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Incoming Minister Brief



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13 May 2025

The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for Home Affairs
Australian Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Congratulations on your re-appointment as the Minister for Home Affairs, with responsibility for law enforcement. I look forward to working with you during the term of the 48th Parliament. The AFP will work with the Department of Home Affairs to implement machinery of government changes to move the AFP to the Home Affairs Portfolio. The AFP will work with you to determine any additional areas of focus you wish to be captured in the Ministerial Direction.

As Australia's national policing agency, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) plays an integral role in ensuring the safety and security of Australians and Australia's national interests. My focus for the agency is protecting lives, livelihoods and Commonwealth interests by remaining agile, innovative and accountable in an evolving and increasingly complex operating environment.

The AFP has a core function to investigate crimes against the Commonwealth of Australia, as established in the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979 (Cth)* along with fulfilling a community policing role in the Australian Capital Territory.

The next three years will continue to see the AFP's threat and operating environment evolving at an unprecedented scale, in terms of both volume and complexity. Geopolitical instability and shifting international government partnerships are being exploited by threat actors to deteriorate social cohesion and amplify political or issues motivated violence. The AFP's leadership role in stabilising and uplifting policing capability in Pacific nations, particularly in the fight against transnational serious and organised crime, is now more critical than ever. The Pacific operates as a pipeline for illicit drugs entering Australia, and strengthening our regional security architecture will likely deter criminal entities to entrench themselves in the region and increase the flow of illicit goods through the Pacific to Australia.

s 33(a)(iii)

s 33(a)(iii) Maritime people smuggling ventures destined for Australia are highly likely to increase. The online environment and unpredictability of new technological advancements and artificial intelligence, enables, amplifies and conceals various forms of criminal activity whilst also increasingly being used for malicious infiltration and data theft. Young people are more susceptible than ever to sexual exploitation through self-generated child abuse material, peer to peer generated material as well as sadistic online exploitation.

Furthermore, the AFP is continuing to witness an increase in youth terrorist offenders being radicalised online through exposure to terrorist and violent extremist content on social media and online gaming platforms. Money laundering is manipulating legitimate business, distorting the Australian economy and artificially increasing property values and multi-tonne drug imports are

increasing in frequency. Australia's criminal and security environments have increasingly overlapped and blurred. Instances of 'Crime as a Service' (CaaS) - the outsourcing of criminal acts to other criminal groups - have demonstrated the willingness and ease at which offshore transnational serious and organised crime (TSOC) actors can undertake acts that directly impact Australia's domestic national security through fostering uncertainty and undermining social cohesion.

Coupled with the complexity of the threat environment, is the continuously increasing volume and speed of illegal activity across the criminal spectrum including: TSOC, espionage and foreign interference, terrorism and violent extremism, people smuggling, cybercrime, child exploitation and human trafficking. These trends and challenges also impact the AFP's core responsibilities in ACT Policing and Specialist Protective Services. The ACT has experienced one of Australia's fastest population growths and as a result, the demand for ACT Policing services is increasing and diversifying. This has contributed to a significant increase in critical and time-sensitive calls requiring urgent police attendance such as those pertaining to mental health and family and domestic violence. The prevalence of youth related crime in the ACT is an ongoing issue that ACT Policing responds to, particularly considering the public expectations for police response to such incidents and the recent changes to the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility. Likewise, in recent years, there has been an increase in issue-motivated threats directed towards parliamentarians, with a number of international high office holders also subject to violence or threats.

The AFP's detection and disruption of crime is continuously guided through innovative approaches and partnerships with domestic and international policing and law enforcement agencies. In 2024, the Prime Minister requested an independent AFP Strategic Funding Review with an objective of reviewing previous AFP financial management practices and resource prioritisation. The independent review was led by Mr Stephen Merchant PSM and found that the maturity and effectiveness of the AFP's Operational Prioritisation Model is very high, particularly compared to that of other Australian policing agencies. The greatest sources of risk to the AFP's future financial outcomes is the complicated way the AFP receives funding (including multiple and short-term funding sources for long term priorities), and AFP's current financial settings not being able to keep pace with the growing complexity of the criminal and national security environment.

The AFP is committed to continuing implementation of the recommendations from the Merchant Strategic Funding Review, following direction from Prime Minister Albanese in January 2024 regarding the AFP's operating budget. The AFP will also continue its internal focus on financial and cash management practices, strategic prioritisation, examining the future funding model and improving the sustainability of AFP's financial investments.

Recently, the AFP has responded to the following government priorities, some of which could not have reasonably been anticipated, or at least the demands fully understood. The most notable being:

- AUKUS, with its requirement for the planning and implementation of an entirely new function for the AFP, including a substantial uplift in the AFP's protective security capability and investigative resources given the additional criminal activity which may arise relating to foreign interference and TSOC,
- Amplified social divisions leading to the increase in anti-Semitic behaviour and the establishment of Special Operation AVALITE,

- unanticipated demand for monitoring individuals previously held in immigration detention that were released following the High Court's landmark ruling in November 2023, and

s 33(a)(iii)

To support operational delivery in the current environment, the AFP must continue to rely on its wide range of partnerships. Domestically, the AFP will continue engagement with Commonwealth government partners to ensure new criminal and law enforcement policies and legislation are informed by intelligence, case studies and evidence. Provision of information on current and emerging threats and crime types will enable Commonwealth government partners to anticipate requirements and prepare for future challenges. This will ensure policies and legislation reflect gaps or requirements where the AFP and other law enforcement agencies can be most impactful in disrupting criminal and national security threats. Additionally, the AFP will continue to cooperate and build on relationships with our state and territory policing colleagues in joint taskforces and operations to share capability and information to produce the best outcome for the Australian community.

With the increasing borderless nature of most crime types, the AFP, as Australia's lead international policing agency, must continue to evolve and utilise new and existing international partnerships to serve our strategic priorities. The AFP's presence across our neighbouring Pacific region, is key to preventing harm from reaching Australia, and disrupting and investigating activities that threaten Australia's interests.

Additionally, the AFP must continue to be reflective of the community we serve through fostering enduring trust of those we protect. Maintaining operational independence is key to maintaining the ongoing legitimacy of the AFP and supports our effectiveness in addressing criminal threats. Our people, capabilities and partners are all critical to achieving our goals across the range of our diverse responsibilities. We will continue to attract passionate and capable people to a career in policing and strive to be the employer of choice across law enforcement. We will continue to advance our capabilities through innovation and the safe, responsible and ethical exploration of new and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI).

In the initial weeks of the 48th Parliament I would like the opportunity to brief you on:

- AFP's core responsibilities and the proposed sustainable funding model as per recommendations from the Strategic Funding Review,
- AFP's efforts in responding to threats to democracy
- Evolving nature of TSOC including cross-crime convergence,
- AFP's response to increasing threats to social cohesion and community violence, including anti-Semitism,
- AFP's role in the online criminal threat environment,
- AFP's capabilities and proposed enhancements to Australia's federal law enforcement footprint,
- AFP's efforts and opportunities in the Pacific, and
- AFP's role and requirements in protection of Australia's Parliamentarians and High Office Holders.

s 47E(d)

The AFP has identified a number of events and AFP sites where we would be delighted to host you for over the coming months:

Events

1. The UN Peacekeeping Pacific Police Training Closing Ceremony, 10 June 2025 – Pinkenba Hub, Brisbane.

The closing ceremony of the UN Peacekeeping Pacific police training with up to 100 Pacific Police participants to prepare for future UN peacekeeping missions. It is expected that UN Under-Secretary General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix will attend.

2. Pacific Policing Tattoo, 22 July 2025 – Papua New Guinea (PNG).

This event will bring together Police Bands and Chiefs from across the Pacific to showcase their talent and capabilities. The Tattoo is one of various events planned to acknowledge and celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Independence in PNG.

3. Pacific Police Minister's Meeting, 12-13 August 2025 – Apia, Samoa.

A regular meeting of Pacific Ministers responsible for police. Attendance is in Australia's interest, serving defensive and offensive objectives and strengthening regionalism.

AFP sites

- A visit and tour of the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (Brisbane)
- A visit and tour of the AFP's Pinkenba Training Centre (Brisbane)
- A visit and tour of the Joint Policing Cybercrime Coordination Centre (Sydney)
- An AFP capability demonstration (Canberra – Majura site)

As the AFP's Minister, you have responsibility for a number of approval and reporting requirements for our agency, as outlined in the relevant legislation. These requirements are further detailed in the *Reporting Environment* section of this product and cover operational approvals and corporate reporting documents.

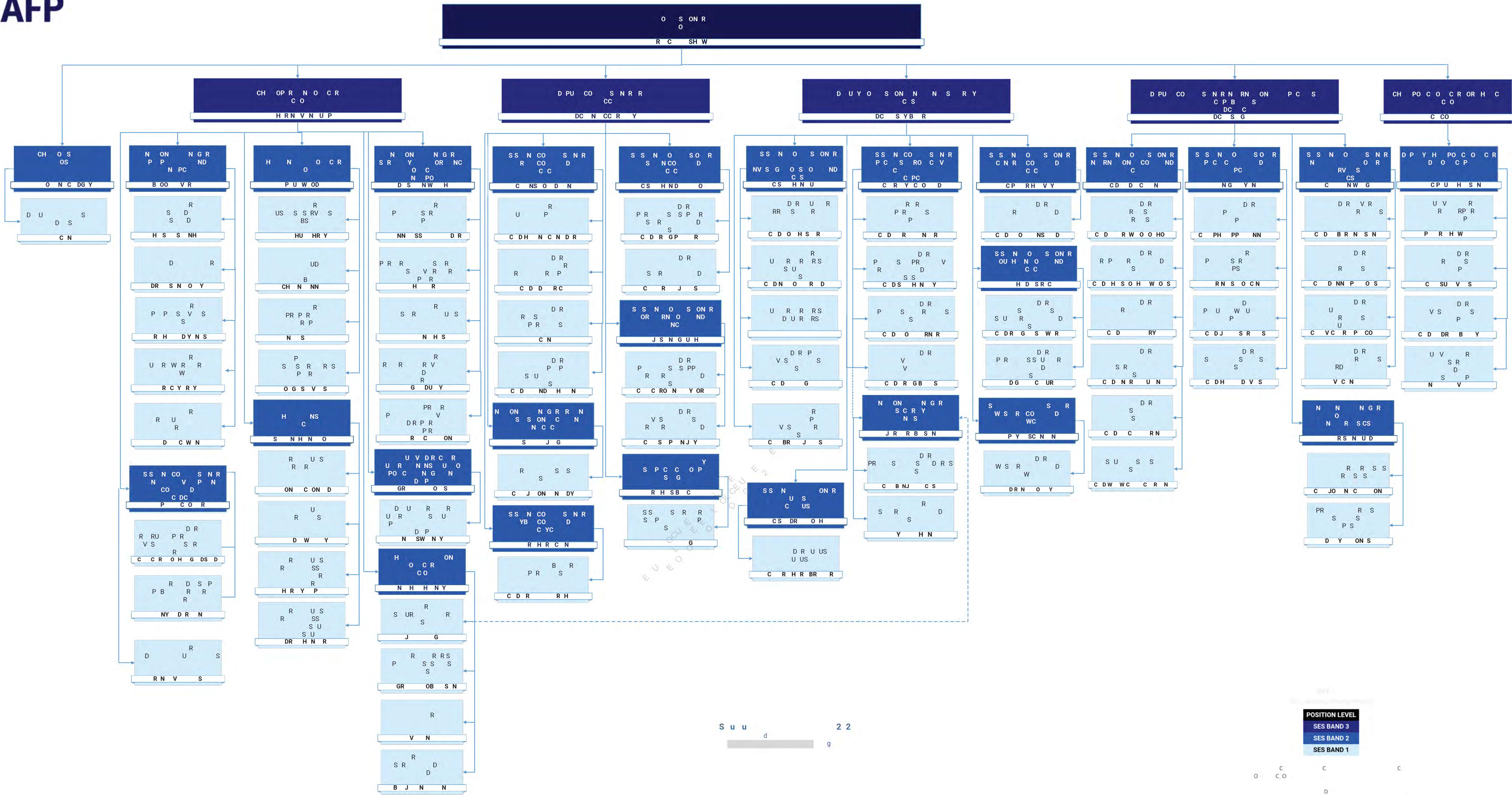
The AFP would welcome the opportunity to engage all Parliamentarians in the 48th Parliament on the functions of the AFP and will continue to work closely with our key partners in Government across ministerial portfolios of responsibility in support of national security and law enforcement priorities. This includes briefings on operational matters directly to the Minister's Office in accordance with relevant governance and engage with the Portfolio Department on policy matters as necessary.

I look forward to meeting with you in the near future to discuss key strategic issues in more detail.

Yours sincerely,



Reece P Kershaw APM
Commissioner



Operating Environment

The AFP continuously monitors and assesses our operating environment to ensure we can deliver on our mission. The geopolitical, social, economic and technological changes in our environment can affect the AFP directly and indirectly and also shape the criminal environment as explored in the [AFP Federal Crime Threat Picture](#). Despite these changes, the AFP strives to evolve with our operating environment to ensure we continue to protect Australians and Australia's interests.

The AFP's strategic and operating environment is becoming more volatile and uncertain. Criminal and national security threats increasingly seek to target, influence, coerce or manipulate the Australian Government and its institutions in order to benefit criminal, political, economic or commercial interests. Foreign actors are aggressively conducting foreign interference within Australia and countries in our region. We are actively working to uplift our security posture to ensure the AFP's people, information and infrastructure are protected from threat actors.

Each year, the AFP produces a (classified) **Intelligence Forecast** that provides an assessment on the likely state of the future threat environment. The Forecast (attached) and other regularly produced intelligence reports provide assessments to support decision making at all levels of the AFP and ensure delivery of maximum impact to the criminal environment. The AFP Intelligence Forecast aligns with the expectations in the Ministerial Direction by maintaining a deep understanding of the threat environment, ensuring the AFP is well-prepared to respond to criminal threats wherever they may occur, and providing advice and support for whole-of-government decision-making. This includes contributing operational perspectives on national security matters to ensure an effective response to emerging threats to the Australian community.

