

Radio Interview with Sabra Lane

SABRA LANE: Joining us now to discuss the terror plot is the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, who is on the line from Perth. Good morning, Mr Turnbull. Welcome back to AM.

PRIME MINISTER: Thank you very much. Good to be with you.

SABRA LANE: It's now more than 24 hours since the nation was alerted to this plot. How close was this group to carrying it out?

PRIME MINISTER: They were advanced. I can't say precisely how far they were advanced at this stage, because that's a matter that's being investigated. But I can say that certainly the police will allege they had the intent and were developing the capability. This is a very fine example of the way in which intelligence was acted upon – very, very swiftly – by our agencies working together. The Government working with our agencies, swiftly, to put measures in place and then to move to a quick investigation and operation as I described with the two police commissioners and the Justice Minister yesterday morning. So there will obviously be more to say over coming days, but right at the moment the investigation is continuing.

But Australians should be reassured that we have the finest security and intelligence agencies in the world. This is now the 13th terrorist plot that has been disrupted by our agencies since 2014.

SABRA LANE: There are conflicting reports, Prime Minister, that this was an alleged bomb plot, or a plan to gas passengers . Can you clarify?

PRIME MINISTER: I won't go into any further detail on that, Sabra. I've noticed there's been a number of reports in the press speculating about the method of attack. But again, forgive me, I have to respect the integrity of the investigations. Again, Australians can be assured that we have very fine intelligence services and we moved extremely quickly on this one and – as you can see – with the right outcomes.

SABRA LANE: The information that triggered the arrests came from an overseas intelligence agency. How concerned are you that on home soil, it appears that our agencies weren't aware of it?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, I wouldn't comment on that. Again, I'm not going to go into details and I think Australians will understand the importance of me being circumspect about the sources of intelligence. But I just want to make this observation, and I've made it many times in recent days: Intelligence is a function of collaboration. We cooperate with other agencies within Australia. We cooperate with members of the community, with business. We cooperate with international agencies. So it is absolutely seamless. You need to be picking up pieces of information – they may seem unrelated – stitching them together, making connections, creating that fabric that then leads you, in this case, to an alleged conspiracy.

So, you know, we have very fine intelligence services. But, every nation, every nation depends on the work of others. We're all in this together and this is one of the key themes of the G20. We are intensifying, all the time, our collaboration with other countries and other agencies. Because, you know, the threat, there are no borders; I mean, nowhere is far away from anywhere else nowadays. In an age of the internet and the age of social media and the age of over-the-Internet messaging applications, Syria is not a long way away from Sydney.

So that's the criticality of it, seamless cooperation.

SABRA LANE: On that theme of the interconnectedness, are you able to tell us whether this group was being guided by someone overseas?

PRIME MINISTER: Again, I won't go into further commentary on that at this point, but I can assure you it was, as the Federal Police Commissioner said yesterday, it'll be alleged that this was an Islamist extremist terrorist motivation.

SABRA LANE: How long will the additional checks at airports be required, or will they become a permanent feature for travellers?

PRIME MINISTER: They'll be required for as long as the threat is assessed as requiring them. I've been discussing these matters this morning with the Federal Police, with ASIO and we continue to discuss them with our Office of Transport Security, of course, who act on the advice of ASIO. We will be working closely with all of these agencies.

This has been a very, very, very rapid response. I am very proud of the professionalism and the dedication of our security and intelligence agencies.

But just over the last few days we've seen, since last week, we have seen a rapid response, as I said, seamless cooperation, integration. The way in which all of the agencies, including with the state police, are pulling together, to ensure that we move swiftly on this, on this threat. And at the same time of course, ensure that they gather all the evidence to deliver successful prosecutions, because clearly disruption is a critically important objective, but also we want people that are planning conspiracies like this to be prosecuted and be imprisoned.

SABRA LANE: Prime Minister, security experts have told AM that they're worried about vulnerabilities in freight and catering services to airports. Do those things worry you?

