

Opening statement – PM&C Estimates

Thank you, Chair and thank you, committee members.

Chair, I thought whilst we obviously will deal with the Middle East on Friday with DFAT estimates I did want to, given today's date, pause on the second anniversary of October 7 and to reflect upon the atrocities inflicted by Hamas.

As the Prime Minister said this morning, the 7th of October 2023 was a day of pain and terror for Jewish people around the world.

Over 1,200 innocent people were killed, over 1,100 Israelis: the largest loss of Jewish life on any single day since the Holocaust.

Australian Galit Carbone amongst them, tragically murdered on this day, two years ago.

We unequivocally condemn the terrorist group Hamas' actions. And we call again for the release of hostages immediately and with dignity.

It is beyond comprehension, I think for all of us, how hostages have been isolated and captive for two years, and what their loved ones have endured in an agony of waiting and not knowing.

Australia welcome progress on President Trump's plan to bring peace to Gaza and to bring the hostages home. We welcome the support of the international community, including members of the Arab League, the Palestinian Authority and Muslim nations in our own region.

So today is a day of mourning and reflection, and we also re-affirm a fundamental principle of our shared humanity: every innocent life matters.

The Government has consistently called for a ceasefire, for the release of all hostages, and for the protection of all civilians.

The number of Palestinian civilians who have lost their lives over the last two years is beyond the world's worst fears.

We unequivocally reject the terror perpetrated by Hamas. Hamas do not represent the Palestinian people, nor act in their interests.

Australia remains committed to a two-state solution as the path to an enduring peace.

Two states – Israel and Palestine – living peacefully side by side in peace, with prosperity and security for their people.

Since the atrocities of October 7, Jewish Australians have felt the cold shadows of antisemitism reaching into this present day.

This is unacceptable and it is un-Australian, and needs to be condemned by all.

We have also seen appalling attempts by the Iranian regime to direct antisemitic attacks on Australian soil – dangerous interference which we have made clear will not be tolerated.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement in August, the Attorney-General will this week introduce legislation to enable the Government to list foreign state entities as 'state sponsors of terrorism' under the *Criminal Code 1995*.

Chair, today also marks the first Estimates hearing following the federal election.

It is a re-elected Albanese Labor Government which has been entrusted by the Australian people to continue building Australia's future.

To secure Australia's place in the world and to keep Australians safe.

The Government is determined that 2025 will be a year of delivery.

We are delivering on the commitments Australians voted for on the 3rd of May.

Cutting taxes for every Australian taxpayer.

Cutting student debt by 20 per cent.

Protecting weekend and overtime pay by enshrining penalty rates into law.

We are strengthening Medicare, and ensuring medicines are the cheapest they have been since 2004.

We are supporting Australians on the cost of living, and getting more Australians into their own home.

This is why we fast tracked our 5 per cent deposit plan for all Australian first home buyers, starting last week.

Delivery is what drives this Government. It is how we look to repay the trust placed that has been placed in us by the Australian people.

And how we demonstrate that a focused and reforming government can make a practical and positive difference to people's lives.

We have done this together, and this government is intent on securing the progress we have made, and pushing forward in the national interest, together.

Thank you Chair.