Global instability, geopolitical contests, and technological advancements have increased the complexity of the threat environment. Intelligence indicates that criminal activities are converging across regions, moving beyond traditional siloed threats. Multiple criminal activities that overlap in AFP's remit are expected to complicate the threat environment in 2025. The online environment is identified as a significant driver of these threats, hosting multiple criminal activities and enabling activities for most, if not all, crime types. For our investigations to have maximum impact on crime prevention and disruption in the current environment requires technological advancements, cross-functional collaboration in intelligence sharing and deconfliction, intelligence-informed strategies and a digitally-skilled and equipped operational workforce.

The AFP will continue to build on existing and new partnerships with state and territory police; academia; industry; and Commonwealth, state and territory governments with a focus on capability investment and delivery. In particular, building a bridge to the community we serve, and fostering the enduring trust of those we protect, underpins the ongoing legitimacy of the AFP and supports our effectiveness in addressing criminal threats. Internationally, the AFP's global presence, particularly across our neighbouring Pacific region, is key to preventing harm from reaching Australia, and disrupting and investigating activities that threaten Australia's interests.

The AFP will brief you or your Office on sensitive or otherwise significant investigations. In particular, the AFP will provide timely briefings where there is anticipated media attention, political, cross-portfolio or international implications. Operational briefings are typically provided 'for information only'. The timing and level of detail in operational information will vary from case to case, as the AFP balances operational sensitivities against accountability and public interest. Sensitive investigations are subject to rigorous internal governance, via a National Guideline on

Sensitive Investigations and oversight by the AFP Sensitive Investigations Oversight Board, chaired by a Deputy Commissioner.

Domestic environment

The AFP acknowledge there has been an increase in concerning conduct and behaviours that may marginalise individuals and groups in Australia. The targeting and threatening of a person or group of people distinguished by race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, nationality, or political opinion are causing fractures to Australia's social cohesion which is of significant concern to the AFP. To maintain public trust and legitimacy the AFP must remain impartial and maintain operational independence to prioritise investigation of crimes which are most detrimental to both the community and Commonwealth interests.

The AFP's remit has significantly expanded over time, mirroring the growth in Commonwealth government powers and responsibilities. Whilst the AFP is responsible for policing Commonwealth offences, it should be noted state and territory law enforcement is often more effectively placed, in their community policing roles to be first responders and utilise Commonwealth legislation in protecting their communities.

International environment

Climate change, geopolitics, and strategic competition place ongoing pressure on the stability of Australia's region. This pressure comes in the form of political instability, supply chain disruptions, and an increase in the number of displaced people. Criminal threat actors will take advantage of vulnerable institutions and individuals and quickly adapt to maximise their financial gain. Hostile foreign powers and their proxies continue to exploit opportunities in this environment to degrade, disrupt and dismantle society and democratic institutions, seeking to obtain sensitive information relating to Australia's national security frameworks and international relationships. This operating environment is expected to become increasingly complex over the coming years as a result of these instabilities.

Building law enforcement capacity and capability with our partners, especially across the Asia Pacific region builds a more secure and stable region. It increases our ability to investigate complex crime, combat corruption and respond to emergencies. A coordinated approach to foreign police assistance will support Australia's security and border management. The AFP will continue to take a multifaceted approach to fight crime at its source, including relying on our partnerships to prevent, detect, disrupt, investigate, and prosecute criminal actors seeking to do Australians harm.

The AFP maintains strong international law enforcement partnerships at bilateral and multilateral levels. This positions the AFP as the primary contact point for international law enforcement seeking assistance and collaboration on a broad range of matters of relevance to Australia or Australians, both domestically and overseas. As of 31 March 2025, the AFP has **184 personnel located in 34 countries around the world** s 47E(c)

s 47E(c)
driving collaborative partnerships and cooperation to detect and disrupt criminal activity and strengthen the rule of law.

In addition to our Posts, the AFP is involved in a number of key international forums, and in some instances embedded within these (* indicates):

- Five Eyes Law Enforcement Group
- ASEANAPOL
- EUROPOL*
- INTERPOL*
- Pacific Islands Chief of Police (PICP) Secretariat*
- Global Policing Innovation Exchange
- International Criminal Court*
- United Nations*



While the AFP has strong, long-standing partnerships with our like-minded Five-Eyes partners, changes in their domestic operating environments will necessitate further investment in partnerships with non-traditional partners to address emerging issues. The AFP has already taken steps in this regard through the creation of additional international posts, such as Paris, as well as the development of new or expanded partnerships, such as the s 33(a)(iii)

s 33(a)(iii)

The AFP however must remain cautious when engaging with partners where approaches to the rule of law differ to the Australian Government approach – for example, in regard to the death penalty. The AFP has stringent governance for engaging with foreign law enforcement on death penalty matters and in some instances, ministerial approval is required to do so.

Pacific

The AFP's strong and enduring bonds with Pacific police are built on mutual respect, genuine engagement and partnership. We are a trusted policing partner in the Pacific due to our longstanding investments in sharing intelligence, building capability, and undertaking joint operations. The AFP is privileged to partner with Pacific police, working side by side, to keep our communities safe, promote regional security, and strengthen the rule of law.

The AFP achieves this through engagement with Pacific police partners through regional and bilateral policing partnerships and through our international network to combat transnational crime.

In the 2023-24 budget, the AFP received \$317.4 million over 4 years for the AFP Pacific Policing Partnership Program (AP4) to deepen our longstanding policing partnerships and support Pacific law enforcement efforts.

The Pacific Policing Initiative (PPI) is a Pacific-led and designed initiative to enhance regional and national policing capabilities and to enable Pacific countries to support each other in times of need. Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders endorsed the PPI in August 2024, with the Prime Minister announcing Australia committing approximately \$417 million over 5 years to ensure the PPI delivers on the aspirations of Pacific Leaders. Pacific Police Chiefs endorsed the PPI Design Overview at the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP) annual conference in September 2024.

The PPI design is centred on 3 pillars:

- Regional Centres of Excellence (RCoE): Purpose built facilities in the Pacific for specialist police capabilities and training. The RCoEs will be available for use by all Pacific police services.
 - Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu have been confirmed as hosts of the RCoEs.
- Pacific Police Support Group (PPSG): A multinational deployable force, made up of approximately 25 Pacific police officers from participating Pacific police services and up to 25 AFP officers. Over time, we envisage this growing to up to 200 Pacific police officers.
- Pacific Police Development and Coordination Hub (Pinkenba Hub): To support the RCoEs, the PPSG and enhance Pacific donor coordination, the Brisbane based Hub will provide organisational support to all aspects of PPI, staffed by Pacific police and the AFP. The Hub will provide a location for secondees to undertake training and development of police administrative and corporate skills. In doing this, the Hub will essentially be akin to an additional "Centre of Excellence" and support training and development of leadership, management and police administration capabilities.

The design of the PPI respects the sovereignty of each Pacific Island Country to determine its own participation based on their priorities and preferences. It reflects the Pacific way of policing and enhances regional and national policing capabilities, to enable Pacific Island countries to support each other in times of need. Australia's own security is also enhanced when we respond to Pacific priorities and maintain fundamental principles of sovereignty and the rule of law across the region.

The Pacific region has its own unique operating environment, opportunities and challenges. The AFP is committed to elevating these in international forums and discussions to ensure a greater understanding of this within the global environment and ensure a tailored, fit-for-purpose approach to the region.

In September 2024, following discussions at the annual Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP) Conference, the 2024 PICP Communique noted for the PPI to “enhance Pacific police’s contributions to global peace and security efforts, including UN Peacekeeping Missions”. In response to this, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations has extended an opportunity for the AFP to fund and host a five-week rapid UN certification program. Between 12 May and 13 June 2025, the AFP will host and fund UN pre-deployment training at the Pinkenba Hub in Brisbane for 100 Pacific and AFP members. This opportunity represents a significant step forward in our shared goal of building meaningful and sustainable pathways for Pacific police participation in UN peace operations. This opportunity also cuts across and drives our Pacific roadmap delivering many outcomes for the AFP and broader WoAG Pacific strategy.

Legislative Reform

The AFP interacts with over fifty different Commonwealth Acts and subordinate legislation, many of which contain outdated concepts and references which require review and maintenance. Recent court judgments and legal advices have also revealed areas that require urgent amendment to address legal risk. The AFP is working with the Attorney-General’s Department and Department of Home Affairs on a number of reform proposals to address these risks.

Workforce Mobility

The AFP’s success is dependent on having the right people, with the right skills, in the right place and at the right time. To support this, the AFP is seeking to improve mobility between the AFP and broader Commonwealth agencies. The introduction of a voluntary movement provision into the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979* (Cth) to apply the principles of section 26 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth) would enable AFP employees (unsworn and sworn) to transfer from the AFP to another APS agency, and APS employees to transfer to the AFP (unsworn roles only).

Electronic Surveillance Reforms

s 47E(d)

s 42(1)

¹ *Surveillance Legislation (Confirmation of Application) Act 2024*.

s 42(1)

s 47E(d)

s 47E(d)

Modernisation of core police powers

Core AFP powers require modernisation to reflect changes in the operating environment and to promote efficiency. For example, clarifying that applications for warrants can be made electronically (such as through a court portal) instead of in-person would expedite criminal investigations and create efficiencies for the AFP. Permitting AFP Members to execute search warrants as a Notice to Produce power would provide a more flexible method for obtaining documents from third-party entities (financial institutions for example) who are not under investigation or closely connected to the offending. Currently, the main avenue for obtaining this information is a search warrant, which required investigators to physically attend premises and 'search' for material. but who hold evidence required to make out a criminal case. In reality, the time and location is agreed by the third-party entity in advance and employees of the entity conduct the searches for AFP. A Notice to Produce power would be consistent with powers already available to other regulatory agencies and reflects entities' preferences for engaging with law enforcement during investigations

TSOC reforms

s 37(2)(b), s 47C(1)

s 37(2)(b)

Espionage and foreign interference

In 2018, espionage and foreign interference (EFI) offences were strengthened, paving the way for closer cooperation between the AFP and Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), and increasing opportunities to consider criminal justice outcomes alongside intelligence treatments. The AFP's experience since then has identified areas where legislation could be improved. Delayed Notification Search Warrants (DNSWs) are currently only available for the investigation of limited counter terrorism offences, however the nature of EFI investigations and the training, experience and knowledge of persons of interest limit the efficacy of traditional collection methods meaning permitting DNSWs would be of significant benefit. Ensuring offences involving a foreign intelligence agency apply extraterritorially would improve prosecutorial prospects. Finally, foreign interference offences require that conduct is engaged in, on behalf of, or in collaboration with, a foreign principal. There are limited methods to collect this evidence, and ambiguity in how to establish someone was acting on behalf of a foreign principle. The upcoming independent review of the espionage and foreign interference offences by the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor will explore these challenges and opportunities.

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Operational Priorities

Protection of life

Protecting Australian lives is one of the highest priorities for the AFP and ensuring Australian lives are safe is a key driver for what we do, and how we prioritise our efforts.

Terrorism and Violent Extremism

- No single ideology or group defines the terrorism threat landscape in Australia – mixed and/or unclear ideologies are increasingly prominent in Joint Counter Terrorism Team (JCTT) caseloads.
- Religiously Motivated Violent Extremism (RMVE) remains the predominant threat, but Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism (IMVE) continues to increase.
- The terrorism environment continues to evolve and diversify in concerning ways. Blurring of ideologies, online expulsions of hate and the sophisticated exploitation of sociological issues by organised crime (as seen in Operation Kissinger (Dural caravan incident)) will continue to erode community cohesion and put finite policing resources under increased political pressure.
- In recognition of the changing nature of terrorism offending and diversity of threat, an independent review into Australia's definition of terrorism is intended for 2025. Outcomes of the review may have significant impacts on the AFP and the resourcing requirements for law enforcement to respond.

The threat of terrorism and violent extremism is dynamic and constantly evolving. There are enduring and known threats alongside emerging threats, reflecting the complex and changing social, political and security environment. A rapid increase in investigations involving a mixed/unclear ideology, the online environment, and young offenders has complicated the threat environment and creates challenges for law enforcement response and prosecution. In response, the AFP is developing a Youth Strategy to coordinate and direct initiatives relating to youth that are vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation. The Strategy is intended to focus on developing a national "roadmap" of the varied State and Territory countering violent extremism programs and their practical application to radicalised youth scenarios investigated by the AFP. The AFP is in the process of consulting with key partners.

More Australians are embracing a diverse range of extreme ideologies and a willingness to use violence to advance their cause. We are witnessing an increase in anti-government and anti-authority violent extremism, antisemitism and Islamophobia, and the use of emerging technologies to enable, produce, disseminate and amplify messages of hate and violence at an unprecedented scale and pace. Actors across the ideological spectrum can mobilise to violence with little warning, as reflected in ASIO increasing the national terrorism threat level to PROBABLE in August 2024.

Extremist groups are deliberately targeting young, vulnerable individuals for recruitment and radicalisation, particularly online. The AFP prioritises early intervention and disruption strategies for young people ahead of prosecution where there is no threat to the community and it is legally available and appropriate considering the level of criminality already observed. Countering youth violent extremism requires a whole of society approach that encompasses law enforcement, government departments, private sector, industry partners and local communities. A whole of government approach in expanding national online capabilities collectively with partners to support early identification, intervention and disruption of radicalised youths is encouraged by the AFP.

The divisive nature of global conflicts has fostered an environment of collusion between non-state and state threat actors. It has enabled the establishment of alliances of convenience, with criminals and state actors facilitating logistical and know-how support to terrorist organisations. It has assisted state actors to spread their political and economic influence into permissive, non-conflict and vulnerable locations in Africa, Europe and Southeast Asia.

The principles of partnership, cooperation and collaboration have underpinned Australia's approach to countering terrorism and violent extremism. Our approach is mature, with strong coordination between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, international partners, communities and industry.

The changes in Australia's security environment highlight the continued need for a flexible whole-of-nation response to support and strengthen our communities and their capacity to respond to violent extremism risks and threats, as well as our law enforcement, intelligence and security agencies to identify, investigate and respond to terrorism incidents at home and abroad. Only through collective and sustained efforts, and the inclusion of diverse, relevant and positive voices from every part of the Australian community (families, community groups, faith leaders, non-government organisations, business, academia and industry), can we ensure Australia remains a safe place for everyone.