PRIME MINISTER: Well as I always say, Sabra, there is no place for 'set and forget'. I am constantly seeking to improve and optimise our security arrangements. That's why I'm bringing our domestic security agencies at the federal level into one Home Affairs department, so as to make that close integration and cooperation of which I just spoke, even closer. Now, as far as airports are concerned, we have very robust security measures in place, including the vetting of people who work at airports. Changes that have been

put in place that we're talking about at the moment, the changes that we're asking passengers – and again, I want to thank the travelling public for their forbearance, having to get to the airport earlier and wait longer to get through security – but all those changes have been put in place on the advice of ASIO and the Federal Police and the Office of Transport Security. So we are constantly reviewing our security measures.

Again, my message to the agencies that work for the Federal Government and to all security agencies around the nation, is that there is no place for complacency; you have to be constantly improving what we're doing. So, that's my mission. You can see that I'm delivering that, whether it's in new legislation, whether it is in new resources – everything I'm doing every day, is designed to keep Australians safe.

SABRA LANE: Prime Minister, Labor has detailed a policy to crack down on disbursements of some family trusts. It might well prove to be popular with the electorate, will you match the policy?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, Bill Shorten doesn't have any policies for jobs, or any policies for investment. He's got just one attack on business after another. He hasn't provided any details for this crackdown he's talking about. It's just –

SABRA LANE: On the substance itself though –

PRIME MINISTER: Well, Sabra, you say "on the substance itself". Mr Shorten has provided no substance. All he provides every day is another outburst about inequality and the targets for his outbursts are invariably hard-working Australians in small businesses. He wants to make it harder for small businesses to invest –

SABRA LANE: Well sorry for my skepticism, but the Coalition previously derided Labor on its taxation policies on superannuation and tobacco and yet you ended up unveiling your own policies.

PRIME MINISTER: Well Sabra, let's just focus on what he's talking about; he wants to increase the tax on small businesses. He's now threatening changes to tax on trusts – which again, he's got to provide the details – but it's perfectly clear that most of those affected will be small businesses. He has got not one policy to encourage anyone to invest a dollar. When your fellow ABC journalist, Fran Kelly asked him about what he had to do to encourage employment and investment, he started talking about investing in public transport. Well, that's a very worthy objective and we have plenty of programs to do that too. But what does he have to encourage business? Nothing.

He wants to increase taxes on business. He wants to reduce the opportunity for people to invest and get ahead. Whereas, for our part, what are we doing? We are reducing business taxes. We've reduced personal income tax on middle-income Australians by increasing the tax-free threshold from 80, the second tax threshold up to \$87,000, before it begins. That has, as you know, reduced tax for 500,000 middle-income Australians, that was a vital

reform. We're also reducing and right now taxes have been reduced for small and business businesses. Bill Shorten wants to increase all those.

SABRA LANE: Okay, Mr Turnbull, thank you very much for joining AM this morning.

PRIME MINISTER: Thank you so much.

Murray Darling Basin-wide Compliance Review Announced

The Coalition Government will seek the agreement of all Basin states for the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) to carry out an independent Basin-wide review into compliance with state-based regulations governing water use.

The MDBA will provide its report to COAG by December 2017.

Over recent months significant milestones have been achieved in the delivery of the Basin Plan, with the June 2017 meeting of COAG having endorsed an approach to ensuring the Plan is implemented on time and in full.

While the Government is confident about COAG's implementation plan, it is important that Basin communities and all Australians have confidence that the rules that underpin fair and lawful water use throughout the Basin are being followed.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Barnaby Joyce, will write this week to all Basin water ministers seeking their agreement to terms of reference for a strategic review of compliance and enforcement regimes in the Murray Darling Basin.

We expect that, as part of their agreement to the review, Basin water ministers will commit to providing the MDBA with ready access to all relevant information and the full support and cooperation of relevant state officials.

Strong compliance regimes are just as important for irrigators as they are for the environment and Basin communities. The vast majority of the irrigation sector follow the rules attached to their water licenses, and the Coalition Government remains strongly committed to supporting this innovative and productive industry.

The MDBA will present its findings to the Council of Australian Government by 15 December 2017, following a report to the scheduled meeting of the Murray Darling Basin Ministerial Council in November 2017.

The MDBA will conduct the review in accordance with its' powers under Section 172 of the Water Act 2007. In the time available, the review will identify

the highest areas of risk of non-compliance and undertake a strategic analysis focused on these areas.

The terms of reference will cover:

- The appropriateness of and compliance with state laws, statutory instruments (including water resource plans), the terms and conditions of water licences and entitlements and any other relevant powers or approvals;
- The adequacy of water measurement and monitoring arrangements, including metering and investigating irregular activity; and
- The adequacy of governance and institutional arrangements necessary to ensure legally compliant water use.

