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22 January 2026

Committee Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Chair,

On behalf of the Australian Federal Police (AFP), thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Joint Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's inquiry into the role of Australia's international development program in preventing conflict. The AFP works closely with Australian Government partners, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), to ensure a comprehensive whole-of-government approach to preventing conflict and strengthening Australia's standing as development partner of choice.

As Australia's national policing agency, the AFP plays a critical role in strengthening the rule of law to support stable and secure governance, and safeguard communities from transnational threats. Since commencing as the ninth AFP Commissioner, Commissioner Krissy Barrett APM has updated the AFP's mission statement to '*defend and protect Australia and Australia's future from domestic and global security threats*' in response to a rapidly evolving environment that increases in scale and complexity. Underpinning this new mission statement is a renewed priority to supercharge the AFP's global operations. The purpose of this priority is to demonstrate the AFP's posture towards national security by taking deliberate and purposeful actions with overseas law enforcement partners. An AFP that prioritises global operations will be in a better position to help partners combat threats to community safety, stability, and security.

The AFP's International Strategy – Towards 2030 (the Strategy) expresses how the work of the AFP links these efforts. The Strategy articulates the AFP's international partnership principles which govern the AFP's global efforts, including in relation to capacity development. Humanitarian assistance alone cannot prevent or resolve protracted crises and conflicts. As such, there is recognition of the need to focus on durable solutions, through aligning humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, diplomatic and security efforts. This includes delivering capacity development that best protects life and property, promotes the role of women in peace and security, builds resilient communities and benefits the people of host nations.

Championing for a principled-based approach that promotes gender equality in a policing context supports the AFP's efforts in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and community resilience and the AFP's international strategic aims. Notably, from 1 – 4 December 2025, the AFP successfully hosted a Gender and Anti-Corruption Workshop in Indonesia, bringing together 35 law enforcement and anti-corruption officials from India, Indonesia, Fiji, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam. The workshop explored how gender mainstreaming improves anti-corruption operations and how advancing gender equality supports more accountable public institutions.

The AFP has a distinguished record of international engagement, marked by trusted collaboration and enduring partnerships with law enforcement agencies globally.

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In particular, the AFP's presence in the Pacific region is essential in ensuring regional stability by disrupting transnational organised crime activities that threaten Australia's interests. The AFP focuses on building enduring partnerships in international regions, emphasising the importance of strengthening community and civic engagement within regional policing and security.

The AFP's efforts to uplift policing capability within Pacific nations is increasingly vital, especially in countering transnational serious and organised crime (TSOC). TSOC is a significant contributor to instability within countries and entire regions and can undermine development assistance in affected areas. The work of the AFP in TSOC benefits Australia's national security and enables a stronger landscape for the implementation of development assistance. This is further demonstrated by the AFP's "Taskforce Thunder". Announced by the AFP in October 2025, AFP Taskforce Thunder is an operation that focusses on all crimes, including cybercrime, illicit importations and human trafficking throughout our region. The primary intent of AFP Taskforce Thunder is to identify and prevent the activity of threat actors who are focussed on exploiting the Pacific region, including Australia, for criminal purposes (such as through the movement of illicit commodities or human trafficking).

A proactive partnership-oriented approach is central to the AFP's operations. This includes intelligence sharing, joint operations, implementing capacity-building initiatives, enhancing governance structures and supporting security reforms with partner agencies. These collaborative efforts not only disrupt criminal networks but also foster long-term stability and trust among international counterparts. Investment in strong relationships and adaptive strategies enables the AFP to respond effectively to emerging threats and evolving criminal methodologies within the dynamic global landscape.

The AFP delivers training and capability uplift of partner police forces through the AFP International Network and bilateral and multilateral programs, including the DFAT-led Mekong-Australia Partnership on Transnational Crime (MAP-TNC) and the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism. In the Pacific, the AFP's primary focus is promoting regional stability, maintaining the rule of law and working closely with our Pacific partners. With over 100 AFP members located across the Pacific, the AFP works directly with local law enforcement to combat crime and provide specialist policing training, equipment and education. In addition to diplomatically accredited police liaisons in Port Moresby, Port Vila, Suva and Wellington, the AFP has bilateral partnership programs in 7 countries: Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Nauru, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu.

The AFP works in close collaboration with our policing partners to jointly establish the framework, priorities and goals for each program. The exception to this is the Vanuatu-Australia Policing and Justice Program (VAPJP) which is a joint policing and justice program that the AFP delivers in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). As a joint policing and justice program, the goal of the VAPJP is improved policing, justice and community services in Vanuatu.

