

# Inquest into the deaths arising from the Lindt Café siege

---

Opening address for biographical segment

Jeremy Gormly SC and Sophie Callan

25 May 2015

**Inquest into the deaths**  
**arising from the Lindt Café siege**  
**Opening Address for Biographical Segment**  
**(1<sup>st</sup> Segment) - 25 May 2015**

INTRODUCTION	[Gormly]	2
Timing		6
Public Interest Immunity		6
Nature of Coronial Proceedings		8
Droudis Criminal Proceedings		10
Joint Government Review		11
FIRST SEGMENT: Biography of Mr Monis		12
Mr Monis in Iran		12
Immigration and Entry to Australia	[Callan]	25
Various names used		25
Early employment and Gun Licencing		27
Perth		29
First Public Notoriety		31
Spiritual healing business		33
The sexual assaults		35
Initial Relationship with <sup>Monis' ex-</sup> <sub>wife</sub> and other conduct		37
The Airport Problems		39
Man Haron Monis and the website	[Gormly]	41
Postal Offences		44
Further education and training,		48
Social (friends, associates, relationships with women)		51
Mental health history		53
Rebels Motorcycle Gang Membership	[Callan]	57
<sup>Monis' ex-</sup> <sub>wife's</sub> murder		58
FINAL REMARKS	[Gormly]	61

**Inquest into the deaths**  
**arising from the Lindt Café siege**  
**Opening Address for Biographical Segment**  
**(1<sup>st</sup> Segment) - 25 May 2015**

**INTRODUCTION**                      [*Gormly*]

1. This First Segment of oral evidence deals with the Biography of Mr Man Haron Monis. The plan for this segment is to provide as much information as we can about Mr Monis, most of which will be outlined in this opening (that will take until this afternoon) but during which, we will show on screen a number of useful pictures, lists, documents, film and sound items.
2. Following the opening and over the next two weeks, we will hear oral evidence about Mr Monis. Each witness will throw light, mostly from personal experience, on aspects of Mr Monis' life. The witnesses generally are people who had personal contact with Mr Monis over the eighteen years from 1996 when he arrived in Australia, until his death on 16 December 2014 —20 weeks ago.
3. There is some evidence available about Mr Monis' life in Iran during his first 31 years, but completion of that evidence, to the extent that it becomes available and is useful, may have to occur in later months along with other evidence.

4. The evidence in this biographical segment is descriptive. It will rarely be contentious. The aim of this segment is not only to examine Mr Monis' life—that topic alone would not justify two weeks of evidence – but it is intended to lay foundations for other evidence in future segments, all with a view to assist your Honour in considering, in due course, Mr Monis' motivations for the siege, his conduct during the siege and the issues he presented for those tasked with siege management. Such questions must await the remainder of the evidence including the evidence concerning the events of the siege.
5. The witnesses we will hear from in this segment include people who employed Mr Monis, others who dealt with him in academic courses, and persons in Government departments, for whom he caused continuing trouble.
6. Mr Monis interacted with the law more and more as the years passed. There will be evidence from good observers among the lawyers who acted for him which arises from
  - a. first, his complaints about the Customs service in 2005;
  - b. second, charges against Mr Monis for offensive letters sent by him to the families of soldiers who died in action and an Australian official who died in a bombing in Jakarta;
  - c. third, the charges against Mr Monis for sexual assault;
  - d. fourth, lawyers involved in his various family law issues;
  - e. and finally, the lawyers who acted for him in relation to his alleged involvement as an accessory, in the murder of his wife.

