



Opening statement to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee

2023-24 Budget Estimates – 23 May 2023

Director-General, Chris Moraitis PSM

Thank you chair.

As you are likely aware, investigations being undertaken jointly by the OSI and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) resulted in the arrest in March of a former Australian soldier who was subsequently charged with War Crime—Murder.

This is the first war crime charge arising from the joint investigations. While the resulting level of public interest is understandable, the case is now before the NSW Local Court and accordingly it is not appropriate for me to make further comment.

In addition to ongoing work in support of these legal proceedings, the OSI's efforts to advance a number of other investigations continue unabated. Our teams are conducting their work as expeditiously as possible, conscious of not unnecessarily adding to the burden of anyone affected by the investigations, including their families.

The joint investigations are currently progressing approximately 40 matters – that hasn't changed significantly since I last updated this Committee in February. The number of active investigations from all sources is fluid and under constant review; I expect it will continue to trend downwards over time, as we focus our efforts on alleged war crimes of particular gravity and which meet the high evidentiary threshold for a criminal justice process.

I remain focussed on ensuring the OSI's ability to conduct a thorough, impartial and rigorous process through our strong workforce, systems and structures.

Finally, I would like to recognise the dedication and exemplary work of the joint investigation teams and other OSI staff. I also acknowledge the continuing support of state and territory police commissioners who have supported extensions for their staff, and the ongoing commitment of our Commonwealth partners to this challenging work.

Thank you.