

Good evening.

This is the AFP's first Budget Estimates appearance since the Bondi Beach terrorist attack on December 14.

I will reiterate what I have previously said publicly, but I will not provide any further remarks given this matter is subject to an ongoing criminal investigation and a Royal Commission.

Indications remain that a father and son who allegedly committed this terrorist attack allegedly acted alone and were inspired by ISIS, a terrorist organisation responsible for mass killings and antisemitism.

The father was killed by police during the active shooter attack.

On January 17, his son was charged by the NSW Joint Counter Terrorism Team, which includes NSW Police, AFP and ASIO and the NSW Crime Commission.

The man, who remains in custody, has been charged with 59 offences, including:

- One count of commit terrorist act
- 15 counts of murder, and
- 40 counts of cause wounding/grievous bodily harm to person with intent to murder.

The most serious charges have a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

This remains an active investigation by the NSW Joint Counter Terrorism Team, so I will not provide any detail on the investigation so as not to prejudice either the investigation or any subsequent criminal proceedings.

Separately, on February 4, the Western Australia Joint Counter Terrorism Team, which includes Western Australia Police Force, AFP and ASIO, charged a man, 31, with an act of terrorism, which carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

It is alleged the man removed a home-made improvised device from his bag and threw it into a rally held in support of First Nations people on January 26, 2026.

We allege the individual acted to advance a nationalist and racially motivated ideological cause.

We allege this individual's target was First Nations peoples.

Hatred and a willingness to mobilise to violence, which often masquerades as a right or freedom to do or say something, is very much directed at our Commonwealth politicians, high office holders, our faith and CALD communities.

We are witnessing the continued rise of individual grievance, including those who are willing to make threats in the online world and then carry them out in the real world.

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Some of these offenders are not seeking or needing a partner in crime or a network to carry out threats of violence – this personalised grievance is often connected to world events, their own sense of injustice or a fixation on people or weapons.

It may also be that loneliness, or a feeling of exclusion, is driving some of this radicalisation – where individuals who find it hard to make connections go searching for forums or platforms where their polarising views are accepted.

A majority of our terrorism case load continues to be religiously motivated violent extremism. But we are also recording increasing incidents of ideologically motivated violent extremism.

We are also witnessing a trend of lone actors being radicalised quickly – and this creates a more challenging environment for law enforcement.

And of significant concern, we are witnessing a growing cohort of people, including youth, who are susceptible to hatred or are attracted to violence.

Too many influences and influencers are poisoning the minds of our kids and the vulnerable.

Joint Counter Terrorism Teams across Australia, of which the AFP and ASIO are members of all eight, have charged 26 youth with terrorism type offences since 2020.

Being convicted of a Commonwealth terrorism offence can mean individuals are subject to the High Risk Terrorist Offender regime.

This is where offenders may not be released from prison after they have served their sentence or are monitored by the AFP when they are released back into the community.

We do not have any young people on the regime, yet, and I say yet, because the trajectory of our caseload makes it probable Australia will start having young people declared as High Risk Terrorist Offenders.

Primarily, we are focussed on public safety, however, under my Commissionership, the AFP will take a very proactive approach to intervene much earlier, including when it comes to youth offenders.

Intervening earlier helps to ensure criminals are disrupted before they reach the most serious levels of offending.

And that is critical for public safety.

That is why I established our new hate disrupter squads, officially known as National Security Investigations teams.

They were set up to target groups and individuals causing high harm to Australia's social cohesion because I was so concerned about the current and emerging groups and individuals who are eroding the country's social fabric by advocating hatred, fear, and humiliation.

While many of these groups and individuals are not committing terrorism offences, the AFP has identified behaviour that may escalate towards politically or ideologically-motivated violence or hate crimes.

These National Security Investigations teams were established to take action quickly.

These flying squads of hate disrupters have been very successful in identifying offending and charging offenders before violence is carried out.

Since I set up the teams, they have charged 21 individuals across Australia.

The majority of these charges relate to threats towards parliamentarians, high-office holders and the Jewish community.

The National Security Investigations teams' proof of concept has been successful, and they are now being expanded throughout the country to work closely with existing security investigation units across state and territory police jurisdictions.

And since the Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism Act received Royal Assent a few weeks ago, the AFP is taking an even more aggressive approach – and that includes releasing more information to the public about our operations. We are doing this because they are important disruption and community assurance levers in themselves.

I can reveal National Security Investigations teams have a standing operation that targets white supremacists. That is called Operation DRAKELOW. A standing operation is one with continuous effect.

We also have a standing operation that targets those described as hate preachers. This is called Operation ANTROBUS, which is focussed on known and emerging hate preachers.

We know who many of these malicious manipulators are.

And we know some are getting legal advice to push their hate and their radical recruitment drives to the edge of what is lawful.

It means in some cases, particularly with hate preachers, we have not been able to reach the threshold of charging.

But I want to be clear about my intent. We will use all our available disruption tools because modern policing is not always about arresting and charging, it includes the benefit of disrupting.

Under my Commissionership, we will disrupt and intervene however and wherever we lawfully can.

Some of our actions will be visible and overt, and other actions will be lawful and covert – and that unpredictability should worry those who are on our radar, and those who will be as we widen our net.

My advice – if you are one of these groups or individuals – your life will become very uncomfortable.

If anyone has information that a person holds extreme views and is mobilising to violence, please reach out to authorities or call the National Security Hotline on 1800 123 400.

Thank you.