This review will complement a number of other actions underway in response to recent allegations, including the independent review lead by Ken Matthews AO; the investigation by New South Wales ICAC; and the audit being undertaken by the Australian National Audit Office.

The Government is committed to ensuring that these processes do not delay the full implementation of the Basin Plan as agreed by COAG in June 2017.

This includes finalising amendments to the Basin Plan arising from the Northern Basin Review, and related commitments made by NSW and Queensland water ministers in June 2017 to implement a package of measures to achieve improved environmental outcomes in the northern Basin.

[Press Conference with the Minister for Justice, the Hon. Michael Keenan MP, Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, Andrew Colvin APM OAM and New South Wales Police Commissioner Mick Fuller APM](#)

PRIME MINISTER: Good morning. I'm here with the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police Andrew Colvin and the New South Wales Police Commissioner Mick Fuller.

I can report last night that there has been a major Joint Counter-Terrorism operation to disrupt a terrorist plot to bring down an airplane.

The operation is continuing. At this stage, four people have been arrested

and a considerable amount of material has been seized by police. This is an example of the outstanding work that is conducted by the Joint Counter-Terrorism Team, which consists, as you know, of the Australian Federal Police, the New South Wales police, ASIO and the New South Wales Crime Commission.

The tight cooperation and collaboration between our intelligence and security agencies is the key to keeping Australians safe from terrorism.

The number one priority of my Government and my commitment to the Australian people, is to keep them safe. Every day, every hour, we are focused on ensuring that our defences against terrorism are stronger than ever. That our cooperation is tighter than ever. That our coordination is swifter than ever before.

Now, we have strong transport security systems in place in Australia to prevent acts of terrorism. Upon the receipt of advice for our security and intelligence agencies, the Government moved swiftly in order to protect the public, while operations were underway.

Additional security measures were put in place at Sydney airport on Thursday. These and further measures have been extended to all major airports at domestic and international terminals around the country overnight.

Now, this ensures national consistency of our aviation security arrangements. Some of the measures will be obvious to the public, some will not be. Travelers should be prepared for additional scrutiny at screening points and while it is important that Australians are aware of the increased threat, be assured; we have the finest security and intelligence services in the world. They are working, as is my Government, and all our governments around Australia, night and day, to keep Australians safe.

Those travelling should go about their business with confidence. The Office of Transport Security however has advised that security screening will take longer and travelers should arrive at terminals at least 2 hours before flights to allow ample time for screening.

They should limit the amount of carryon and checked baggage so far as possible, as this will help to ensure that security screening is efficient. Airlines of course would be able to provide further advice on the impact of these measures on your particular flight.

Now the national terrorism threat level – which of course is set on the advice of ASIO – remains at probable. While Australians should always be aware of that threat level of ‘probable’, be assured, again, that our number one priority is to keep you safe. That is our focus, that is our determination. We have the finest security, police, intelligence services in the world working 24-7, to keep you safe.

The major counter-terrorism operation which has occurred overnight and is continuing – and operations are continuing – is an example of the way in which terrorist plots are uncovered and disrupted due to the extraordinary

intelligence services we have and the fine cooperation they have with our police and security agencies.

Every day, we're working tirelessly to keep you safe. Last night's disruption operations are a very good example of the way in which our agencies are delivering our commitment to keep Australians safe from terror.

Now, I will ask the Justice Minister to make some remarks and then the Commissioners will speak to us.

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Thank you, Prime Minister. Since 2014 when the terrorism threat level was raised to 'probable', we have been working closely and diligently with our agencies to give them the resources and powers they need to deal with this threat.

This is the 13th significant disruption that we've had because of the ability of our agencies to do this job and it again reinforces the excellence of our agencies and the wherewithal they have to keep Australian people safe.

Since 2014, 70 people have been charged as a result of 31 counter-terrorism operations around the country. Now, the primary threat to Australia still remains lone actors, but the events overnight remind us that there's still the ability for people to have sophisticated plots and sophisticated attacks still remain a real threat. In light of this information, it's very important that everyone in Australia remains vigilant. If there's something you see that seems suspicious, if there is something that doesn't seem right, then call the national security hotline on 1800 123 400. All the information that we get helps us to complete an intelligence picture about what is going on. It helps our agencies to do this very important job, the job that they're doing so well, of keeping the Australian people safe.