7. There will also be evidence called from people who knew Mr Monis at a social level or even friendship, but there are only a few witnesses who fall into that category as Mr Monis appears to have lead a relatively isolated existence in that regard.
8. The oral evidence will also include some mental health professionals including psychologists, and psychiatrists who treated him for mental health complaints up to 2011, when he last had treatment for a mental health issue.
9. Mr Monis unquestionably had at stages of his life, some mental health issues but I say at the outset that any such issues appear to be modest; mental illness may not provide a full answer to the questions about his motivations for the siege. Better answers about mental health will have to await the expert evidence of Dr Jonathan Phillips, psychiatrist, who in due course will provide an analysis of Mr Monis' psychiatric state taking into account his past medical history as well as his actions and behaviours up to and including the siege. That means his expert analysis will necessarily be called at a later segment of this inquest.
10. Each of the witnesses called in this first segment has provided a written statement. The oral evidence will go to the essential parts. Hopefully that means that each witness will take a short amount of time.
11. Since the preliminary opening on 29 January this year, while ongoing, the investigation has reached a point that allows us to start on public hearings. While those hearings are occurring in the courtroom, investigation continues outside the courtroom.

12. The proposal for future public hearings is that another segment will commence on **Monday 17 August 2015** and will run for about three weeks. It will include at least the following topics;
  - a. the bail issue – that is the circumstances in which Mr Monis was granted bail in 2013 and 2014;
  - b. academic evidence about terrorism and its definition, as well as radicalisation;
  - c. the gun used by Mr Monis; and
  - d. some other shorter topics.
13. We anticipate distributing a brief about those topics by Tuesday **31 July 2015**. It will be much less bulky than the brief for this segment. You will note that much of the underlying material going to the bail issue (such as court transcripts) has already been provided in the current brief.
14. After it there will be some other work done but not in public hearing – I will refer later in this opening what that's about. The final public segment will be the evidence concerning the siege; that will not be ready for presentation for a considerable time. The investigation is continuing, and one of the exercises to occur in the interim is for the siege evidence to be provided to experts from the UK and Queensland to provide their assessment from the perspective of siege and terrorism management. Once that report is available, we will be in a position to proceed with the oral evidence about the events of the siege. The aim is then to call all remaining evidence in one block, in one lengthy segment. It will probably commence with evidence from the former hostages.

15. Following this opening into the biography of Mr Monis, I will call Detective Inspector Memmolo who has been the officer in charge of the police work in the investigation. He will provide some evidence on the scope of the investigation. I may have to call Detective Inspector Memmolo a number of times during the inquest, as the various topics develop.

### ***Timing***

16. That leads me to the topic of timing. Ordinarily, an inquiry the size of this one would not commence hearings until all preparation had been completed. Shortly after the siege there was seen to be a need to expedite this matter as much as possible. Certainly special arrangements have been made to give this matter the priority it needs. Equally, we accept the need expressed to us by some parties that the matter requires close scrutiny and ought not to be rushed.
17. It's only 20 weeks since the siege and this inquest is under way. This speedy timing and the segment approach, we know, is difficult for many people affected by the siege and we are adjusting to meet that problem. We now anticipate perhaps two more public segments spaced well enough to allow full examination and consideration of each area. Fortunately, and for an array of reasons, this matter is being given the resources to gather the material in numerous areas – Commonwealth, State and private – simultaneously. We accept that this is not a matter to be unduly hurried. We are all after good answers not just quick ones.

### ***Public Interest Immunity***

18. That leads me to the next preliminary issue. In the opening of 29 January 2015, I indicated that the inquest was aware that

some counter-terrorism considerations may require special treatment. Those issues have been the subject of a great deal of work. An inquest is intended to be a very public exercise so closed hearings in an inquest would generally be avoided.

19. The concern here is to find a way to assess the monitoring of Mr Monis by Australia's security agencies and to properly examine Australia's systems for managing counter-terrorist responses, but not do so in a way which might compromise ongoing work and public safety.
20. We, on Your Honour's assisting team, acknowledge, as we have from the commencement of this investigation, the difficulties involved and Your Honour's willingness to engage in the design of a process that meets both coronial needs and security needs. We acknowledge the efforts being made by the affected government agencies, both State and Commonwealth, to cooperate with this inquest, to properly manage those issues.
21. We seek a balance between a coronial review of these civilian deaths together with the damage to hostages and families caused by those deaths on the one hand, and the legitimate demands of counter-terrorism responses on the other. We consider both to be important. We do not consider that the two are inconsistent. We do not understand that any relevant government decision-maker thinks they are inconsistent. We accept, as do those most immediately affected by the siege, that a degree of compromise in ordinary process is required.
22. Public hearings, (however necessary they may generally be in this jurisdiction), are not possible for all of the evidence that has to be taken here. It may be that some of Your Honour's