Special Operation Avalite

On 9 December 2024, the Prime Minister, the AFP Commissioner, and the ASIO Director General, announced the establishment of Special Operation AVALITE to respond to reports of antisemitic threats and violence towards the Australian Jewish community and parliamentarians.

Special Operation AVALITE is a joint agency operation with the AFP and ASIO. The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) and Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) are also providing support. This operation is targeting high harm antisemites who threaten, direct, advocate or urge antisemitic violence towards members of the Australian Jewish community and federal parliamentarians and complements existing state and territory law enforcement by leveraging Commonwealth legislation and resources, where appropriate but with a focus on identifying national and international links and individuals behind the offences.

As at 14 April 2025, the AFP has charged 6 individuals with offences relating to antisemitic threats against politicians and a senior member of the Australian Jewish community, and the public display of a prohibited symbol. The teams continue to investigate a number of serious matters, which includes 12 investigations into offences of displaying a prohibited terrorist organisation symbol in a public place, contrary to section 80.2HA of the Criminal Code at protest activity in Melbourne in September 2024.

Special Operation AVALITE is heavily focused on engagement with community groups and leaders to identify security concerns and better assess public sentiment. Building and maintaining trusted relationships, while critical to the success of the Special Operation, also supports whole of government social cohesion efforts within the Australian community.

While Special Operation AVALITE is focused on anti-semitism, the AFP does and will continue to respond, disrupt, and where possible, prosecute individuals who commit a Commonwealth offence, irrespective of background, race or religion. The AFP works diligently to ensure all Australians and the Australian community are protected from harm.

Protection of Parliamentarians

- There has been a significant increase in demand for AFP protective security capabilities, including the protection of high office holders and an expanded protection remit at international ports and sensitive Defence establishments.
- Reports of harassment, nuisance and offensive communications against Australian high office holders, federal Parliamentarians and federal electorate offices have grown by 362% over the past four financial years
- The AFP Strategic Funding Review identified that current funding is not adequate or sufficiently flexible to scale and respond to emergent threats in the current and future protection environment.

The protection of Australian High Office Holders, Parliamentarians and Commonwealth Establishments is a key role of the AFP in safeguarding Australians and Australia's democracy. Protection arrangements for parliamentarians is a whole-of-government responsibility, comprising of a multi layered security approach and delivered by several agencies including the AFP, Home Affairs, the Department of Finance and the Department of Parliamentary Services.

The AFP is responsible for the safety of Australian High Office Holders, Internationally Protected Persons and all 227 federal Parliamentarians. All federal Parliamentarians are subject to protective security oversight by the AFP. The AFP provides full-time protection to the Prime Minister, Governor-General and selected Ministers. Protective security services are provided to other Ministers or Members of Parliament/Senators based on identified risk.

The AFP's delivery of protective security services is complemented by its role in guarding key institutions, such as Australian Parliament House, Commonwealth institutions, Defence sites and foreign diplomatic missions and residences across Australia.

Internationally, there have been increased threats and violence against Parliamentarians and democratic institutions from issue-motivated individuals and groups. Global issues will likely continue to influence the Australian protest environment. Whilst the threat environment in Australia remains stable, a rise in antigovernment sentiment has seen a rise in protest activity, especially around Parliament House. While most issue-motivated group (IMG) protests are peaceful, the potential for extremist elements within IMGs to inspire small groups or individuals to plan and carry out violent attacks is an enduring risk. An increase in policing resources required to ensure appropriate security overlays has been observed, with this expected to continue. Specialist

protective capabilities within the AFP are facing challenges in keeping pace with the increased workload.

On 17 December 2024, the Protective Security Board endorsed the final joint Department of Home Affairs and AFP Review of Protective Security Arrangements for Parliamentarians. The review identified 16 recommendations for Phase 1 delivery. The AFP and Home Affairs have commenced actioning components of these recommendations utilising existing resources. In addition to the implementation of Phase 1 recommendations, recommendations for Phase 2 will also be progressed. These recommendations relate to longer term initiatives that would support the improvement of internal processes, governance, capability and training and will likely require further consideration by Government.

The AFP has historically been funded for the protection of Australian High Office Holders, Internationally Protected Persons and federal Parliamentarians through a combination of ongoing base funding § 47E(d) and annual estimates variations § 47E(d). The AFP Strategic Funding Review identified that current funding is not adequate and sufficiently flexible to scale and respond to emergent threats in the current and future protection environment. The AFP is committed to working with Government to consider the Review's recommendation of renegotiating funding arrangements for inclusion in AFP base funding, to provide certainty and flexibility in AFP resourcing for protection requirements. Without adequate resourcing or certainty in funding, there is a significant risk to the safety and security of Australian High Office Holders, Parliamentarians and Commonwealth Establishments. The AFP will be unable to provide the necessary protective security overlay in line with threat assessments. The deployment of resources would be reactive, further risking those requiring the security overlay as well as safety and security of AFP members.

Human Exploitation

- Reports of online child exploitation and human trafficking will continue to increase, with a forecasted increase in sadistic online exploitation, mixing elements of child abuse, cybercrime, violence and in some cases accelerationist ideology.
- Since the inception of the Australian Centre To Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE), AI and machine learning (ML) technology has evolved at an advanced pace, which enables offenders to create child abuse material (CAM) at an increased rate. There is a critical need to uplift ICT infrastructure to implement AI and ML capabilities to detect, identify clusters of offenders and victims, triage and process material of interest at speeds not possible with current technology.
- Continued investment in uplifting the capacity and capabilities of key domestic and international stakeholders will ensure maximum impact in the criminal threat environment and the protection of victims globally.

Online Child Exploitation

Online child sexual abuse is becoming more prevalent, commodified, organised and extreme. Reports of online child exploitation have increased each year since the ACCCE commenced operations. Further complications arise from an increase in self-generated CAM and peer-on-peer

abuse. The use of AI to produce CAM will certainly continue increasing, helping offenders operate, lowering barriers to entry, and normalising offending. It can also increase offenders' ability to target children online and presents significant issues for victim identification. There are opportunities for the AFP to harness AI to detect, review, and process image identifiers within CAM, which will alleviate some of the burden on investigators and reduce mental health impacts on members responsible for reviewing CAM. Offline, the threat of Australian travelling child sex offenders will almost certainly persist, while child exploitation and abuse in the Pacific region has emerged as a growing concern.

To note current ACCCE funding is a total of \$37.47 million. In 2023-24, the ACCCE received over 58,000 reports of online child sexual exploitation, which was an increase of over 18,000 reports from the previous year, representing a 45% increase. In 2024-25, it is anticipated the ACCCE will receive up to 70,000 reports.

The National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse (National Strategy) (2021-2030) is a 10-year, whole-of-nation framework to establish a coordinated and consistent approach to preventing and better responding to child sexual abuse. The AFP is responsible for 14 measures under the National Strategy, which is driven by two four-year action plans.

The AFP is considering new proposals under the Second National Action Plan (2025-2027). The AFP's proposal largely prioritises the enhancement of technology and international capability uplift. These capabilities will support the work of the ACCCE through improving technological infrastructure, the ACCCE's response to emerging threats internationally and psychological safety of child protection investigators. The implementation of these capabilities is crucial to the ACCCE's ability to continue to respond effectively to rapidly evolving methodologies of offenders in this crime type.

Human Trafficking

Australia is predominately a destination country for human trafficking, and the AFP has identified trafficked individuals from around the world. In Australia, the AFP is the lead investigative agency for all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery. In the 2023-24 financial year, the AFP received 382 reports of modern slavery and human trafficking offences, an increase of more than 12 per cent from 340 reports the previous financial year. Forced labour, forced marriage and child trafficking-based offences have shown a consistent increase in incidents over the last three years. The AFP continues to see an increase in human trafficking reports year-on-year, and AFP intelligence forecasts predict this trend will continue.

Within Australia's geographical region, forced criminality is increasing with victims being coerced into committing crimes, particularly fraud, which adds another layer of complexity to investigations. Advances in technology is enabling this type of human trafficking to occur. The AFP assess that over the next several years the emergence of AI and forced criminality is likely to have a high impact on the human trafficking criminal landscape.

People Smuggling

s 33(a)(i), s 47E(d)

- Under Joint Agency Task Force Operation Sovereign Borders (JATF-OSB), by virtue of Ministerial Directive, the AFP leads the Disruption and Deterrence Task Group (DDTG).
- Continued investment will be required to sustain the AFP's efforts under JATF-OSB to disrupt people smuggling threats to Australia with regional partners.

People smugglers target vulnerable groups, encouraging them to undertake dangerous maritime passages often in unseaworthy vessels. There are serious security and criminal concerns and major quarantine and health risks involved when people arriving in Australia bypass lawful immigration. People smuggling infringes the sovereignty of our borders and the processing of irregular immigrants creates significant costs and logistical problems.

s 33(a)(i), s 47E(d)

s 33(a)(i), s 47E(d)

Since the establishment of OSB in 2013, the AFP has supported regional partners to arrest 1,629 people for people smuggling offences, and disrupt 121 maritime people smuggling ventures targeting Australia, affecting 3,748 potential irregular immigrants (as at 31 March 2025).

In July 2024, the AFP received \$26.655 million over two years to bolster onshore and offshore deterrence and disruption capabilities by:

- Enhancing AFP engagement with regional partners to disrupt and investigate people smuggling ventures in source and transit countries;
- Enhancing domestic and deployable capacity to address/investigate people smuggling threats on and offshore, and uplift skills and equipment capabilities of our regional partners; and
- Strengthening the AFP's coordination, intelligence and investigation capabilities in the JATF.

Building on our longstanding and close relationships with international partners, the AFP is acutely focused on working across our region to address the threat of people smuggling to Australia.

The AFP has posted officers dedicated to counter people smuggling efforts in Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka, and multi-disciplinary officers throughout the region whose priority is combating transnational serious and organised crime, including people smuggling.

To directly uplift partner capabilities and to promote regional coordination, the AFP leads and funds regional law enforcement forums and initiatives including:

- the Regional Law Enforcement Joint Management Group (JMG) on People Smuggling
- the Regional Law Enforcement People Smuggling Working Group
- an International Management of Serious Crime program at the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) in May 2025 on *'partnering to prevent the illegal movement of people'*

With this funding due to expire in 2026, the AFP is working with partners across Government to determine ongoing resourcing requirements to maintain efforts to detect and disrupt maritime people smuggling ventures and protect our sovereign borders.

Operation Aegis

On 8 November 2023, the High Court of Australia made an order for the release from immigration detention of a stateless detainee (NZYQ). The Court judgement resulted in the release of individuals in immigration detention where their removal cannot be enabled in the reasonably foreseeable future. As at 17 April 2025, a total of 321 detainees had been released from detention into the community.

Operation Aegis was established to coordinate across Commonwealth, state and territory law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety and protection of the Australian community in response to the release of the individuals from immigration detention. The AFP is providing support to the ABF-led taskforce as part of the Commonwealth response.

The AFP has developed a nationwide capability for a 24/7 response to Operation Aegis matters across the country, and investigative capability is now established across all AFP regional commands within Australia. Under Operation Aegis to date, approximately 315 members have been deployed within regional response teams in a range of capacities, including investigating alleged breaches of visa conditions (where a breach constitutes a criminal offence) and coordinating intelligence with state and territory law enforcement agencies.

In the 2025-26 Budget, the AFP received s 47E(d) over one year to support the Governments management of the NZYQ cohort and implementation of community safety orders. This funding, terminating in 2026-27, is critical to ensure the safety and security of the Australian community and represents a new demand on the AFP's services which cannot be managed without additional investment.

Protection of livelihoods

Protecting Australia's collective economic and societal interests from criminal threats by deterring malicious actors and making Australia a hostile environment for criminals to operate in, is a cornerstone of the AFP's mission.

Transnational, Serious and Organised Crime (TSOC)

- TSOC groups impacting Australia continue to develop, grow and diversify, even after disruptions. Opportunities exist to increase engagement with international partners to enhance upstream disruption of importations at the point of origin or in transit, before reaching Australia's shores.
- There are opportunities to further strengthen foreign partner relationships in key TSOC High Value Target locations such as the s 47E(d)
s 47E(d) This would extend the reach and influence of the AFP and undermine the notion of safe havens or permissive operating environments.

- s 47E(d)

TSOC is estimated by the Australian Institute of Criminology to cost Australia approximately \$68.7 billion per year. This includes:

- the production and importation of drugs,
- large-scale money laundering operations,
- the sale of black-market firearms and other dangerous goods, and
- the illegal movement of people across Australian borders.

Serious and organised crime operates across integrated global networks, in which criminal participants are often well-financed. It is also associated with other crimes such as terrorism, human trafficking, and child exploitation. The AFP is uniquely placed amongst Australian law enforcement to take action across the spectrum of the TSOC business model – we focus our

s 47E(d)

The AFP works to identify and disrupt the TSOC groups who cause the most harm to Australia, in partnership with Commonwealth, state, and territory law enforcement agencies as well as an extensive network of International Partners. s 47E(d)

s 47E(d)

Key to maximising our impact against the TSOC threat is joint taskforce arrangements with law enforcement, intelligence and regulatory partners, including via the Joint Organised Crime

Taskforces (JOCTF). The JOCTF's are located in each state/territory and in NSW, it is the Multi-Agency Strike Team (MAST). In addition to the AFP and the relevant state/territory police, can include the Department of Home Affairs/ABF and ACIC. The JOCTFs allow for cross-jurisdiction investigations and bring together the collective resources, legislative powers and experience across all agencies to target criminality from all available angles.

The AFP undertakes major, complex operations against sophisticated criminal networks. These operations are often long-term and covert. Undertaking large complex operations such as Operation IRONSIDE and Operation KRAKEN are well within the government and the community's expectations of the AFP. However, accurate forecasting of the costs of these operations is not possible in anything other than the immediate action period. Operations of this scale and complexity increase the risk of an adverse financial outcomes. This can only be managed at present by blunt reprioritisation of other activities, potentially compromising other important operations and the development of future capability. Funding under the TSOC Fight Crime New Policy Proposal, totalling \$142.247 million/4 years and s 47E(d) is due to terminate in 2026.