We will continue to work with the federal police, with our intelligence community, to give them the powers and the resources that they need to deal with the threat as it evolves.

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: Well, good morning everybody. Thank you, Prime Minister. It's great to be here with Commissioner Mick Fuller as well. As the Prime Minister has said, this is an ongoing operation, so I will be limited in what we can say. Yesterday's activities by the New South Wales Joint Counter-Terrorism Team, so that is teams made up of ASIO officers, New South Wales police officers, Australian Federal Police officers and New South Wales Crime Commission officers, has been undertaken to ensure the continuing safety of the New South Wales community and the Australian community.

In recent days, law enforcement has been become aware of information that suggested some people in Sydney were planning to commit a terrorist attack using an improvised device. At this time, we don't have a great deal of information on the specific attack, the location, date or time. However we are investigating information indicating that the aviation industry was potentially a target of that attack.

Now, I will hand over to Commissioner Fuller in a moment, to say a little bit

about reassurance for the community, but I just want to say for the record now, there are four people in custody. We have not charged any of those individuals as yet, and I don't want to speculate on potential charges. The investigation is at a very early stage of its process.

We commenced searches in five premises overnight, in suburbs of Surry Hills, Lakemba, Punchbowl and Wiley Park. There were two searches in Punchbowl. Four of those are ongoing and we anticipate that they will be ongoing for many hours, if not days. This is the start of a very long and protracted investigation.

What I will say at this point is that there will be disruption of course, to people in the area around those searches. We appreciate their cooperation. What I'd also like to say at this point is that I want to put on the record our thanks to the men and women of the Australian Federal Police, New South Wales police and ASIO in particular, who once again have done a magnificent job of protecting the Australian community, and continue to work very hard on that investigation.

With that, I'm sure there will be questions, but I will hand over to Commissioner Fuller.

NEW SOUTH WALES POLICE COMMISSIONER: Thank you Prime Minister, Commissioner Colvin. As the Commissioner of New South Wales Police, I just want to assure the people of New South Wales that we are doing everything in our ability to prevent and disrupt terrorism in this state.

This is an important operation for New South Wales and again, shows the close working partnership between Australian Federal Police and other agencies. Over the course of last night, we used some very strong state terrorism powers as well as Commonwealth laws they've put in place to help police carry out these most difficult investigations. From my perspective, it's important that the community of New South Wales know that they should go about their business today. Come into the city, take your trains, go to the shops, you shouldn't be concerned in relation to this. There's not specific information that means you should sit at home.

New South Wales will continue to support you 24-7 and operations like this show you that we're working tirelessly to make sure that we prevent and disrupt these terrible types of crimes.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister you suggest there's still this operation, still ongoing. There's work still going out at the airports, you made that warning. Is this threat then still very real?

PRIME MINISTER: Well the threat of terrorism is very real. The disruption operation, the efforts overnight, have been very effective but there's more work to do. Andrew do you want to enlarge on that?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: Yes Prime Minister. So the operation is ongoing, as we said. In the searches so far, we have found a number of items of interest to police. As we have said, we have a number of people in

custody. So we're confident that we have taken great steps to mitigate the risk to the community. However, the matter is ongoing.

JOURNALIST: Commissioner you mentioned possibly a strike to an aircraft. We have very stringent security already. Is there some sort of an indication there was a plan to circumvent that, beyond what's already known? A new method if you like?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: Well terrorists are becoming very ingenious about ways to defeat our security mechanisms. But as the Prime Minister has already said, Australia has some of the best, if not the best, airport security arrangements in the world. We're very confident that those measures are effective and would have been effective, in this circumstance.

However, the investigation is still going so there's a lot of unknowns in relation to what this attack planned.

JOURNALIST: So is the screening sort of ramped up, or a different type of screening?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: No the screening ...I don't want to talk specifics. You'll understand, I'm not going into details about what that screening at airports is. But what people can expect is there's an increased police and security agency presence. You can expect longer delays to make sure that more screening is being done on baggage, both hold luggage as well as hand luggage. As the Prime Minister has said, the travelling public just need to be aware to get about their business, go to the airport as you normally would, but give themselves more time.