findings can never be publicly exposed. That does not mean that the relevant evidence cannot be reviewed and referred, if necessary, to appropriate oversight agencies and the Commonwealth Attorney General. It can and should.

23. The task is to find ways to assess these topics in a manner that does not compromise national security considerations. We acknowledge the efforts to date of those with whom we are talking and the progress that has been made. We will continue to move towards a finalization of a suitable arrangement to meet all concerns. Some closed hearings are likely.

#### ***Nature of Coronial Proceedings***

24. I pause now to review the nature of the proceedings we are undertaking and why they are occurring. The Coroners Court is not a civil dispute court deciding damages between disputing parties. It is not a criminal court that finds whether people are guilty of some offence. It's not a disciplinary tribunal sitting to determine whether someone has breached obligations of some service duty. Its purpose is first and foremost to investigate and establish the facts surrounding and leading up to each of the three deaths that occurred in the Lindt Café. It provides a civilian review mandated by statute.
25. That statute, the Coroners Act, obliges the Coroner to investigate facts necessary to answer doubt surrounding a death – the identity, time, and place of such a death. And - in a matter such as this, most particularly – the manner and cause of death. The obligation to investigate manner and cause of death is a different causation requirement from that in other areas of law. The extent of the investigation may vary with the nature of the deaths or the questions it raises. Sometimes

limited questions may resolve questions a coroner is required to examine. In other matters a larger investigation is required. The statutory task is the same – the questions that a death may raise can determine the extent of an investigation.

26. For nearly nine hundred years the office of the Coroner in the United Kingdom, inherited here in Australia but used in various forms in many countries, has operated in recognition that no community can function unless violent, doubtful or suspicious death is objectively and independently examined and wherever possible, explained.
27. In recent times the inquest has been used in this state of NSW to examine, for example the 18 deaths of the Thredbo landslide, the death of the young Brazilian man Roberto Curti in 2012, the ferry collision on Sydney Harbour in 2007, the Quakers Hill nursing home fire, the death of David Iredale the school boy who died in the Blue Mountains, the Balibo Five who died in East Timor, and numerous others cases where members of the NSW community have died in circumstances of concern.
28. The effects on family, friends or sometimes everyone, of violent, suspicious or doubtful death is corrosive and disturbing; it is always necessary for a settled civil society to investigate unexplained death. That is especially true of deaths involving the use of executive power as in this matter.
29. The result can be that systems are improved. Future deaths can be avoided. The outcome of these proceedings will be a civil or civilian review of government action, with independent, judicial

findings and perhaps recommendations. We do it where any death needs explaining. We do it for these deaths.

### ***Droudis Criminal Proceedings***

30. A preliminary topic I must address before turning to the narrative of Mr Monis' life is this.
31. It is widely known that Ms Amirah Droudis, the partner of Mr Monis in his later years, has been charged with the murder of his former de facto wife <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife</sub>. Ms Droudis had sought from the Court and was granted leave to appear in this inquest. She has since withdrawn from the inquest. With criminal proceedings on foot against her there is an obvious obligation on the inquest and those participating in it, not to impair the integrity of that trial. Both prosecution and defence should be able to proceed with their respective roles and rights unimpaired by this inquest.
32. Ms Droudis is a relevant, though modest part of the story of Mr Monis' life as it relates to the issues to be considered in this inquest. Among those assisting Your Honour, the wide though not complete berth being given to matters relating to Ms Droudis is necessary to protect both defence rights of Ms Droudis and Crown obligations. Furthermore, we do not consider that the wide berth we are taking is one that will impair the work of this inquest. If any further issue arises in the evidence, it is clear that the sanctity of a fair and effective trial of criminal charges should prevail over an issue that might arise in this investigation.

