



OFFICIAL

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Opening statement
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee

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Thank you Chair

Since we last met, Australia has been shocked to its core by the devastating terrorist attack against Australia's Jewish community at Bondi. Our thoughts remain with the families, friends and communities impacted so horrifically by this attack.

Home Affairs staff have worked tirelessly since 14 December to respond to the tragedy. They have engaged with the Jewish community to understand its needs, they have prioritised visas for families and loved ones, they have organised immediate financial assistance to facilitate medical treatment, family reunion and other essential needs. They supported the finalisation of the Government's response to Ms Segal's report, and commenced the rollout of the antisemitism training recommended in that report.

In close collaboration with colleagues in Attorney-General's Department and others, they were integral to the successful passage of the Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism Bills on Criminal and Migration Laws, and on Firearms and Customs Laws. And of course they are now working hard to support the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion.

I want to acknowledge also the work of Australian Federal Police and Western Australian colleagues in response to the failed terrorist attack against the 26 January invasion day rally – again our thoughts are with our First Nation colleagues and all who joined that rally, who have a right to protest without risking their lives.

Much else has been achieved across Home Affairs since we last appeared in early December. Today is not the day to detail these achievements, with our focus rightly on the terrorist attacks described above. But those staff who have continued to progress outcomes as diverse as countering violent extremism programs, cyber security, expedited access to the US for Australian citizens, enhanced citizenship processing, combatting migrant worker exploitation, illicit tobacco and prohibited drugs, should be in no doubt that their efforts are seen and greatly appreciated.