

Good morning Committee members.

Today, there are a number of matters to outline, including key developments since our last appearance on May 25.

I will go into detail as much as I can, noting that some issues of interest are active investigations.

The AFP holds itself to the highest standards when it comes to accountability and transparency.

As a mature and agile agency, we know community trust and confidence is a key pillar to operational success.

And while we may want to provide more information to the community and hearings like this, we must primarily protect active criminal investigations.

Having a clean corridor for investigations is integral.

Today, I want to address a number of issues relating to the investigation involving PwC Australia.

Firstly, there has been commentary that the AFP received a referral to investigate PwC for the alleged misuse of confidential government information in 2018.

That is incorrect.

In 2018, the ATO asked the AFP's then-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Centre for advice about the matter. This was standard practice for complex tax matters.

An initial sample of documents was provided to the AFP.

There was an understanding between the AFP and ATO that this would help to determine whether an offence may have been committed.

There was also an understanding the AFP would take no further action without further consulting the ATO.

Based on the documents provided to the AFP, and further engagement with the ATO, we advised the ATO there was not enough information for the AFP to make an assessment at that time. As such, a referral of a report of crime to the AFP was not progressed.

Now, it is important to note the AFP did not receive a report of crime for investigation until 24 May, 2023, almost five years later.

And that report was from Treasury.

Our investigation is underway. It is complex. We expect we will have to triage thousands of documents, and we will need to navigate various legal considerations in relation to these documents.

This will take some time but we will carry out this investigation with rigour and efficiency.

Secondly, I want to address commentary that there was a conflict of interest in former NSW Police Commissioner and PwC partner Mick Fuller receiving a contract to review policing in the ACT.

Mr Fuller and I have a collegial, professional relationship.

I describe him as a friend, and like I said in May, I consider all current and former Police Commissioners friends.

My familiarity with Mr Fuller is from years of working together - including through the COVID pandemic – but it is not from socialising together.

Mr Fuller and I do not have dinner at each other's homes. We don't play golf together. I don't know the personal details of his life.

I want to be clear about that because it is important that our professional relationship is not mischaracterised.

The majority of the conversations Mr Fuller and I have are about matters relating to our former or current roles, or policing issues in general.

What we have in common is dedication to service, to the community and keeping our people safe.

The contract Mr Fuller undertook was a job for a former Police Commissioner, who had the required knowledge and expertise for a review.

It was critical the reviewer had a contemporary skillset and knowledge of the unique operating environment of the ACT, the capabilities needed for

a fully-effective police force and the ability to navigate a range of stakeholders, including ministers and agency heads.

Over a number of years, governments and other agencies have used former police commissioners to undertake reviews because of their knowledge, the unique role they had in the public service and their connection to community.

But to provide more background, and give you some insight into our thinking, I can tell you that we considered other former Police Commissioners in Australia and offshore to carry out the review, but Mr Fuller had the knowledge needed, given his former police jurisdiction bordered the ACT.

The bottom line is that Mr Fuller was the best person for the job. In the AFP, we aim to hire the best people for the job.

Mr Fuller was also supported by a team experienced in strategy, national security and law enforcement.

PwC was engaged through the Management Advisory Services panel, which is a mandatory Whole of Australian Government procurement panel, administered by the Department of Finance. PwC charged the AFP in accordance with the agreed panel rates.

The findings from the *Independent Review of the AFP's provision of policing services to the Australian Capital Territory* are what I would describe as long-range, for example policing issues coming down the pipeline for up to a decade away.

These findings will help the AFP and the ACT Government plan and coordinate policing issues over the years to come.

These types of reviews are done to help future protect residents and visitors to the ACT, and those of you, and your staff, who work in this building.

I am concerned about the level of threats in and around the Parliamentary precinct and to high office holders.

But as Commissioner, I can't just think about today and tomorrow, we have to be prepared for what's next and how we can get ahead of those looming issues.

I make no apologies for undertaking a review that identifies issues that could help keep residents and parliamentarians safe, five and 10 years down the track. We need to know the issues, so we can plan for them now.

The work parliamentarians perform go to the heart of democracy, but it also goes to the first principles for the AFP – protecting Australians and our national interests.

More broadly, the AFP also provides high-visibility protection services for a range of high-office holders and establishments, including: defence establishments, the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, diplomatic missions, parliamentary sites and designated official establishments. Some of these establishments are in Canberra.

Finally, on June 16, **the AFP advised PwC all contractual arrangements with the firm would be finalised.**

The deed of termination by mutual consent was signed on July 3, with effect on June 30 this year.

As we have previously advised this Committee, the AFP is implementing the savings measure announced as part of the Government's Plan for a Better Future through reducing external contractors and consultants.

We are committed to developing our internal capabilities, delivering more outcomes using AFP resources and reducing the reliance on external labour hire.

Thank you and we are happy to take questions.