Case Study: Operation KRAKEN

In September 2024, the AFP led a successful global operation following its infiltration of the GHOST platform, a dedicated encrypted communications platform, used by organised crime groups for drug trafficking, money laundering, organised killings and other illegal activities.

Operation KRAKEN involved the identification of the GHOST platform, the successful technical infiltration of that platform, the investigation of an Australian-based person as the administrator of the global criminal encrypted communication platform, and a coordinated response from police across Australia, Ireland, Italy, Sweden and Canada.

s 47E(d), s 34(3)

Drug crime in Australia results in significant harm to the health, safety, financial and physical security of the Australian community. The AFP plays a key role in efforts to minimise these harms and is accountable to Government in accordance with the National Drug Strategy 2017-2026 which identifies national priorities, guides action by governments and outlines a national commitment to harm minimisation through balanced adoption of effective demand, supply and harm reduction strategies.

Drug imports will almost certainly continue to present a high-tempo, high-volume challenge. Longstanding challenges including massive offshore production coupled with the high price Australian consumers pay, and the large number of decentralised networks targeting Australia, are almost certainly going to drive continuous imports totalling multiples of Australia's estimated

annual consumption. Additionally, the volume of narcotics evidence being seized is increasing and newly classified border control drug seizures have significantly exceeded initial estimates. Commodities of greatest concern include methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin and MDMA, as well as emerging threats such as ketamine and synthetic opioids.

Harm prevention through supply reduction is key – the AFP prioritises offshore detection, disruption and deterrence where possible, to stop drugs at their source of origin or transit points and before they cause harm the Australian community. We achieve this through maximising AFP's International Network's collaboration and capability development with international partners. We gather insights into global drug threats, transnational supply chain vulnerabilities and criminal methodologies to inform our work, using organisational and external data sources, wastewater monitoring and research. Despite this, the onshore domestic response to drug detections continues to dominate.

Responding to drug crime is a resource intensive process and poses numerous challenges. [§ 47E\(d\)](#)

[§ 47E\(d\)](#)

There are opportunities to enhance federal drug offences. Currently, serious drug offences only count the weight of the pure drug in a substance in determining whether it meets the relevant threshold. Other Australian jurisdictions (and many international jurisdictions) use a mixed-weight system

[§ 47E\(d\)](#)

[§ 47E\(d\)](#)

s 47E(d)

Cybercrime

- The scale and impact of cybercrime in Australia is unprecedented.
- Ransomware, business email compromise and scams perpetrated by global organised crime groups will almost certainly continue to pose a considerable threat to Australian companies and Australians as offenders adopt new technologies.
- Close engagement with private industry and international partnerships are key to a better understanding of and response to cybercrime.

The cybercrime ecosystem is continuously evolving, enabling cyber criminals to consistently adopt new methodologies while attempting to evade disruption efforts by law enforcement. Australia is facing increasing, persistent and pervasive cybercrime threats targeting critical infrastructure, governments, industry and the community.

To combat these threats, the AFP is working closely with domestic and international partners on large scale disruption operations, continuously attacking the global cybercrime business model. A key AFP strategy is strongly supporting foreign counterpart investigations, prosecutions, and disruption activities, to amplify collective global law enforcement efforts.

The AFP also leads the Joint Policing Cybercrime Coordination Centre (JPC3) which brings together Australian law enforcement and key industry and international partners to fight

cybercrime, focussing on high volume high harm cybercrime affecting the Australian community such as investment scams. The JPC3 currently includes secondees from a range of stakeholders including financial institutions, Australian Government departments, international law enforcement partners and most state and territory law enforcement agencies.

The AFP was provided \$52.4 million from the Government over 5 years to amplify the AFP's offensive cyber capabilities and contribution to Joint Standing Operation Aquila between the AFP and Australian Signals Directorate. Law enforcement is just one element in the fight against cybercrime. The AFP works closely with our partners and continues to innovate how we disrupt cyber criminals. Public education and awareness campaigns and partnering with industry and the community remains essential to any coordinated response.

Fraud and Corruption

- Professional facilitators continue to enable large-scale fraud against Australian government-funded programs.
- Funding for the AFP's contribution to the Fraud Fusion Taskforce terminates in 2026.

The threat of fraud is high and increasing against Australian Government-funded programs such as childcare, Medicare and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Fraud damages Australia's economy and deprives honest Australians of the financial stability necessary to survive.

The AFP seek to reduce serious or complex fraud and corruption against the Commonwealth, including foreign bribery, by:

- disrupting, dismantling and prosecuting those who commit or attempt to commit Commonwealth fraud and corruption against Australians and Australia's interests
- ensuring a coordinated response to serious or complex fraud and corruption internationally, nationally and across Commonwealth entities
- making Australia an unattractive place to commit financial crime, by achieving maximum impact against serious and complex fraud and corruption offending
- encouraging self-reporting and cooperation by corporations using data to improve the efficiency of fraud and corruption investigations.

Professional facilitators continue to enable large-scale fraud against Australian government-funded programs. Professional facilitators range from those with professional qualifications to those who have industry experience. Service providers, lawyers and accountants establish and maintain companies and banking structures and help satisfy auditing requirements and former government agency insiders or allied health professionals provide inside knowledge of exploitable vulnerabilities. There are opportunities to target and disrupt professional facilitators who enable fraud, foreign bribery and grand corruption.

The SFCT commenced on 1 July 2015 and brings together law enforcement and regulatory agencies to protect the public finances of Australia. Across the AFP's Criminal Assets Confiscation matters supporting the SFCT, the AFP has reported over \$83 million in Restraints and Forfeitures under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Additionally, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has freezing

orders of over \$200 million in place across a number of Taskforce matters. The SFCT is currently funded \$223.9 million over four years to 30 June 2027. Noting the complexity and time taken to understand, address and deliver sanctions on those criminals engaging in serious financial crime,

s 34(3)

The AFP safeguards Commonwealth revenue by preventing, detecting, disrupting, and investigating serious or complex fraud and corruption against the Commonwealth, including foreign bribery. Non-Corporate Commonwealth Entities must report all instances of potential serious or complex fraud to the AFP, in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Policy. NCEs must refer all instances of suspected serious or systemic corruption to the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC). The NACC and the AFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding in July 2024 and frequently meet to discuss operational matters, trends, insights and de-conflict on referrals, reports of crime and ongoing investigations.

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Protection of the Commonwealth

The AFP plays a crucial role in safeguarding the Commonwealth and protecting Australia's democratic system. This includes combatting foreign interference and espionage, and protecting high office holders, other dignitaries, our borders, and critical infrastructure.

Espionage and Foreign Interference (EFI)

- Australia is the target of sophisticated and persistent foreign interference activities from a range of countries.
- These activities undermine our democratic values, civil rights, government institutions, economic prosperity, media and community cohesion.
- Some foreign powers and their proxies threaten Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This is done to inflame tensions in the Australian community and advance foreign interests.
- Since the introduction of the EFI legislation in 2018, the AFP has **charged four individuals, with one successful prosecution to date.**

EFI is one of Australia's principal national security concerns. It represents a serious and enduring threat to Australia's sovereignty, security and the integrity of our national institutions. As part of the Counter Foreign Interference Taskforce, the AFP works closely with national security and law enforcement partners to combat these threats. EFI is often clandestine and pervasive and whilst some of the Taskforce's activities have attracted media interest, most of our actions to mitigate threats are not publicly visible.

Australia will continue to be the target of sophisticated, expanding and persistent espionage and foreign interference activities from a range of foreign powers and their proxies. Ongoing geopolitical events and tensions, Australia's involvement in geostrategic activities in the region, domestic social cohesion impacts and key events, such as federal elections, are all issues of interest to foreign powers and their proxies to leverage opportunities for targeting and collection. The nature of threats from foreign powers and their proxies are multi-dimensional, extending beyond the use of agents and shifting towards cyber-enabled espionage and foreign interference. Hostile foreign powers and their proxies will continue to threaten certain sectors and information, including our political systems, government information, defence capabilities and industry, critical infrastructure and the research sector.

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities across Australia are being targeted as victims of foreign interference and will continue to be subject to surveillance, harassment and intimidation by foreign powers or their proxies. Responding to allegations, real or perceived, of community interference will continue to provide valuable insights into diaspora communities in Australia and global tensions resonating in Australia. The AFP is focused on fostering trusted relationships with diaspora communities in Australia via our Community Liaison Teams (CLT). Our CLTs make the Australian community stronger and actively engage with diverse communities to build trust and enhance our ability to protect the community.

The AFP has developed a [Foreign Interference in the Community Factsheet](#) (the Factsheet) to assist in educating communities on foreign interference, how to recognise it, and how to report it. The AFP has shared the Factsheet with Commonwealth agencies and State and Territory Police to assist in building awareness and enhance our relationships. This Factsheet is publicly available on the AFP website in over 40 languages. This work is supported by the Department of Home Affairs [Counter Foreign Interference in Australia](#) publication, released in January 2025.

AUKUS

- AUKUS is a multi-dimensional program, which will require significant uplift across multiple areas of the AFP.
- An emerging risk of supply chain and procurement fraud is expected, while current work remains focused on providing protective security.
- The AFP received funding [REDACTED] s 47E(d)

[REDACTED] s 47E(d)

The AFP and Defence have a long history of working collaboratively to protect Australia's interests through the provision of protective services and high visibility protective security, including armed counter terrorist first response at specified Defence bases. In October 2024 the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Defence and AFP for the provision of protective services at specified defence bases was renewed.

In working with the Department of Defence, the Australian Submarine Agency and Commonwealth partners the AFP is developing a fit for purpose armed protection capability for Australia's Sovereign Nuclear Powered Submarine capability. The protective security model has been designed to meet the requirements and expectations of our AUKUS partners which are articulated in the Integrated Nuclear Security Operation Intent developed by the Australian Submarine Agency.

AUKUS represents an entirely new set of requirements for the AFP. This work may in future be extended to [REDACTED] s 33(a)(i) Defence sites, each requiring a bespoke security effect and some may also need a marine protective security presence. The AFP is working with partner agencies to determine the security effect requirements and is developing a plan to meet these. AUKUS will be a major undertaking for the AFP, requiring significant, ongoing investment.

Current planning is primarily focussed on the force protection element, however AUKUS will inevitably drive-up demand for AFP intelligence and investigative services in the context of the broader national security and law enforcement environment.

Aviation Security

- Australian airports will continue to be vulnerable spaces where multiple different criminal activities occur, cutting across the AFP's broad remit.
- The AFP continues to respond to incidents at airports, including security related incidents, in the order of over 21,000 per year.
- From 2026, the AFP will provide a counter-terrorism first response (CTFR) capability to the new Western Sydney International Airport, in addition to the existing nine designated Australian airports.

The AFP manages policing services at Australia's international airports, this includes CTFR capability at all nine designated Australian airports, as well as emergency first response, police incident response and response to crimes against the Commonwealth. Airports are attractive places for criminals seeking to exploit clearance holder vulnerabilities.

Consistent with our national security function, prevention is the highest priority of AFP Aviation. Robust aviation security requires a security-centric culture and capability focussed on identifying current and emerging risks, threats and vulnerabilities, including trusted insiders and clearance holders.

The demand for AFP services within the aviation environment has also increased significantly over recent years. Reports of Priority 1 incidents (life threatening or time critical situations) have consistently been 20% greater than numbers immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with 92 Priority 1 incidents recorded in the 2024-25 financial year to 17 April 2025. The AFP is focused on having the capacity and capability to respond to all incidents in a timely manner and ensure the safety of the public. This includes technical advancements to keep pace with emerging threats, such as 3D printed firearms.

Enabling

The AFP is Australia's national policing agency, responsible for the protection of Australians and Australia's interests from serious criminal threats. The AFP's role is to enforce Commonwealth criminal law, contribute to combating complex, transnational, serious and organised crime impacting Australia's national security and protect Commonwealth interests from criminal activity in Australia and overseas.

The AFP's vision – policing for a safer Australia – reflects its core functions as legislated in section 8 of the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979*. The AFP operates in a complex criminal environment and delivers maximum operational impact by directing its resources against the highest criminal threats to Australia through prevention, detection, disruption, investigation and prosecution of criminal activity. Core functions are delivered across three outcomes:

- National and International Policing and Investigations,
- ACT Policing, and
- Specialist Protective Services.

Subsection 37(2) of the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979* provides the minister responsible for the AFP may give written direction to the AFP Commissioner with respect to the general policy to be pursued in relation to the performance of functions of the AFP

On 20 October 2023, the former Attorney General signed a [Ministerial Direction](#) to the AFP. The Direction outlined the expectations of the Minister for the AFP to focus its activities to maximise impact on the criminal environment in relation to the *protection of life, protection of livelihoods and protection of the Commonwealth*. The AFP Commissioner's [Statement of Intent](#) in response to the Ministerial Direction was issued on 20 October 2023. The AFP will work with you on a new Ministerial Direction to ensure the governments priorities for the AFP are adequately captured.

Over successive Governments, the AFP has provided a law enforcement liaison officer (LELO) to the Minister responsible for the AFP. The LELO, similar to a Departmental Liaison Office, can assist you and your Office to obtain information and advice from the AFP.

Reporting Environment

The AFP welcomes oversight and accountability, acknowledging this enhances public trust and confidence in the AFP's use of the powers it has been entrusted with. We work closely with oversight bodies such as the Commonwealth Ombudsman, the NACC and the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS), to provide assurance around the AFP's compliance with legislative requirements across our systems, processes and personnel.

Ministerial oversight

As the AFP's Minister you have responsibility for a number of approval and reporting requirements, covering operational and corporate matters. These include:

- Decisions regarding high-risk terrorist offender orders, such as Control Orders (AFP as applicant), Interim Control Orders (AFP as applicant), Continuing Detention Orders (Minister as applicant) – *Criminal Code Act 1995*,

- Approval of other AFP operational matters, such as engagement on police-to-police assistance in death penalty situations, international referrals for witness protection – *Witness Protection Act 1994*,
- Approval of AFP corporate documents, such as Annual Reports and Corporate Plan – *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*; *Crimes Act 1914*; *Witness Protection Act 1994*; *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002*,
- Approval of AFP honours and awards, such as the nominations for Australian Police Medals – Australian Police Medal Regulations 1986,
- Oversight of operational matters and reports, such as controlled operations, engagements on death penalty matters, extraterritorial use of surveillance devices – *Surveillance Devices Act 2004*, and
- Oversight of AFP corporate documents, such as the Protective Security Policy Framework Assessment.