JOURNALIST: How capable was this group of actually carrying out an attack on a domestic plane?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: We have taken this threat seriously. In that itself, you should infer we think this was credible and that there was an intention and quite possibly a capability as well.

JOURNALIST: Did you find an improvised explosive device in those searches?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: I don't want to talk about what we've found today. I say that because the search could take many more days. We have found a number of items of great interest to police.

JOURNALIST: The terrorism landscape has changed in terms of police investigation hasn't it, in terms of where one time, following criminality, you wait until you were completely ready to put something before court. This is different isn't it, this is about prevention, is that fair to say? That you've had no choice but to jump in?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: Absolutely. As the Commissioner Fuller has said, we will always act in the interest of public safety. In terrorism matters that means us acting much earlier than we may act in an organised crime matter. That will mean sometimes the community will need to have patience with police because we'll be taking action when we don't have

all the pieces of the puzzle to put together. We may not be in a position to charge people straight away.

JOURNALIST: Commissioner, were the four people on any watch list?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: That's sensitive information I would rather not talk about just at the moment. Look, I think it's best that I not comment on whether we know about them or not.

JOURNALIST: Commissioner Fuller, firstly congratulations on this great police work. The four, that obviously your officers were closely monitoring them, could you tell us, did you have to pull the trigger on these raids earlier because the threat was so imminent?

NEW SOUTH WALES POLICE COMMISSIONER: The reality is with terrorism, you can't wait. You can't wait until you've put the whole puzzle together. You do have to go early because if you get it wrong, the consequences are severe.

So in this case we risk-assess regularly, hourly sometimes, around the clock and you need to make a decision at some stage about when it the right time to go.

Both Australian Federal Police and New South Wales police agreed last night was the right time to go.

JOURNALIST: Commissioner, can I also ask, do you believe there is a link to the Redfern mosque?

NEW SOUTH WALES POLICE COMMISSIONER: At this stage, as Commissioner Colvin said, it's so early in the investigation. We'll need some patience. Because if it was an organised crime issue, we may have waited a week before resolution. I promise you we will leave no stone unturned, in terms of working it out. Not just the criminality of the four we have in custody but including any broader networks that may be involved. That's a real reassurance I want to give the people of New South Wales.

JOURNALIST: The additional screening at the airports, is that specifically in relation to the methodology you believe was possible here? Rather than just a general beefing up, is there a specific weakness that's been identified that has been addressed on Thursday in Sydney and now throughout the rest of Australia?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: I'm not going to talk about specific weaknesses of security measures. You'd understand that. The measures that were already in place were as good as you'd find anywhere in the world. What we're making sure, is that those measures are being applied as rigorously as they possibly can.

JOURNALIST: Regional airports as well?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: At this stage, major airports.

JOURNALIST: Is this Islamist-inspired?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: We believe it is, yes.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, would you be urging the public, when you talk about taking precautions when you're travelling, are you talking domestically as well as travelling overseas?

PRIME MINISTER: Yes. The Australian public, as Andrew and Mick have observed, can have great confidence in our security arrangements. In particular in our security and screening procedures at airports. However, what we have done, is increase them, so that more bags will be checked, it's really intensifying what we're already doing. Some of that will be visible, some of it will not be visible. But it will be take more time.

So that's why the Office of Transport Security has said: "Get to the airport 2 hours before your flight."

We have very good security measures but nonetheless, we've enhanced, or intensified them I think, a better way to describe it, in the light of this operation.

JOURNALIST: What are the protocols? You've these people in custody for over 12 hours. How long can you hold them before you have to take action.

PRIME MINISTER: So there's a range of pieces of legislation both under New South Wales law and Commonwealth law that allows us to hold these individuals under judicial scrutiny. So we need to apply to a magistrate to extend our holding period under the Crimes Act. That has started. We have these gentlemen in custody now for about 12 hours or so, just over 12 hours. The process is only just starting now of giving them an opportunity to be interviewed. So this is going to take days.

JOURNALIST: Is there any sort of indication of inside knowledge of airport security, of how it works to circumvent it?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: I don't want to talk operational specific, and I really don't want to speculate. This is the start of an investigation, we don't know the full breadth. I have no reason to believe at this stage that the integrity of our airport screening, our airport security operations has been compromised in any way. But what I ask is, you're going to get lots of pieces of information in the coming 24 hours. I know you have already heard various pieces of information. It's helpful for police not to speculate.

