

# Opening Statement

Additional Estimates 2025-26

*February 2026*

- Thank you, Chair.
- Blair Exell, Deputy Secretary of Social Policy Group in the Department.
- Other members of the PM&C's Executive in attendance for this session to answer your questions include:
  - Elly Lawson, Deputy Secretary, International and Security,
  - Kendra Morony, Deputy Secretary, AUKUS,
  - Narelle Luchetti, A/g Deputy Secretary, Economy, Industry and Resilience, and
  - Kerren Crosthwaite, A/g Deputy Secretary, Governance and Corporate.
- The Department also has other senior officials here to assist the Committee. A detailed list of witnesses attending has been provided to the Committee Secretariat.
- Officers from the Office for Women and Australian Government Consulting will be appearing tomorrow – Tuesday, 10 February – with portfolio agencies under the responsibility of the Minister for Women and Minister for the Public Service, respectively.
- I also note the following recent changes to the PM&C Executive:
  - As of 12 January 2026, Kendra Morony was promoted to the position of Deputy Secretary, AUKUS Group.
  - Nadine Williams has been seconded to the Department of Defence to lead the whole-of-Government taskforce to implement the Defence Delivery Agency, announced by the Government on 1 December 2025.
  - Finally, Martin Hehir retired from the Public Service on 6 February 2026, after a career that has spanned more than three decades working across the ACT and Commonwealth public service.
- I have PM&C's Organisation Chart available for the Committee, should you wish it to be tabled.

- I would like to acknowledge on behalf of PM&C that our thoughts remain with the families and friends of the 15 people who tragically lost their lives in the horrific antisemitic terrorist attack at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025, those recovering from injuries, and all those affected.
- As the Prime Minister said in his remarks during the National Day of Mourning on Thursday 22 January 2026, we stand in solidarity with Jewish Australians, and affirm our shared values of unity, compassion and resilience that define Australia.
- In response to the incident, PM&C established the Bondi Response Coordination Taskforce to manage coordination of activities across Government in response to the attack, in addition to its business-as-usual role in supporting the Government's policy response and the usual workings of government.
- PM&C continues to work closely with NSW to ensure victims and their families receive the support they need.
- PM&C worked in close collaboration with agencies leading aspects of the Government's response. In particular –
  - the Department of Home Affairs on firearms reform, the Government response to the report of the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, the *Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism (Firearms and Customs Laws) Act 2026*, and on security and immediate support for Jewish community organisations,
  - the Attorney-General's Department on the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion and the *Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism (Criminal and Migration Laws) Act 2026*,
  - the National Emergency Management Agency on funding to New South Wales (NSW) under Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, and
  - The Department of Health, Disability and Aging on the implementation of immediate mental health supports for the affected community.
- Thank you for the time, Chair. We are happy to answer questions.