Commonwealth Ombudsman

The AFP has a strong working relationship with the Commonwealth Ombudsman and is subject to annual and ad-hoc reviews.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman conducts a number of inspections on the AFP every year to ensure the AFP is using its powers as the Australian Parliament intended. These inspections are requirements under acts such as section 40XA of the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979*, the *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979* (Cth), the *Telecommunications Act 1997* (Cth), the *Surveillance Devices Act 2004* (Cth) and the *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth). The Ombudsman also oversees the AFP's professional standards framework, as well as having a general complaints and 'own motion' investigation jurisdiction.

The AFP continues to work closely with the Ombudsman's office to identify any areas of improvement and implementation of any recommendations.

National Anti-Corruption Commission

On 30 November 2022, the Federal Parliament passed the *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022* (NACC Act). As a result, from 1 July 2023 the AFP started reporting serious or systemic corruption issues to the NACC. The NACC is an independent statutory agency that will prevent, detect, investigate and report on serious or systemic corruption matters in the Commonwealth public sector, including the AFP.

Category 3 or corruption (referred to colloquially as Category 4) issues involving AFP appointees are referred to the NACC Commissioner for investigation. The NACC Commissioner may elect to:

- conduct the investigation
- referral to another agency for investigation
- refer the matter back to AFP Professional Standards (PRS) for investigation
- conduct a joint investigation with PRS.

The NACC is not required, nor will it be able to investigate every corruption issue, even if it is believed to be serious or systemic. If the NACC decides not to investigate a corruption issue, or believes a corruption issue is not serious or systemic, they may deal with it in the above ways.

Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security

The AFP, through its intelligence functions, is well established as a National Intelligence Community (NIC) agency. The AFP is unique from other NIC agencies due to our primary use of intelligence being to support our statutory policing functions. AFP intelligence-gathering activities are vital for the AFP as they enable the detection, disruption, and investigation of a broad range of criminal and national security threats and inform operational decision-making. Crucially, criminal intelligence assists investigators to gather evidence for the prosecution of offenders.

We acknowledge that the important role of robust oversight of intelligence activities is essential for ensuring accountability, transparency and to maintain public confidence. The AFP was closely consulted on the Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill (the IGIS Bill), which seeks to expand IGIS oversight to the AFP's collection, analysis, use and dissemination of intelligence. However, IGIS oversight would not extend to ACT Policing, Jervis Bay and External Territories, witness protection, the gathering of evidence, and arrest/charge.

Parliamentary Committees

Both the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) and the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement (PJCLE) have an oversight role in relation to AFP functions as set out in relevant legislation.

Section 29 of the *Intelligence Services Act 2001* (Cth) (IS Act) requires the PJCIS to monitor and review the performance of the AFP in relation to its functions under Part 5.3 of the Criminal Code (terrorism) as well as Division 3A of Part IAA of the Crimes Act 1914 (Cth) in relation to stop, search and seizure powers. Section 7 of the *Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Act 2010* (Cth) (PJCLE Act) sets out the functions of the Committee, including, reviewing the performance of the AFP's functions, examining annual reports and examining trends and changes in criminal activities, practices and methods.

The AFP considers the functions listed in the PJCLE Act and IS Acts to determine the scope and limitations on what the AFP can brief to the Committees. In particular, the review of specific operations, investigations, and sensitive operational information and methodologies is explicitly excluded from the functions of the committees. The existence of an AFP investigation, certain police methodologies and covert capabilities can be highly sensitive and is also not discussed. These restrictions protect the AFP's operational independence from government and from political influence, which is an important feature of policing in a healthy democracy.

Financial settings

The AFP has remained agile and flexible in the use of its resources, balancing defined priorities with the need to address emerging threats. The AFP currently has 27 different revenue and funding streams which make up the AFP budget, including 11 terminating measures. The AFP's budget is not sustainable nor reflective of the scale and sophistication required to deliver an impactful policing response. This has been identified in multiple external reviews. With multiple threats manifesting in new and unfamiliar ways, criminal activity and disruption to public order are impacting people, institutions and economies across the world. These changes highlight the challenge the AFP faces in developing fit for purpose policing strategies within its funding envelope.

The AFP needs long-term confidence in its budget to ensure it can deliver key initiatives whilst still being able to undertake major, complex operations against sophisticated criminal networks without compromising other important activities or risk an operating loss.

In 2023-24, the AFP received \$1,502 million in appropriation funding and \$417 million other revenue, largely relating to policing and protection services. The AFP net cash operating result was an \$83 million surplus. This was in part due to Government approving a cash injection to fund the rectification of the unpaid superannuation provision (\$85 million).

In 2025-26, the AFPs estimated total resources is \$2,177.2 million which is \$10.6 million higher than 2024-25 actual resources. This includes new and continuing funding for the AFP totalling \$118.6 million in 2025-26 (\$132.1 million/4 years) and includes:

- Illicit Tobacco Compliance and Enforcement Package - direct and targeted law enforcement to counter profits from illicit tobacco: \$33.5 million/2 years from 2025-26 (including s 47E(d) .
 - o This measure enhances the capacity of the AFP's Criminal Assets Confiscation Team to investigate serious and organised crime groups dealing in illicit tobacco and other nicotine products.
 - o This funding allocation includes \$17 million to support State and Territory law enforcement to partner with the AFP in the work of the CACT in targeting the profits of illicit tobacco.
 - o The AFP has commenced engagement with our State and Territory counterparts to brief them on the Commonwealth's new initiative and discuss the most effective way for each jurisdiction to work with the CACT and specifically target the profits of illicit tobacco. Our approach will be consultative and flexible to ensure we best target the profits of illicit tobacco taking into consideration each jurisdiction's operating environment.
- National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse - continuation: \$1.2 million/1 year in 2025-26 (including s 47E(d) .
 - o This funding continues the existing measure for a further 12 months. Funding was originally provided to uplift the AFP's contribution to the Republic of the Philippines' law enforcement efforts to combat LOCSA.
 - o Australian offenders travel to developing countries to sexually abuse vulnerable children and drive demand for child abuse material produced offshore.
 - o We know that Australian offenders abuse vulnerable children overseas, by both travelling overseas and abusing them online. Shamefully, Australia is the third

- largest global consumer of livestreamed child sexual abuse, where offenders pay and direct facilitators in impoverished countries to abuse children in real time.
- o The Australian Government has committed funding to curb this abuse and support our partners in the Indo-Pacific region to strengthen their criminal justice response to child sex offending in our shared region.
- Attorney General's Portfolio – additional resourcing: \$38.2 million/4 years from 2025-26 and \$2.4 million per year ongoing.
 - o AFP's component of this measure provides funding to the AFP for its fit-out requirements for the Western Sydney International Airport.
 - o The fit out is required to support the AFP in establishing its operations in support of the airport commencing operations in 2026.
 - o The AFP plays a pivotal role in the 'security designation' of the airport and requires infrastructure and facilities to support this function.
 - o Funding was required to ensure long lead time items, such as specialist forensic and IT equipment can be procured.
- Savings from External Labour – further extension: -\$21.4 million/1 year in 2028-29.
 - o This measure continues the existing WoAG Savings measure for a further 12 months into 2028-29.

There are a number of critical AFP measures terminating in 2026-27 financial year, **totalling \$159.9 million and s 47E(d) in 2025-26 (\$639.8 million over 4 years)**, relating to the management of the NZYQ cohort, sustainment of OSB, protection of high office holders and work to combat terrorism, child exploitation, fraud and TSOC. These funding measures allowed delivery of the ongoing management of the High Risk Terrorist Offenders regime (HRTTO) and ongoing work to establish a National Convicted Terrorist Offender Register (NCTOR), Protection of High Office Holders, capacity building efforts in the Philippines to combat LOCSA and a number of successful TSOC operations including Operation IRONSIDE and Operation GAIN. These initiatives would cease without continued and ongoing funding.

In addition to terminating measures, a key priority for the AFP in support of whole of government priorities, is support to the AUKUS agreement through the provision of protective security at relevant Defence sites. The AFP has been determined to be the only agency with the necessary powers to deliver the protective security role considered essential for the project to proceed by the US and UK partners. AUKUS will be a major undertaking for the AFP, requiring significant, ongoing investment. AUKUS represents an entirely new set of requirements for the AFP. The AFP is working with partner agencies to determine the security requirements and developing a plan to meet these. AUKUS is a multi-dimensional program, which will require significant uplift across multiple areas of the AFP. The AFP requires confirmation of funding from 2025-26 in order to build and deliver the capability required under the AUKUS agreement and there to enable the agreement to proceed, commencing in 2027 as planned. This will require urgent budget consideration prior to 30 June 2025.

Strategic Funding Review

On 18 January 2024, the Prime Minister agreed to provide the AFP with a cash injection of \$85 million as an estimates variation to rebuild its cash reserves that had been depleted due to the correction of underpaid superannuation balances. As part of this decision, it was agreed the AFP

would conduct a Strategic Funding Review (the Review) of its financial settings, to be completed ahead of the 2025-26 Budget Process.

The independent Review was undertaken from August to December 2024 and undertaken by Mr Stephen Merchant PSM. To support Mr Merchant, the AFP's Chief Operating Officer provided oversight and chaired a Band 3-level Interdepartmental Committee with representatives from the AFP, the Attorney General's Department, the Department of Finance, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Treasury. The final report was handed down in December 2024 and contained 21 recommendations for the AFP and Government consideration.

Overall, the Review found the greatest sources of risk to the AFP's future financial outcomes was the way in which the AFP is funded and the impact of this on our ability to meet the growing complexity of the criminal environment.

The 21 Recommendations in the report build on the proactive steps the AFP has been taking over recent years, focused on the following themes:

- Financial and cash management practices,
- Setting priorities,
- The future funding model, and
- Sustainability of current financial settings.

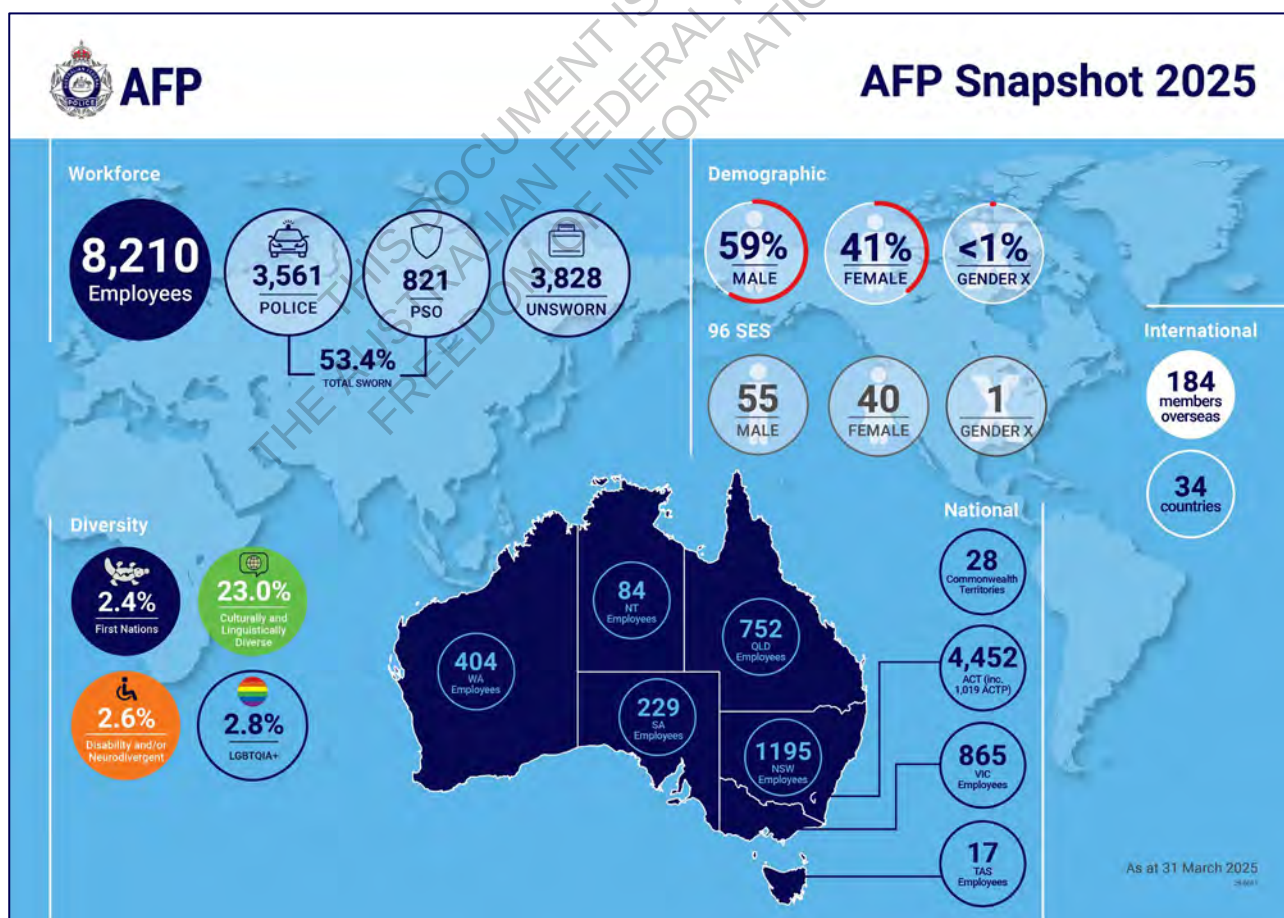
The AFP is committed to continuing implementation of the recommendations from the Strategic Funding Review and is deeply committed to improving financial practices. Of note, many internal recommendations have been successfully implemented to date. A number of the recommendations extend beyond the direct responsibility of the AFP. The AFP is committed to taking a leadership role in supporting the progression of the recommendations that require inter-agency activity, or input from Government. We will work with your office and across Government to bring forward consideration for the implementation of these recommendations.

Our people

The AFP is focused on maintaining an adaptable, agile workforce that represents the communities we serve and protect.

