

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG  
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
DFAT ESTIMATES OPENING STATEMENT  
THURSDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2025**

Chair, Senators – thank you for the opportunity to make an opening statement.

And before I address the broader strategic context, I want to begin with the devastating floods and extreme weather that have struck Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka in recent days.

And on behalf of all Australians, I extend our deepest condolences to all who have lost loved ones, homes and livelihoods.

This morning, Minister Anne Aly and I announced that Australia is providing an additional \$5 million in emergency assistance to help affected communities.

This takes our total assistance to the region to over \$14 million to date.

Senators, we all see that our world is becoming less certain and less stable.

More people displaced. More people hungry. More conflict – Sudan, Ukraine, Gaza and elsewhere.

Geopolitical tension, economic uncertainty and technological disruption is testing the resilience of our economies, our peoples, and the strength of our cooperation.

But as I said before to this Committee just a couple of months ago, I am confident in Australia, I am confident in Australians and in our ability to work together to protect the peace, security, stability and prosperity of our nation.

For the past three and a half years – the Albanese Government has been strengthening every one of our regional relationships.

We have been building Australia's future in our region.

Because we do not just live here. We are architects.

And since I last addressed this Committee in October, we have concluded negotiations on the Treaty on Common Security with Indonesia—a watershed moment in the Australia-Indonesia relationship.

We have built on the Pukpuk Treaty with Papua New Guinea, with Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles holding our first-ever trilateral Defence Ministers' Meeting with PNG and Indonesia just this week.

This follows the successful PNG-Australia Ministerial Forum held in Canberra where we reaffirmed our shared commitment to shaping a peaceful, stable and prosperous Pacific, as allies.

As a result of our COP31 negotiations, Australia and the Pacific family will have unprecedented influence over multilateral deliberations and actions of the global community next year.

Our partnership is a practical expression of what it means to be part of the Pacific family.

We don't lecture, we don't mock – we listen, respectfully.

We are a reliable partner and we are elevating Pacific leadership so that the Pacific can help shape solutions to our shared problems.

I have also travelled to India for the 16<sup>th</sup> Australia-Indian Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue, my 26<sup>th</sup> meeting with my Indian counterpart.

I have met with the new Japanese Foreign Minister on the sidelines of APEC in South Korea where we affirmed our commitment to elevate our Special Strategic Partnership.

These milestones demonstrate what Australia wants:

A peaceful, stable, prosperous region – where sovereignty is respected.

A region where countries large and small have the freedom to decide their futures.

Senators, we are also strengthening our traditional and diversified relationships.

The Prime Minister has travelled to Washington DC, signing a historic critical minerals deal with President Trump.

We are also increasingly working with Canada and New Zealand, and working to find common ground in other groupings including the Quad and MIKTA.

And we continue our work to stabilise Australia's relationship with China without compromising on our interests.

We know we are stronger when Australia and our partners work together, which includes upholding the rules that protect us all.

And even as institutions are being undermined and rules being broken, international law and the multilateral system still set expectations, and enable free trade and cooperation.

Finally Senators, I think all of us here appreciate Australia's unique parliamentary system and the strength of our democracy.

The trust Australians place in our institutions enables us to navigate a world that is more divided, more contested and more insecure.

I again say, our strength at home, our cohesion at home, raises the costs for those who seek to coerce us.

Our strength reinforces our capacity to engage with others with confidence, to withstand pressure, and to shape outcomes in Australia's national interest.

But as I have said before we can't afford to stand still while tectonic plates are shifting around us – because in these circumstances, that means going backwards.

So we do not stand still.

We focus on our region.

We focus on our relationships, and we invest in them.

We uphold and protect the rules.

And we strengthen Australia's resilience.

The Government is realistic about the circumstances we face, and we recognise that not every decision will go our way.

But we will keep pressing Australia's interests in all of these ways.

And as a result of our work so far Australia is more connected, more respected and more influential than at any time in recent years.

I look forward to your questions.