### ***Joint Government Review***

33. The final preliminary matter is the Joint Government Review established by the Premier of NSW and the Prime Minister as it affects the inquest. That Joint Government Review operated in a way separate and different from this judicially-sourced coronial investigation but there was useful communication between the two entities. The Joint Government Review expressly sought to avoid intruding on the work of the State Coroner. The team assisting the State Coroner wished to make use of evidence gathered by the Joint Review, as a part of its investigation.
34. The Joint Review sought to gather all information about Mr Monis' extensive interaction with state and commonwealth government departments since his arrival in Australia. Not surprisingly the capacity of the Departments of the Premier of NSW and of the Prime Minister to speedily gather that material was high. The Joint Review did not purport to take oral evidence as the inquest will do, or indeed do any more than gather and collate government file material. This inquest cannot attend to or be bound by conclusions formed by the Joint Review. Your Honour is obliged to make findings independent of the view of any other source including the Joint Review. This Court will be examining evidence that necessarily exceeds what the Joint Review could examine. However, as a resource for gathering government material the Joint Review has been of benefit to the Coronial investigation.
35. The Review did gather material from across numerous State and Commonwealth agencies much faster than would have

occurred given usual multi-jurisdictional, federal and other issues.

36. The quick timing of the Joint Review has also allowed the coronial investigating team to offer and to discuss appropriate arrangements for public interest immunity and counter-terrorism considerations earlier than could otherwise have occurred. That work has not been simple and it is not complete but it is definitely advanced.

### **FIRST SEGMENT: Biography of Mr Monis**

37. This first segment of substantial hearing in the inquest addresses what has been termed the 'biography' of Mr Monis. As I've already mentioned, the reason for such attention to his life prior to 15 December 2014 is both to lay a foundation for evidence addressed in later segments. But more importantly, it provides a background and context to aid your Honour in considering the man who walked into the Lindt café that morning.
38. Mr Monis has proven to be a complex and secretive man about his own life even though he could be very public about his views. Initially it took some effort to find and verify useful information about him although once that process commenced a large volume of material emerged.
39. Government records proved a valuable source of information. The brief contains the best and most representative material of a much larger mass of available documents.

#### ***Mr Monis in Iran***

40. I turn first to the life of Mr Monis in Iran. Some information comes from Iranian records, some from his versions of events

(where they can be relied upon) and some from other sources we expect to serve in due course—it is all largely non-contentious so we do not hesitate to release it now. It is fair to say that other material exists concerning Mr Monis' conduct in a travel agency in Tehran to which I will shortly refer, and the implications of that evidence, which is not verified. That will not be cited now, but may be dealt with in a later segment, if it can be verified.

[SHOW SLIDE: #1]

41. Mr Monis was born **19 May 1964** in the Iranian city of Borujerd.

[SHOW MAP: #2].

42. Borujerd is a city of about a quarter of a million people, 400 kilometers south west of Tehran. It is an ancient city with economic links to agriculture and industry.
43. He was born Mohammed Manteghi and appears to have retained that name throughout his time in Iran.
44. As will be referred to later, Mr Monis took an array of names whilst in Australia. Name changes might ordinarily have slowed investigation of Mr Monis but in this as in later behaviour he was to demonstrate a curious feature of administrative compliance and regularity. He was secretive in many respects, and seemed increasingly defiant in the later years. Yet he kept records dating back many years, including copies of correspondence complete with registered post receipts. He lodged tax returns. He registered and notified name changes. He reported changes of address. On one occasion he provided

notice of a protest he proposed. In his later more radical period he wrote to attorneys-general seeking advice about whether some act would be illegal. The contrast between compliance and illegality is a thread which runs through much of his story in Australia.