As at 31 March 2025, the AFP's headcount was 8,210 with a full time equivalent (FTE) workforce of 7636.4. The AFP maintains a mobile and deployable workforce that are regularly required to move across different roles. To achieve this level of flexibility, the AFP's workforce is managed to budget, rather than to vacant positions. Our people are our greatest asset. The AFP aims to remain an employer of choice, building and fostering a workplace environment that attracts and retains agile members with adaptive skillsets, while reducing attrition.

As at 31 March 2025, the AFP's total attrition rate was 6%. The sworn (police and PSO) attrition rate was 4.8% and the attrition rate for police members was 4.5%. The sworn cohort attrition rate is currently considered low, particularly in comparison to state and territory policing jurisdictions, with the overall attrition rate considered to be at a suitable range to enable new skills and ideas to enter the workforce. We are operating in a competitive recruitment environment, but the AFP has a healthy pipeline of new applicants – both for sworn and unsworn roles. Additionally, the AFP continues to attract sufficient applications for national Police Recruit positions. The AFP will be able to support you in further exploring police recruitment, remuneration and retention at the Police Ministers Council.



Health and wellbeing

The AFP Health and Wellbeing Strategy – Beyond 2024 (Beyond 2024) was launched in March 2025 and is the AFP's key enterprise-enabling strategy recognising the critical importance of organisational and operational factors in the health and wellbeing of our people. Beyond 2024 acknowledges the evolving and demanding environment in which the AFP continues to operate, and the impact this environment has on our people. Beyond 2024 builds on the foundation and learnings derived from the AFP's previous Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023 and the implementation of SHIELD.

Beyond 2024 provides a shared responsibility framework that empowers all commands across the AFP to prioritise workforce health and wellbeing and places our people at the core of everyday decision making. It focusses on the importance of a strong, positive and inclusive workplace culture and outlines why and how the AFP works together to embed proactive and preventative health and wellbeing practices into our business, to ensure our staff are healthy and resilient now, and able to support the AFP's success into the future

Comcare

The AFP is currently working on multiple initiatives to positively influence current performance trends associated with return-to-work outcomes and incidence of claims. These initiatives are designed to improve supervisor's knowledge and capability to support rehabilitation and return to work processes.

A key focus of our ongoing collaboration with Comcare has been improving the overall relationship and AFP member experience. This includes, but is not limited to:

- fast tracking claims by reducing the need for an independent medical examination if there is supporting medical evidence from a legally qualified medical practitioner,
- delivery of leadership training to enhance capability across the *Work Health & Safety Act 2011*, and the *Safety Rehabilitation & Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act),
- ongoing implementation of health and wellbeing services through SHIELD, and
- an early intervention program which provides accessible treatment, limited leave and shorter assessment processes.

Despite these efforts and investments, there are several elements outside the direct control of the AFP that have put pressure on the AFP's Comcare premium. For example, the bulk of loading to cover the anticipated impact of the newly introduced presumption for post-traumatic stress disorder injuries was borne by the AFP. The AFP strongly supports the recommendation in the Strategic Funding Review (mentioned above) for the AFP to receive an increase in its base funding to cover rises in the Comcare premium which result from legislative change.

The AFP welcomes the independent review into the SRC Act. As the review progresses, the AFP will continue to consider strategies to assist with the management of the Comcare premium. For example, under the SRC Act, the AFP can apply for an alternate claims administration arrangement such as a 'delegated claims management arrangements'. The AFP is aware of positive work in other policing jurisdictions by third-party organisations, offered as part of the alternate claims administrative arrangements.

ACT Policing

ACT Policing is the community policing arm of the AFP, responsible for providing policing services to the ACT. This is done in partnership with the community and the ACT Government. The key arrangements which govern the delivery of policing services to the ACT include the Policing Arrangement, the Purchase Agreement and the Ministerial Direction by the ACT Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. The Purchase Agreement details the outcomes, outputs, performance measures, targets, facilities, and associated administrative arrangements.

Under the 2022-26 Purchase Agreement the funding provided by the ACT Government to the AFP for delivery of policing services in 2023-24 was \$215.537 million. The total price includes enabling costs and direct funding from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate for crime prevention initiatives. Negotiations for the 2026-2030 Purchase Agreement will commence in June 2025 and provides an opportunity to address relevant outcomes from the Strategic Funding Review, which identified a significant underfunding of enabling services delivered by the AFP for ACT Policing.

ACT Policing has 7 priority areas of focus – the prevention, disruption and investigation of domestic and family violence, reducing first nations over representation in the criminal system, preventing, disrupting and investigating sexual offences, combatting organised crime, road safety, youth justice and countering terrorism and violent extremism. ACT Policing is leading significant change and uplift in the response to domestic and family violence and sexual offences. ACT Policing is working across government and with the community sector to prepare for the raising of the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14 on 1 July 2025. Finally, ACT Policing is driving change to the response to mental health crisis to rebase police, ambulance, and health response to people in mental health crisis to the core competencies and responsibilities of each agency while protecting the person in crisis and the community. This reflects the AFP's unique role in Australian law enforcement with responsibilities across the spectrum of offending. This positions the AFP to contribute its expertise toward the Government's commitments in addressing the devastating impact that violence against women and children presents to all sections of the Australian community.

Capability

Accommodation

The AFP is a geographically dispersed agency, reflecting the need to be co-located with our key partners, both domestically and offshore. The AFP occupies 69 domestic properties – 58 of which are leased, eight are provided by the ACT Government, two are owned by the AFP (Majura and Thursday Island Residence) and one is occupied under a NSW Government license (Australian Institute of Police Management).

In external territories and internationally, the AFP occupies

§ 47E(c), § 47E(d)

§ 47E(d)

However, with the increase in demand for AFP support and services further accommodation requirements have been and will continue to be considered.

The Department of Finance established three Centres for National Resilience (CNR) during the pandemic, located in Brisbane, Perth and Melbourne. In July 2024, the AFP took over management of the CNR Brisbane under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Finance. The AFP has been progressively configuring the CNR Brisbane, now referred to as the Development and Coordination Hub (Pinkenba Hub) and has commenced Pacific focussed police training at the site. the Department of Finance has proposed to transfer ownership of the land and buildings to the AFP to provide longer term certainty to the AFP in its investment and operational requirements.

§ 47E(d)

Forensics

Forensic science is a fundamental component of the AFP capability set and is an essential and trusted frontline policing enabler to solving crime and securing prosecutions. The AFP has built a reputation as a global leader in Forensics providing probative intelligence, expert opinions and tailored solutions across the full span of AFPs operational needs.

§ 37(2)(b)

§ 37(2)(b)

There are three key strategic context points shaping the future of AFP Forensics, each presenting challenges and opportunities:

- Digitisation and technological innovation: Changes to criminal methodologies and the subsequent evidence trace due to digitisation. The rapid pace of growth in technological innovation and adoption by the criminal environment is impacting all areas of forensics.
- Economic, environmental, political, social and organisational: Economic and fiscal outlook, environmental drivers and changes to societal expectations and demands all impact the

delivery of service by forensics. Despite these impacts, forensics remains a source of public trust for the AFP.

- The changing nature of federal policing: The AFP's core functions are enduring but the scope of our responsibilities has increased. The threat landscape is evolving, changing the pattern of demand for forensics.

As well as the domestic work undertaken by Forensics Command, the AFP looks further to assist our pacific partners in uplifting their forensic capabilities. The PPI is a current focal point for forensic strategic initiatives in the Pacific, with design and planning underway for the recently announced Forensic RCoEs in Fiji and Samoa. The RCoEs will be accessible by all Pacific Police services to address common policing and security challenges.

Technology and Data

Technology is expected to continue to advance at a rapid rate, shaping both the criminal threat environment and our policing capabilities. All crime types and policing functions are impacted by the use of technology. For the AFP to be effective in combating crime, access to the digital footprint of those crimes becomes critical to our success. Data and technologies that enable effective analysis are key enablers, alongside the traditional tools and tradecrafts of police.

Technology is a critical enabler of the AFP's operational and corporate services to ensure that we achieve our purpose. We use technology to assist frontline policing and protective services through direct tactical interventions in investigations, and to strategically maintain, sustain and evolve our foundational technology platforms and architecture.

We are continuing to develop this capability by:

- modernising the AFP's technology foundations and applications, and increasing the cyber-security position of the organisation
- evolving our internal processes to navigate the development and deployment of emerging technologies
- continuing to mature our use of technology across the 6 strategic shifts outlined in our AFP Technology Strategy 2025

enhancing our collaboration with academic institutions, police forces and the technology sector to understand technological challenges and opportunities to strengthen law enforcement capabilities.

The management of data is critical for the AFP, with a priority on protecting and managing it effectively. This challenge is widely felt among other domestic and international law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and no single agency has been able to adequately address the issue. The AFP is committed to investing in resources to analyse and address this capability gap, while working within the legislative frameworks and requirements for retaining data.

Investment is required in the AFP's ICT capabilities including those which collect, store, analyse and disseminate large volumes of complex data contained within reports and referrals received into the agency, including the ACCCE. Updating this ICT infrastructure will expedite assessment and operational responses and protect AFP officers who are exposed to this explicit material.

To address this issue, the AFP has developed a five-year strategic budget plan to guide our investment in technology and data storage solutions. This plan looks to incrementally reduce risk,

increase cyber maturity, appropriately maintain systems, and increase the ability for the AFP to be responsive to demands and needs.

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Reece P Kershaw APM **Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police**

Commissioner Kershaw is a career police officer, joining the Australian Federal Police (AFP) in 1988 as a Constable for the ACT region. Throughout the early years of his career, he worked in General Duties and Criminal Investigations as a Detective. Commissioner Kershaw was also seconded to the National Crime Authority and the Australian Crime Commission.

In 1999, Commissioner Kershaw moved to the AFP Perth Office and worked in Operations and Close Personal Protection. In 2003, Commissioner Kershaw was promoted to Superintendent, undertaking various leadership roles in the investigation of victim-based crime, High Tech Crime Operations and deployments on overseas postings to the Netherlands, East Timor and Solomon Islands. In 2010, Commissioner Kershaw was promoted to Commander, leading Serious and Organised Crime Investigations.

In 2011, Commissioner Kershaw left the AFP to commence work for the Northern Territory Police Force (NTPF). His service in the NTPF includes holding the positions of Assistant Commissioner Crime and Specialist Services and Darwin Metropolitan Service. In 2015, he was appointed Commissioner of Police and Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

Commissioner Kershaw was a Visiting Fellow for the Police Executive Leadership Program at the Australian Institute of Police Management and has completed the Australia New Zealand Police Leadership Strategy Program. He is a graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Law Enforcement Executive Development Program and the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Commissioner Kershaw also holds a Master of Business Administration, Graduate Certificate in Business (Banking) and a Certificate in Business (Europe).

Commissioner Kershaw was a recipient of the NTPF Outstanding Leadership Medal, and in 2016, he was awarded the Australian Police Medal in the Australia Day Honours.

Commissioner Kershaw was appointed as the AFP's 8th Commissioner on 2 October 2019. Under Commissioner Kershaw's leadership, the AFP has seen a renewed focus on supporting the frontline, reducing red tape, and enhancing partnerships, to support and enable our police to deliver maximum impact to the criminal environment.



Ian McCartney APM Deputy Commissioner Crime

Deputy Commissioner Ian McCartney is a career police officer who has been a member of the Australian Federal Police since 1990.

He was promoted to Deputy Commissioner in 2019, responsible for AFP Investigations.

Following the organisational restructure in early 2023, Ian was appointed as Deputy Commissioner of the National Security Commands, including Counter Terrorism, Specialist Protection and Security. In early 2024, Ian became Deputy Commissioner Crime, responsible for Commands such as Organised Crime, Criminal Assets and Confiscation, and Cyber Command.

Ian has diverse experience in national and international economic, organised crime and counter terrorism investigations and has participated in a number of taskforces involving Federal and State law enforcement agencies.

Ian also spent four years offshore as part of the AFP International Liaison Network, as the AFP Senior Liaison Officer in China. Other roles include Coordinator of the AFP narcotic strike teams in Melbourne and Manager of the AFP Adelaide Office.

In August 2014, Ian was promoted to the rank of Assistant Commissioner and performed the role of National Manager Organised Crime and Cyber. In January 2017, Ian transferred to the role of Assistant Commissioner Counter Terrorism.

In 2014, Ian was awarded with the Australian Police Medal (APM) in recognition of his distinguished service, particularly in the areas of law enforcement liaison in Asia, and for his role in national investigations.



Krissy Barrett APM

Deputy Commissioner National Security

Krissy was appointed to the rank of Deputy Commissioner in March 2024 where she leads the National Security Portfolio, responsible for monitoring threats to the Australian Government, critical infrastructure, and terrorism environment, as well as the internal integrity and security of the AFP. Before this, Krissy was Assistant Commissioner (AC) of Counter Terrorism and Special Investigations (CTSI), the first woman in the AFP to lead the Command, one of the highest priorities in the AFP. The Command develops strategies and leads operations to combat terrorism offences and special investigations including foreign interference and espionage, while working collaboratively with government agencies and commands within the AFP.

Prior to her commencement as AC CTSI, Krissy held the position of AC Southern Command, where she led teams of police officers, protective service officers and support specialists to deliver policing outcomes for the Victorian and Tasmanian communities. Krissy worked closely with partner agencies and other commands across the AFP, achieving maximum impact on the criminal environment locally, nationally and internationally.

Krissy's career with the AFP includes extensive operational experience in general policing and investigative roles including Deputy Chief Police Officer of ACT Policing, Commander of Operations Southern Command, and leading teams in Money Laundering, Organised Crime, and the Serious Financial Crime Taskforce. She also held a number of other frontline and leadership positions in ACT Policing. Krissy has represented the AFP and Australia in international forums, including two Five Eyes Law Enforcement working groups targeting significant organised crime mutual threats across the world.

Krissy leads and develops a diverse workforce and is focused on developing future capacity for law enforcement, enhancing the capabilities of domestic and international agencies and private sector partners to future proof the AFP's ability to fight crime.

Krissy proudly holds the role of AFP First Nations Champion, promoting healthy and inclusive workplace culture, creating awareness and advocating for First Nations people, whilst leading and advising on significant matters to assist in implementing diversity and inclusion strategies.

