit recommended that DFAT improve security guidance and training, security risk management, the implementation and effectiveness of security measures in mitigating risk and the monitoring of security at overseas posts.
5. The objective of the ANAO's *Protecting Australia's Missions and Staff Overseas: Follow on* audit was to examine the effectiveness of measures taken to strengthen the protection of Australia's posts and staff overseas.
6. Since 2012, DFAT has commissioned several reviews of its arrangements for protecting staff and posts overseas and is currently implementing recommendations from the 2015 internal review.
7. The audit identified that DFAT has arrangements in place to provide security to overseas missions and staff. Aspects of the delivery of overseas security, in particular the strategic planning, management of security measures and elements of the framework supporting staff training, have not been fully effective.
8. The audit made seven recommendations. They were aimed at improving DFAT's strategic planning and management of overseas security reforms currently underway, introducing arrangements to record all security measures at posts, along with undertaking an assessment of residual risk for posts, and improving the recording of security training information to provide assurance that staff receive appropriate security training. The recommendations were also aimed at improving the process of selecting and deploying security measures to overseas posts, enhancing the coordination of overseas security inspections, and strengthening the management of deployed security measures, as well as improving the management of security breaches.

9. As noted in the report, in accordance with section 37 of the *Auditor-General Act 1997*, I have determined to omit particular information from the public report. The reason for this is that I have formed an opinion that disclosure of such information would be contrary to the public interest as it would prejudice the security, defence or international relations of the Commonwealth. In accordance with sub-section 37(5) of the Act, a report including the omitted information was prepared and a copy provided to the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The consequence of this is that I am unable to make comment on information that has been excluded from the public report under section 37 of the Act, and may only speak about the content of the public report.
10. We would be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.