45. It is likely that Mr Monis spoke the Borujerd dialect as well as mainstream Farsi. He certainly spoke a very correct and formal classical Arabic. He must have learned English in Iran. He spoke it fairly well from his early years in Australia though he apparently required, or at least was provided with, an interpreter in his Immigration interview in Australia in 1997. His written English reflected his spoken English.
46. He was the youngest of 5 children with 4 older sisters. His parents lived in what has been described as very modest circumstances. He was brought up Shi'ite which is the dominant but not the only form of Islam in Iran.
47. He appears to have had a conventional education, undertaking this at various schools in Tehran.
48. There is evidence of attendance at primary school, and then secondary school in Iran.

**[SHOW SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE: #3].**

As this secondary school certificate demonstrates

49. This secondary schooling must have been with some degree of achievement as he was admitted to a recognized university in Tehran – Imam Sadegh University.

50. Mr Monis was tall and as a young man seems to have been strongly built. There is no evidence that he played sport or was physically active. There is no evidence that he underwent any military service. It is not apparent that he had any direct exposure to violence. There is no evidence that he had exposure to weapons. He wore spectacles but there is no suggestion he was other than a physically healthy person.

[SHOW MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE #5]

51. Mr Monis married young, in May 1985 – he was aged 21. His own father and his father in law are listed as witnesses to the marriage on this certificate.
52. He seems to have lived with his wife with the support of his father in law, who appears to have been a patron of sorts. Not long after their marriage, he and his wife had two daughters.
53. He maintained contact with his town of birth – Borujerd

[SHOW DRIVERS LICENSE #6]

As indicated by the drivers licence he obtained in July 1989, issued from that town.

54. In **December 1990**, Mr Monis apparently graduated from university with a Masters degree in Islamic Culture and Political Science with a grade point average of 72.77%.

[SHOW UNIVERSITY CERTIFICATE #7]

55. While we cannot independently verify the veracity of this document, such a level of education is consistent with Mr Monis' subsequent presentation to various persons in Australia – some of whom will be called as witnesses in this segment – as

an intelligent and seemingly well educated man.

56. That University seems to have been a supplier of educated personnel to government. He might ordinarily have anticipated government employment but there is no evidence that he gained it.
57. After graduating he seems to have attended a divinity college called Abdol Azim College. Again, the veracity of documentation to this effect cannot presently be confirmed, but again such studies are not inconsistent with his later presentation.
58. The precise status of these divinity colleges as they existed in the 1990's is not clearly known yet, and is the subject of ongoing enquiries.
59. In later years, Mr Monis has made the unlikely claim that his late father was an Ayatollah. He has also stated that his father in law was a senior person in a university, and had been a one-time general secretary to the late but well respected Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani.
60. Ayatollah Kani established the university at which Mr Monis studied politics and played a significant role in the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the 1980's. He was seen as a relative pragmatist in later years. He died last year at the age of 84 but had been a force of significance in the 1980's when Mr Monis' father in law was said to be his general secretary.
61. Whether this connection between Mr Monis and Ayatollah Kani, via his father in law, is true cannot be confirmed. But

perhaps it was this type of environment accessed through his father-in-law, that was later to cause Mr Monis to make repeated claims that he was well connected in Iran.

62. In that regard, Mr Monis has made claims to have become acquainted with Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, former Deputy Prime Minister and former Foreign Minister Ayatollah Ebrahim Yazdi, Ali Akbar Nategh-Noori – former Speaker of the Parliament and others. He claims to have become friends with some of them. There is no evidence presently available that any of these claims are true but again, it is possible that through his father-in-law he had some opportunity to meet some such people.
63. As we will see Mr Monis was prone to grandiose claims but it seems these may have had some kernel of truth in his background. Mr Monis seems to have been a person who showed some early promise and may have both sought and been offered the type of contact with senior people of which he later boasted.
64. Monis and his new wife lived in a dwelling of relative luxury next to the university of his father-in-law. It is said to be a dwelling of higher standard than the dwelling in which his parents had raised him.
65. On **10 March 1994**, Mr Monis achieved the rank of Hujatolislam. This video shows his ordination. Although difficult to make out in the audio, it is possible to hear his name “Mohammad Monteghi” announced.