In 2023, Krissy was recognised for her distinguished policing career with the Australian Police Medal. She also holds the Police Overseas Service Medal, Operations Medal (Operation Alliance – Bali bombings), ACT Emergency Medal and National Emergency Medal for leadership during bushfires, as well as the National Medal, National Police Service Medal, AFP Service Medal and ACT Community Service Medal.

Krissy holds a Masters of Leadership and Management (Policing) and a Bachelor of Arts (Criminal Justice Administration). Krissy was recognised and awarded the Mark Scott Memorial Scholarship in 2015 which she used to complete a research study contributing to diversifying the police workforce.



Lesa Gale APM

Deputy Commissioner International & Specialist Capabilities

Lesa Gale was appointed to the role of Deputy Commissioner in March 2023 and has responsibility for the International & Specialist Capabilities (IS&C) portfolio. The IS&C portfolio encompasses four Commands that deliver the AFP's specialist capabilities including Intelligence, Covert Services and Forensics as well as leading AFP's international engagement aimed at combating transnational crime, capacity-building missions, contributing to regional stability and responding to international incidents.

In 2020, Lesa was appointed by AFP Commissioner Kershaw to establish and lead the AFP's Northern Command. In this role, Deputy Commissioner Gale led a command comprising AFP offices across Queensland including Cairns, Gold Coast and Brisbane. In addition to this, Deputy Commissioner Gale was the designated specialist command lead for the AFP's global, national and local response to Human Exploitation crimes and the head of the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation.

During her distinguished 37-year career, Deputy Commissioner Gale has combined significant leadership expertise across national investigations, community policing, victim based crime and national security portfolios. This has included leading the delivery of business outcomes through deployments in AFP Commands in Canberra, Brisbane and Sydney. Promoted to the rank of Assistant Commissioner in 2018 in the role of National Manager Protection Operations, Deputy Commissioner Gale was responsible for the delivery of protection services and aviation functions both nationally and internationally, to associated threat and risk environments, for the Commonwealth and in doing so introduced significant capability enhancements to protecting Australia's national security interests.

A career highlight for Deputy Commissioner Gale was her appointment as AFP Commander for Victim Based Crime (2016). In this role, she led and delivered innovative high impact outcomes for victim-focused crime encompassing; Human Trafficking, People Smuggling, Child Protection and Exploitation and Harming Australian's Offshore. Deputy Commissioner Gale also represented the AFP at the Santa Marta Group at The Vatican, and at the World Congress in Dublin, Ireland where she delivered a landmark keynote speech titled 'The Global Realities of Child Exploitation and Australia's innovative approaches to combat in the online and offline world'.

Deputy Commissioner Gale is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Police Management's flagship program, the Australia New Zealand Police Leadership Strategy, and of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD). Deputy Commissioner Gale holds a Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Management (2017) and was awarded the Australian Police Medal (APM) in the 2019 Australia Day Honours. Throughout her career, Deputy Commissioner Gale has been awarded five Commissioner Group citations for Conspicuous Conduct and two Australia Day Medallions.



Katherine Van Gorp **Chief Operating Officer**

Katherine Van Gorp is the Chief Operating Officer for the Australian Federal Police (AFP). In this role, Katherine is responsible for the AFP's core strategic and financial mechanisms at the enterprise level. This includes: Strategy and Performance, including ministerial and government engagement, Legal, Chief Information Officer, Chief Financial Officer, People Command, including the AFP's Health and Wellbeing capability, Learning and Development and the AFP College, the Australian Institute of Police Management and Media and Communications.

Katherine brings with her to this role extensive experience across Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

Prior to returning to the AFP in 2021, Katherine was the Chief Executive Officer of the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA), appointed in late 2016. During her time at ANZPAA, Katherine implemented a new strategic foresight capability for policing across Australia and New Zealand, which examined future trends and implications for policing. Katherine strives to actively promote innovative, collaborative and strategic discussions.

Prior to her role at ANZPAA, Katherine was Chief of Staff and Executive Director with the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services, where she led first of its kind legislative reform, and was responsible for the agency's strategy and policy, organisational performance, ministerial and government engagement, key external (national and territory) engagement, and risk and audit functions. Katherine was also executive sponsor of a range of innovative agency projects, such as the introduction of facial recognition technology.

Katherine has over 27 years' experience in law enforcement and justice and has previously held executive and policy roles in the Australian Federal Police, NSW Department of Juvenile Justice and NSW Attorney-General's Department. Katherine's areas of expertise include organisational change, legislative policy, strategic planning, environmental scanning, policy advice, organisational performance and risk management.

Katherine holds a Bachelor of Business (Management) and has undertaken Bachelor of Laws studies. She is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD) and was awarded the Northern Territory Telstra Young Business Woman of the Year in 2013. Katherine has been the recipient of an AFP Commissioner's Citation for Conspicuous Conduct, for her work in policy. Most recently, Katherine was awarded the inaugural Dr Margot McCarthy Scholarship from the Australian Government, for her significant leadership and contribution to the AFP. Through the scholarship, Katherine completed the Executive Leaders Programme at Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford.



Scott Lee APM
Deputy Commissioner
Chief Police Officer, ACT Policing

Deputy Commissioner Scott Lee is the Chief Police Officer for the ACT. Scott has an extensive career with the Australian Federal Police and has been responsible for criminal investigations and intelligence operations in combatting terrorism, organised crime, money laundering, organised fraud, human trafficking, child sex offences, people smuggling, and foreign interference.

Throughout his career Scott has continued to serve the community to maintain the safety of the public. Scott has undertaken roles nationally and internationally with the AFP and collaborated with state and territory, Commonwealth and international partners to investigate and disrupt crime impacting the Australian community.



In 2002 Scott led the Australian contingent deployed to Indonesia following the Bali bombings. As Forward Commander he was in charge of the Disaster Victim Identification process which returned victims to their families. He also assisted the Indonesian National Police with the investigation into the terrorist attacks. Scott returned to Indonesia two years later in response to the terrorist bombing attack on the Australian Embassy in Jakarta.

In 2005, Scott was posted to the AFP Bangkok Office as the Senior Liaison Officer, where he worked closely with Royal Thai Police in the investigation of the Bangkok New Year's Eve 2006 bombings, counter terrorism investigations in Southern Thailand, child protection, people smuggling and narcotics investigations. During 2011 – 2013 Scott was deployed as the State Manager Victoria, where he was responsible for the delivery of operational outcomes in Victoria and the enhancement of operational partnerships with Victoria Police.

Scott was promoted to Assistant Commissioner in November 2014. In July 2015 he commenced as the Assistant Commissioner responsible for the AFP's International Operations to disrupt crime and ensure regional security and stability. In January 2020, Scott commenced as Assistant Commissioner Counter Terrorism & Special Investigations Command. In this role Scott was responsible for all national and international counter terrorism and sensitive investigations undertaken by the AFP, including the AFP's role in the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce.

Scott continues to be a champion for Diversity and Inclusion within the AFP. Scott was the Malunggang Indigenous Officer Network for six years from 2015 – 2021 and established the First Nations Unit within the AFP. As the Australian Global Head of Counter Terrorism, Scott established the global Women in Counter Terrorism program and for the first time, achieved gender balance in the executive leadership of the AFP counter terrorism command. Scott has also implemented policies to provide greater access to women for opportunities in the AFP's international command.

From October 2022 to February 2023, Scott assumed the role of Assistant Commissioner Specialist Protective Command to reform the AFP's Protection Operating Model. In 2023, Scott commenced as Assistant Commissioner Cyber Command, working together with our Australian and global partners to protect the people of Australia, their information, identities and data. In March 2024 Scott was promoted to Deputy Commissioner, and became the Chief Police Officer for the ACT.

Federal Crime Threat Picture 2024



AFP



Commissioner's foreword

I am pleased to launch the second annual Australian Federal Police (AFP) Federal Crime Threat Picture. This high-level snapshot provides insight into the trends and shifting landscape of criminal and security threats that the AFP is working tirelessly to counter.

It highlights the challenges of policing in an uncertain world driven by constant technological advancements, which provide new opportunities for criminality throughout the Commonwealth, while also offering law enforcement new avenues to identify, detect and disrupt those who threaten the safety of our communities and the security of our democracy.

Our community is facing evolving challenges including geopolitical instability, impacts of climate change, socio-economic pressures and accelerated digital transformation. Challenges arising from a cybercrime, fraud, economic vulnerabilities and traditional security frameworks are amplified by advancements in technology. We are seeing border control measures and socio-economic strains reshape the dynamics of organised criminal networks.

To address these complexities, the AFP must remain agile and continually positioning to respond to an ever-evolving threat landscape. The AFP is focused on establishing an adaptable, agile workforce that represents the communities we serve and protect, and bolstering cybersecurity infrastructure.

Policing, like the environment in which we operate, is changing and requires a skilled, tech-enabled workforce that is grounded in its humanity. As Australia's national law enforcement agency, it is vital that we stay a step ahead of crime and prevent harm to Australians and Australia's interests.

Reece P Kershaw APM
Commissioner

Addressing global challenges through a focus on partnerships

Enduring positive partnerships and accelerating disruptions, particularly for transnational and multi-jurisdictional matters, are crucial to effectively combatting crime.

Fundamental shifts in geopolitical, economic, and technological domains, along with societal changes are shaping the increasingly complex Australian criminal threat environment. Critically, threats often have international links so our international partnerships with intelligence and law enforcement agencies are vital to combatting complex crimes.

Climate change, geopolitics, and strategic competition place ongoing pressure on the stability of Australia's region. This pressure comes in the form of political instability, supply chain disruptions, and an increase in the number of displaced people. Criminal threat actors will take advantage of vulnerable institutions and individuals, and quickly adapt to maximise their financial gain. This operating environment is expected to become increasingly complex over the coming years as a result of these instabilities.

Building law enforcement capacity and capability with our partners, especially across the Asia Pacific region builds a more secure and stable region. It increases our ability to investigate complex crime, combat corruption and respond to emergencies. A coordinated approach to foreign police assistance will support Australia's security and border management.

The AFP will continue to take a multifaceted approach to fight crime at its source, including relying on our partnerships to prevent, detect, disrupt, investigate, and prosecute criminal actors and stop activity seeking to do Australians harm.



Protection of life



Protection of livelihoods



Protection of the Commonwealth



Protection of life

Protecting Australian lives is of the highest priority for the AFP and ensuring Australian lives are safe is a key driver for what we do, and how we prioritise our efforts.

Protecting Australians from terrorism and violent extremism

Terrorism is an enduring threat to the safety of the Australian community and the threat is increasingly complex and diversified.

- / Vulnerable young people are increasingly being targeted for radicalisation, particularly those who have diverse cognitive profiles or are experiencing mental health conditions.
- / Violent extremists are exploiting technology to radicalise and recruit to their cause. Ease of access to social media and other platforms will continue to provide extremists the ability to easily spread propaganda material, as well as radicalise, recruit, and organise.
- / Extremists are continuing to see airports, Australian Parliament House and other protected establishments as symbolic targets. Terrorism will remain a threat with catastrophic consequences, that has enduring risks to the broader Australian community.

The AFP takes the threat of terrorism and the threat from violent extremists, both individuals and groups, regardless of their background, motivations, or ideologies, seriously.

Ensuring Australians are safe from exploitation

Ensuring Australians and those travelling to Australia are safe from exploitation is a key priority for the AFP. The displacement of communities due to climate disasters and subsequent deterioration of personal support networks coupled with cost-of-living pressures has increased the number of vulnerable people who are prime exploitation targets.

Australia continues to be a highly attractive destination for migrants from around the world, which opens a market for people smugglers intent on exploiting exposed people. Additionally, the threat of modern slavery has increased in recent years, as broad socio-economic instabilities including the pandemic, lack of education and rising debt has increased forced labour and reporting of forced marriage.

Vulnerable people are being coerced into debt bondage on the false promise of work. Technology is being increasingly adopted by offenders to generate false employment advertisements that are indistinguishable from legitimate opportunities.

Human exploitation is a hidden crime, with no regard for borders, making it difficult to tackle. The AFP will continue to partner with law enforcement agencies both domestically and internationally to educate, prevent, respond, and disrupt those who seek to exploit others.

Protecting our children from harm

Increased access to the internet has amplified the threat of predators targeting our children. Most pre-teens now have internet access with limited supervision; however, they are not always prepared to recognise or defend themselves from online exploitation.

In the past five years the number of child sexual exploitation cases reported to the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation has doubled, with an increase of self-generated explicit content being shared through social media.

Concerning trends of children self-generating and sharing explicit material online as well as criminals deceiving children into producing exploitation material and then extorting them are rising. The methods for sharing child sexual abuse material (CSAM) are also a growing concern as criminals attempt to use the dark web and encrypted platforms to avoid detection.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being used to sexually exploit children by creating new ways to victimise and re-victimise children. The technology unlocks the ability for a single child predator to quickly create CSAM at scale. Victim identification is becoming more difficult as law enforcement has to sift through huge amounts of content to find the child in harm's way.

Australians conduct large parts of their life online and online safeguards can no longer be relied upon in isolation. The AFP will continue to make every effort to evolve the capability required to keep pace with the dynamic nature of child exploitation threats.

Protection of livelihoods

Protecting Australia's collective economic and societal interests from criminal threats by deterring malicious actors and making Australia a hostile environment for criminals to operate in, is a cornerstone of the AFP's mission.

Dismantling and tackling organised crime syndicates

There are thousands of transnational and serious organised crime (TSOC) entities impacting Australia, operating both onshore and offshore. TSOC groups are a national security threat undermining Australia's economy, social security, financial systems, and the health and wellbeing of our citizens. Australia's drug market is heavily driven by TSOC groups importing illicit drugs. Domestic drug production forms a small part of the overall picture, with criminals using improvised materials and methods in clandestine drug laboratories to meet local demand.

Psychoactive substances are becoming more prominent with dangerous consequences for our society, as manufacturers use new and different mixes of chemicals which are not yet subject to regulation to stay ahead of the law.

Despite significant efforts of law enforcement to seize methamphetamine domestically and offshore, consumption levels in Australia have reached the highest level recorded since 2019-20, with Australians consuming approximately 10.6 tonnes in 2022-23.