The program focuses on themes including increased support for effective handling of cases involving violence against women and children, community policing, support for law reform, and strengthening the administrative capacity of the Vanuatu Police Force (VPF) and the Justice and Community Services Sector.

The AFP's international policing partnerships help advance Australia's development goals by promoting a peaceful, stable and prosperous region where sovereignty, the rule of law and human rights are upheld. These partnerships strengthen institutions, enhance regional security and support efforts to combat TSOC, and respond to humanitarian and disaster emergencies. Built on diplomacy, trust and shared interests, this collaboration reflects Australia's commitment to regional peace and its determination to protect sovereignty and security from global threats.

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Case Study 1:

The Pacific Policing Initiative (PPI) is a Pacific-led, Australian-supported initiative designed to enhance law enforcement and policing capabilities and promote safety and security in the Pacific. The PPI is a collective regional response to the peace and security of the Blue Pacific. Pacific Police Chiefs are collaboratively developing the PPI to meet collective policing needs in a way that responds to regional priorities, improves cooperation, respects sovereignty and enhances capability and interoperability. The PPI has three pillars:

- Regional Centres of Excellence;
- Pacific Police Support Group (PPSG); and
- Pacific policing development and coordination hub (Pinkenba Hub) in Brisbane.

On 12 December 2025, following the Pinkenba Hub's first anniversary celebrations, the AFP announced plans to significantly expand the Pinkenba Hub as the primary training facility for PPSG. The PPSG has previously deployed to the Palau 2025 Pacific Mini Games, Vanuatu's post-2024 earthquake recovery and the 2025 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa. Memorandums of Understanding were also signed establishing the PPI's institutional arrangements. This milestone demonstrates that collaboration and sustained efforts in partnerships can advance shared interests.

Case Study 2:

The Timor-Leste Police Development Program (TLPDP) commenced in 2004 and is the AFP's longest running bilateral policing program. The longevity and consistent support for the program demonstrates the strength and impact of police diplomacy and development assistance in support of the bilateral relationship between Australia and Timor-Leste. The current Phase V has built upon prior designs and is centred upon principles of community policing and enhancing enabling systems for the Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL).

Phase V integrates locally led development priorities informed by the PNTL, including the PNTL's Commander General's Five Priorities (2023-2028) and the recently launched PNTL Gender Strategy 2024-2028. With the approval of the Joint Steering Committee in November 2024, TLPDP is also extending targeted support and development to the Criminal Investigation Scientific Police (PCIC) to strengthen national institutions in advance of the end of program outcomes and overarching program goal that aim to 'contribute to a stable and secure Timor-Leste.'

In early 2024, the TLPDP was notified that His Holiness Pope Francis could be travelling to Timor-Leste as part of the Indo-Pacific tour in September that year. The visit fast became the national priority as around 97% of the Timorese population are Catholic. In response, TLPDP prioritised advisory support and targeted training for the PNTL in areas of Major Events planning, Command, Control and Coordination, Forensics, Surveillance, Close Personal Protection, Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Public Order Management (POM). Leveraging AFP support, the PNTL formed a Public Order Management Task Force and delivered training throughout the 14 municipalities across the nation. With an estimate of Pilgrims planning to travel to Dili exceeding half of the national population, the implications of internal movements and mass gatherings raised significant concern. The Papal security operation was a resounding success and was a milestone achievement for the PNTL.

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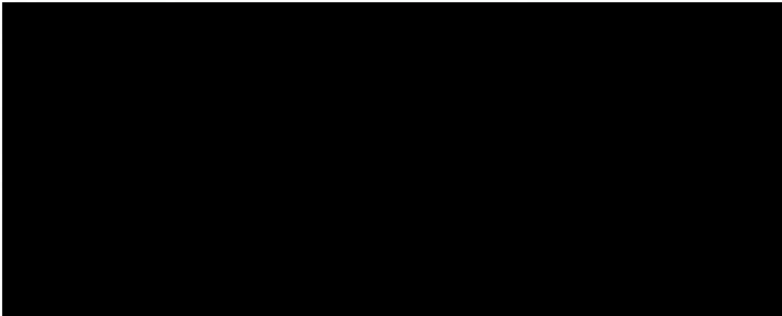
Case Study 3:

From 12 May to 13 June 2025, the AFP facilitated and financed UN pre-deployment training at the Pinkenba Hub for 100 participants comprising both Pacific police and AFP members. This initiative marked a significant advancement towards fostering enduring and effective pathways for Pacific police involvement in UN peace operations, while also supporting the AFP's objectives and broader Whole-of-Australian-Government (WoAG) Pacific strategy.

The AFP is available to appear before the Joint Committee to expand on the information in this submission should hearing dates be scheduled in the future.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,



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