[SHOW VIDEO #8(a)]

66. In the shi-ite faith, this is apparently a title awarded to scholars, and in the hierarchy but falls well below an Ayatollah.
67. It is difficult to make comparisons with Christian religious ranks; Mr Monis later claimed his rank as Hujatolislam ranked as a bishop in a Christian church. It may be more accurate to describe his rank as of priestly level, more for example than merely holding a degree in theology—perhaps a middle ranking cleric—certainly less than the much rarer and highly respected senior role of Ayatollah.
68. There is another video – the date of which is unknown – which appears to depict Mr Monis in the same location.

**[SHOW VIDEO #8(b)]**

69. Other than this footage, it is not entirely clear how Mr Monis occupied himself in the early 1990s.
70. Although there is evidence to suggest he was the director of four companies, registered in Iran in 1994 and 1995 – said to involve import/export businesses. Here is one document by way of example

**[SHOW COMPANY DOCUMENT #9]**

There is also some suggestion that in the same year, 1995 he had come to work at a Travel Agency – to which I'll turn shortly.

71. It is not clear if Mr Monis completed his studies at the Divinity College, but this document, if authentic,

**[SHOW CERTIFICATE #10]**

indicates that in **December 1995** he was accredited as providing tuition in literature and introductory divinity classes at the college.

72. Whilst little else can be established, it is convenient at this point to note that when Mr Monis arrived in Australia in 1996 he made an application for a protection visa, describing two bases of alleged persecution in Iran.
73. He addressed his claims in some detail during an interview with the Department of Immigration in 1997.
74. One aspect of his claim concerned a book of poetry he published – which I'll describe for your Honour in a moment.
75. The other aspect of his claim was that he claimed to have undertaken a religious conversion to the Ahmadi sect of Islam following some Quoranic translation work he did for the Ahmadis in 1988 (when he would have been aged 24).
76. This seems almost certainly a fiction he told to obtain refugee status - but he says that in undertaking this translation work, he became convinced of the Amadi version of Islam and secretly converted. He says that his conversion was preceded by correspondence with the head of the Amadhi sect in London and he handed such a purported letter to Immigration at the time of his interview in 1997.
77. I pause here to note the Ahmadiya Muslim Community is a minority form of Islam who believe the promised Messiah was born in India in 1889 with the name Mirza Gholam Ahmad. Although numbering over 10 million world-wide, they are a small minority in the Islamic world. Their presence in Iran was

tolerated - said Mr Monis – though they may not proselytise in Iran and are closely watched.

78. He says that eventually he was summoned by the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security known as VAVAK or MOIS, to account for his association with the Ahmadi. Thus commences Mr Monis' long history of claimed engagement with security, spying and related agencies including the CIA, ASIO and VAVAK.
79. To attempt proof or disproof of these events especially with the CIA and VAVAK is unlikely to be effective. What is possibly true is that he made approaches to these agencies but whether his overtures were fruitful for him is another matter. In the context of the times and given his travel and his willingness to leave Iran, it is possible.
80. It is worth outlining his story, and then examining not so much the truth or likelihood of it, but the way he used his story over the years of his life in Australia and perhaps, the way it affected him and his behaviour.
81. Mr Monis said that VAVAK told him they had evidence of his involvement with the Ahmadi. He says he admitted to VAVAK some academic work but denied religious conversion to the Ahmadi faith. He says that VAVAK told him his actions with the Ahmadi would be overlooked if he spied on Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani. He was also warned off contact with the Ahmadi. He says he did do the spying he was asked to do, he stayed away from the Ahmadi and he became a praised spy developing good connections with VAVAK. He says they gave him commercial tips and opportunities in exchange for his spying.