Organised crime groups use legitimate businesses across all sectors of our society to launder money to facilitate a broad range of crime. In doing

so, criminals evade contributing to Australia's economic prosperity and undermine domestic and international trust in, and the stability of, our financial institutions.

Technological advancements, including in AI and encrypted communications systems, are strengthening criminals' capabilities, and making it more difficult for law enforcement to intercept communications.

The AFP will continue building and maintaining strong partnerships with domestic and international law enforcement partners to counter TSOC entities that seek to target Australia from overseas. We will invest in and adopt a technology based approach to disrupt the new and emerging threats that arise from technological advancements.

Rising threat from technology and malicious actors

Malicious cyber activities perpetrated against Australia are becoming more frequent, more sophisticated and are having a more adverse impact on our national and economic interests than ever before. Cybercrime has direct and indirect implications for society, causing financial loss, disruption to essential services, reputational damage for individuals and businesses, and distrust in the digital economy.

The expanded use of cloud services, transnational service providers and identity and location masking technologies, particularly among offshore cybercriminals, presents complex challenges for the AFP. Offshore criminals are exploiting governance structures around data sovereignty and using offshore information technology infrastructure in jurisdictions hostile to law enforcement, to evade policing efforts.

Programs and software that are commercially available are reducing the technical knowledge required of criminals, making it easier to commit crimes. Generative AI models, like FraudGPT and WormGPT, provide cybercrime-as-a-service tools which assist cybercriminals in developing and deploying a wide variety of methodologies.

The use of end-to-end encryption, deepfake and AI technologies by criminals is progressing faster than legislative reform can effectively address. The AFP is a key stakeholder and source of advice for government on the criminal and policing law reform and policing powers required to more effectively counter cybercriminals. The AFP will continue to engage with its partners overseas to counter and prosecute cybercrime perpetrated offshore against Australia and its interests.

Increasing challenges from elaborate financial deceptions and corrupt conduct

Safeguarding Australians and Commonwealth revenue streams from malicious fraudulent activity and corruption remains a key focus for the AFP. An increasingly complex financial environment requires enhanced AFP capability and policing response.

Monetary loss and identity deception is growing due to the advancement of AI and biometrics. Technology is making it easier for criminals to conduct illegal activities and significantly more difficult for law enforcement to identify and counter scams and fraud.

Tax evasion, particularly through misreporting and account manipulation, is significantly impacting the Australian economy. Criminal syndicates often use trusted insiders and non-traditional facilitators, such as health professionals, accountants and business consultants for Australian Government programs and payments, to make it more difficult for law enforcement to identify and counter attempts to defraud the Commonwealth.

The increasing popularity of cryptocurrency continues to create new avenues for fraud, including the ability for criminals to hide illegal financial transactions. We are increasingly seeing criminals exploit and influence for-profit and not-for-profit entities for private gain.

As criminals continue to exploit technological advancements for their own advantage, the threat of financial deception and corrupt conduct in Australia will continue to grow and become more complex. The AFP will continue to assist other Commonwealth entities to harden their programs against the evolving threat of fraud and corruption.





Protection of the Commonwealth

The AFP plays a crucial role in safeguarding the Commonwealth and protecting Australia's democratic system. This includes combatting foreign interference and espionage, and protecting high office holders, other dignitaries, our borders, and critical infrastructure.

Threats to Australia's democracy and way of life

Espionage and foreign interference represent a serious threat to Australia's people, sovereignty, security and the integrity of our national institutions. It is a principal security concern for Australian security agencies.

Australian government employees, political leaders and their associates will continue to be attractive targets for foreign powers and their proxies, seeking to influence government decisions and policy.

Government and critical infrastructure networks are increasingly being targeted by foreign actors to conduct espionage and foreign interference which impacts social cohesion, democracy, and freedoms. Emerging markets, such as those associated with the green economy, continue to be susceptible to foreign bribery, due to weaker governance frameworks and regulatory oversight.

The insidious nature of espionage and foreign interference means even a small level of activity can have severe consequences, which can take years to be realised. The AFP will continue to evolve its strategies and tactics to investigate and disrupt these threats.

Ensuring the safety of Australian high office holders, protected persons and critical infrastructure

Threats involving federal politicians have risen in the past 12 months, with more than 1009 reports during the 2023-24 financial year involving reports of harassment, nuisance, offensive and threatening communications against federal Parliamentarians and Electorate Offices.

Together with more traditional forms of harassment and threats of force, threats such as cyberattacks, phishing scams, hacking and data breaches have risen. This has the potential to compromise sensitive information, disrupt operations, and undermine trust in government institutions.

Numerous factors can drive threatening behaviours towards Australian high office holders including increased interactions between parliamentarians and the public and trending socio-economic challenges, such as inflation, increasing interest rates, cost of living pressures and geopolitical issues. It remains important for the AFP to deliver a high visibility protective security and armed first response at protected establishments to detect, deter and disrupt criminal activity.

Ensuring the security of Australia's airports

People travelling through Australian airports expect their travel to be safe and secure. Australian airports face heightened risks with increases in international travel after the pandemic. Fifty-two bomb threats and 218 assaults occurred at Australian airports in 2023, an increase of 44% and 32% respectively from 2022.

Firearms, weapons, drugs, prohibited items, bomb threats and assaults are likely to continue presenting at Australian airports.

Counter-terrorist first response at all nine designated Australian airports, in addition to major incident first response, will remain a focus for the AFP. This will ensure the AFP can continue to deliver on the community's expectations of safe travel.

The importance of public order management in protecting the Commonwealth

An increase in violence offshore may trigger an increase in community interest and protest activity from issues motivated groups.

Social media is fueling polarisation of topics. Provocative and inflammatory online commentary inspired by international conflict is expected to continue, increasing community tensions on global issues.

The AFP recognises the right to peacefully protest, and most protests in Australia will almost certainly be lawful. However, the potential for isolated issues-motivated individuals to undertake unlawful actions, including isolated acts of violence, remains an enduring risk.

Violent or destructive protest activity of any kind will not be tolerated. Working with organisers and community leaders to ensure the safety of protesters and maintain public order will remain a key focus area for the AFP.



AFP

Commissioner's Statement of Intent

The AFP is committed to our vision of **policing for a safer Australia**. We remain dedicated to enforcing the rule of law and maintaining the trust and confidence of the community and government. Section 8 of the *Australian Federal Police (AFP) Act* outlines the policing services that we deliver, informed by the key priorities outlined in the AFP's Ministerial Direction issued by the Attorney-General.

Delivery of federal and community policing, and protective services, is critical to the protection of lives, livelihoods and Commonwealth interests. We ensure strong **police-to-community relationships** at the local, national and international level and work closely with our partners to deliver outcomes for a safer Australia. We continue to provide exceptional policing and protective services, meeting the needs of our diverse communities by enforcing the criminal law, and disrupting and responding to threats to **maximise our operational impact**.

The 2023 AFP Blue Paper highlights the long-term view of our strategic and operational needs. In recognition of the continually evolving threat environment, and consistent with our enduring focus, our key priorities across all Commands will be: **protecting lives, protecting Australia's way of life, and maximising our impact on the criminal environment**.

As a policing agency with a global footprint, we leverage our unique position to **gather critical insights, information and intelligence into threats**, and identify both issues and opportunities that are confronting Australia and our region.

To ensure that we are the **employer of choice across law enforcement**, we will continue to examine our workforce capability model, our attraction and retention initiatives, and maintain a priority focus on the health and wellbeing of our people. We will enhance our strong and effective leadership, ensure the AFP values underpin our decisions, and continue to develop and deliver critical and core capabilities needed for today and into the future.

We will continue to **prioritise partnerships and use the collective knowledge** of the law enforcement community to disrupt crime and accelerate outcomes. We will cooperate and collaborate with Commonwealth, State and Territory law enforcement and security agencies, as well as our international partners to prevent, disrupt and investigate activities threatening Australia's interests. And given we know more than 70 per cent of organised criminals seeking to harm Australia are based offshore, we will maximise the effects of our international footprint to fight crime at its source and ensure a safer Australia.

Our **innovative use of technology** to disrupt criminal activity has proven effective and we will continue to build on this success by applying inventive and practical approaches. We will continue to work across government and with industry to develop specialist technical capabilities to detect, deter and disrupt crime at the first possible instance. We will ensure robust governance frameworks and oversight mechanisms support our efforts, knowing our use of technology must be ethical and consistent with legal requirements and community expectations.

The trust and confidence of the community is our priority: the police are the community and the community are the police. Consequently, **engagement with the community** is critical to gathering information and intelligence, addressing criminal threats, building trust and maintaining legitimacy.

Our mission since inception has been to protect Australians and Australia's interests. We must ensure we remain **flexible and agile, and effectively prioritise our resources to have maximum impact** on the criminal environment today and into the future.

Reece P Kershaw APM
Commissioner



THE HON MARK DREYFUS KC MP ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I issue this Ministerial Direction under subsection 37(2) of the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979* (the AFP Act). It supersedes and revokes the Directions issued on 16 December 2020 and 8 August 2019.

The Government is committed to ensuring the safety and security of Australians and Australia's national interests. The role of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) is to uphold and enforce Commonwealth criminal law, contribute to combating complex, transnational, serious and organised crime affecting Australia's national security and protect Commonwealth interests from criminal activity in Australia and overseas.

The rule of law underpins the way Australian society is governed. Everyone—including citizens and the Government—is bound by and entitled to the benefit of laws. In upholding the law, I expect the AFP to act in accordance with the rule of law and enforce the law in a rational and fair manner. Further, I expect the AFP will uphold the highest integrity standards when conducting operations and interacting with the public. This includes acting honestly and fairly in service of all members of the community.

1. Areas of focus

When performing its functions under section 8 of the AFP Act, I expect the AFP will focus its activities to maximise impact on the criminal environment. This is in addition to the AFP working with the communities of the ACT, Jervis Bay, and Australia's external territories to address victim-based crime, threats to community safety and serious and organised crime.

In addressing these priority areas of focus, I recognise that the AFP operates in a highly complex and rapidly evolving criminal environment and must remain agile and responsive to changing demands.

Protection of life

- Identify, prevent, disrupt and investigate violent extremism in all its forms.
- Identify, prevent, disrupt and investigate human exploitation, modern slavery and the exploitation of children, including working through the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation, with a focus on protecting and supporting victims and removing them from harm.
- Support domestic and international partners to combat people smuggling ventures to Australia.

Protection of livelihoods

- Identify, prevent, deter, disrupt and investigate transnational and serious organised criminal activities affecting Australia, including illicit drug importation, firearms offences, money laundering, returning criminal assets and removing the profits of crime.
- Deter malicious actors from targeting the Australian cyber environment across government, industry and the community and protect Australians from cybercrime.
- Safeguard Commonwealth revenue by deterring, disrupting and investigating serious or complex fraud and corruption against the Commonwealth, including foreign bribery.

Protection of the Commonwealth

- Disrupt and investigate espionage and foreign interference affecting Australia's national interests.
- Ensure the security of people (including Australian High Office Holders and foreign dignitaries when in Australia), assets, critical infrastructure and systems of national significance.
- Prevent, disrupt and respond to security and criminal threats at designated Australian airports.
- Provide expertise, training and development to law enforcement partners in our region and beyond to build law and order capacity and enhance regional security.
- Respond to critical incidents in the international community as requested from time to time by foreign jurisdictions, including responding to the breakdown of law and order, criminal activities resulting in mass casualties and humanitarian crises such as natural disasters and pandemics.

2. Expectations

To fulfil its role as Australia's federal law enforcement agency and maintain high levels of trust, the AFP must act with the upmost integrity and continue to engage with government and the community through a range of legislated accountability mechanisms. Further, the operational independence of the AFP must be preserved so that the Commissioner continues to have general administration and control of the operations of the AFP.

Collaboration and partnerships with domestic and international policing counterparts, as well as industry, academia, civil society and the community is essential. The AFP must work closely with the Attorney-General's Department, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre and other Commonwealth law enforcement and intelligence agencies. As a federal police force, the AFP must develop close relationships and work collaboratively and cooperatively with state and territory law enforcement bodies. This will ensure a strategic and coordinated approach

to law enforcement policy and operations across Australia. Further, the AFP must develop close relationships with Australia's international partners, including those in the Pacific.

In performing its functions under section 8 of the AFP Act, I expect that the AFP will:

- Maintain a deep understanding of the threat environment to ensure the AFP is best placed to respond to criminal threats wherever they may occur;
- Conduct its activities with the utmost integrity and respect;
- Adhere to Australia's international obligations, including protecting human dignity and upholding the human rights of all persons;
- In protecting and serving the community, engage with members of the community with respect and in a culturally appropriate way, with special care taken when engaging with children;
- Provide advice and support whole-of-government decision-making, contributing operational perspectives on matters of national security to ensure an effective response to emerging threats to the Australian community;
- Use the AFP's significant international presence and relationships to address criminal threats offshore to prevent harm reaching Australian shores and maintaining security in the region;
- Continue to maintain a high-performing, innovative and values-driven policing agency that prioritises the development of its people and their health and wellbeing in the pursuit of operational outcomes;
- Ensure the safety of AFP members, capabilities and policing infrastructure;
- Ensure strong corporate governance and information management, comply with relevant legislative requirements and act with integrity at all times; and
- Proactively identify and address issues affecting the AFP's performance and capacity to achieve priorities in a timely and comprehensive manner.

3. Investigations involving a professional journalist or news media organisation

Regarding the investigation of unauthorised disclosure of material made or obtained by a current or former Commonwealth officer involving a professional journalist or news media organisation, I expect the AFP to take into account the importance of a free and open press in Australia's democratic society and to consider the broader public interest implications before considering investigative action involving a professional journalist or news media organisation.

I also expect the AFP to exhaust all alternative lines of inquiry and to seek voluntary assistance wherever operationally possible from a professional journalist or news media organisation, prior to exercising powers against a journalist or news media organisation.

Further, the AFP should follow the National Guideline on investigative action involving professional journalists or news media organisations and have regard to any whole-of-government guidance that may be issued concerning the levels of harm caused to Australia's national interest by disclosure of the various types of information held across government.



MARK DREYFUS KC MP

20 / 10 / 2023

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