JOURNALIST: You told us there's four men?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

JOURNALIST: Ages, any idea?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: I actually don't have those ages with me.

JOURNALIST: Can you tell us what kicked off this operation? What piece of

information did you receive that made you act?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: We received credible information from partner agencies. I think I'll just leave it at that.

JOURNALIST: Inspiration? Are we talking ISIS?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: Early days of the investigation, as I said before. We do believe it's Islamic inspired terrorism. Exactly what is behind this is something that we will need to investigate fully.

JOURNALIST: Was a fully equipped IED found at Surry Hills?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: I don't wish to comment on what we found at this point.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, what are your thoughts on the fact you know this is an Islamic State inspired plot –

PRIME MINISTER: I think the Commissioner said it, yes?

JOURNALIST: That is more sophisticated than what we've seen in Australia. How, as Prime Minister –

PRIME MINISTER: As Michael Keenan observed early, we face a range of terrorist threats. Some of them are lone actors who activate very quickly, with very little warning. On other occasions, you get quite elaborate conspiracies. This appears to be in that category.

You may recall the operation in Melbourne, which again, was the Joint Counter-Terrorism Team effort, in Melbourne where a plot to explode devices in and around Federation Square just before Christmas. That plot was uncovered and disrupted and dealt with and prevented. This is more in that category of an elaborate plot. So you know there's the full range. But the police and security agencies have moved very swiftly, as has the Government and I want to thank them for their remarkable work today and last night and every day, keeping us safe.

JOURNALIST: Question very briefly, Commissioner how intense is the pressure over the coming days, you may not have enough to charge beforehand, right now you're in the discovery phase of finding what you possibly can. There must be intense pressure with that small window?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: Yeah, absolutely. We have certain powers available to us that we can detain these individuals while we continue our investigation. The best mitigation is a prosecution of these individuals. That is the absolute focus of the AFP and the New South Wales police, to gather evidence to make sure there's a prosecution for these alleged acts.

JOURNALIST: Are any of those people arrested, do they have anything to do with the airport, in terms of, as employees?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER: As I said before I have no reason to

believe that the integrity of the security at airports has been compromised. But we're in the early stages of an investigation to understand the full –

JOURNALIST: So that's a no?

PRIME MINISTER: Thank you very much.

Media Statement

Major Joint Counter Terrorism Team operations by the Australian Federal Police, ASIO and NSW Police are occurring in Sydney.

These operations are designed to disrupt and prevent plans to undertake terrorist attacks in Australia.

I have been kept closely briefed on the progress of the operations by the heads of our relevant security agencies.

However, as the operations are ongoing, it is inappropriate to provide further detail at this stage.

My number one priority, and that of my Government, is the safety and security of all Australians.

The public should be reassured that our security and intelligence agencies are working tirelessly to keep us safe.

In the meantime remain alert, follow the advice given by police and if you do see or hear something suspicious call the National Security Hotline on 1800 123 400.

Australia condemns latest North Korean Ballistic Missile Test

Australia condemns North Korea's latest Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) test in the strongest possible terms.

This test is North Korea's second ICBM test this month.

The ballistic missile tests and North Korea's ongoing reckless and menacing behaviour, are in violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions, is a threat to regional and global security and stability and is in violation of

the rules based order we seek to promote and advance.

Australia urges strong UN Security Council action in response to these tests. We call on all countries to implement existing UN Security Council resolutions against North Korea as a matter of urgency.

Australia also urges China to use its considerable leverage to dissuade North Korea from continuing to conduct these tests in order to develop its illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

In addition to our actions in the United Nations, Australia continues to implement a strong autonomous sanctions regime that targets individuals and entities supporting North Korea's illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Australia's sanctions also add to international pressure on North Korea and limit commercial activities that could finance weapons programs.

Australia supports defensive measures under way in the region which are a necessary response to the threat posed by North Korea's behaviour and policies. The escalation of regional tension is entirely the responsibility of the North Korean regime.

We will continue to work with our partners, including the United States, Japan, the Republic of Korea and China, to impose costs on the regime in order to stop its threatening and destabilising behavior.