82. He says that his value to VAVAK as a spy was such that he was permitted ordination as a Hojatolislam – we have already seen the video of his ordination.
83. He claims to have become disenchanted with VAVAK. He says he was desperately unhappy in Iran and feared execution if he did not comply. He claimed still to be a secret Ahmadi. He says it was about this time that he began to write the anti-government poetry. In the meantime he took up the commercial tips and opportunities offered by VAVAK and commenced to make some money.
84. In July 1995, he says he undertook his first travel out of Iran claiming it as a liberating experience. He travelled to Romania for two weeks free of VAVAK demands. He says he felt compelled to bring to light the injustices of Iran-- committed in the name of Islam --and so approached the U.S. diplomatic post in Bucharest.
85. He claims to have been interviewed then by a US agent and again in later travel in other nearby countries. He claims to have provided information to the U.S. and to have agreed to provide more information in the future.
86. He says that the CIA arranged visas and made other arrangements including a company registration to justify his travel in Malaysia. This, he says, also led to a secret visit to Virginia in the USA.
87. He returned to Iran with a view to keeping a low profile but in 1995 he says he published a book of poetry titled 'Daroon va Baroon' or "Inside and Outside".

88. It can certainly be confirmed that not long after arriving in Australia – in about **December 1996** – he self- published this book.

[SHOW BOOK COVER #15(a)].

89. In his refugee application, Mr Monis pointed to “Daroon va Boroon” as evidence of his discontent with Iran, compromised his safety in Iran and justified refugee status.

90. He said that the poetry demonstrated dissent with the Iranian government. Immigration officials seemed to have difficulty with that proposition. A poem at p.72 of the book, translated from Farsi, is as follows:

[SHOW TRANSLATION OF p.72 POEM - #15(b)]

The few later reviews of his poetry have ranged from mixed to bad.

91. Mr Monis claimed that when published in Iran in 1995 the book initially received no adverse public reaction, but the next year a group in Iran harassed him, claiming his poetry was anti-Islamic.

92. Meanwhile he says that information being supplied to him by an Iranian friend in government was in turn being used by the U.S. and thus raising concern among Iranian officials about his friend being a leak. He says he was interviewed and asked about his friend. This caused him to make immediate arrangements to leave Iran. He secured an Australian business visa and after waiting a necessary period left for Australia.

93. As I have already said, the basis for his claims of persecution and fear in Iran must be treated with a degree of scepticism particularly now, with the benefit of hindsight.
94. Another version of the facts and for which there is an equal lack of hard data, is a second hand account that Mr Monis was involved with a travel agency with political connections—perhaps a political fund raising or fund clearing body.
95. He had a responsible management position in the business for a period and it is said he defrauded the company or its clients of money. On one currently unverifiable version, the defrauding had an elaborate political motive.
96. The amounts of money in question vary with differing reports. Some reports have the amount at Iranian Rial \$470 million which is equivalent to approximately USD\$16,500. According to Fars News International, Iran's government news agency, he had stolen \$US200,000, and used that money to flee to Australia. The truth of any of this is difficult as yet to determine.
97. After the siege, the Australian media reported a statement by the head of Iran's police, General Ismail Ahmadi Moghaddam, who asserts Mr Monis committed fraud on the travel agency business and was wanted for that charge. Iranian authorities had apparently issued arrest warrants against him, initiated Interpol inquiries and sought extradition of Mr Monis from Australia. But there was not then, and there is not now, an extradition agreement between Iran and Australia
98. Another version of Monis' life in Iran, which he told some people here in Australia in the late 1990s was that he held a

significant role in VAVAK, that is, Iran's ministry of intelligence and had either fled because of that role, or was in Australia as an Iranian spy. Some witnesses to be called next week will refer to this account he gave.

99. It is difficult to reach any sound conclusions as to what caused Mr Monis to leave Iran. The dilemma presented of his life in Iran is as either a dissident or a fraud. There may be other possibilities. We expect by completion of the evidence that the true position may be clearer.
100. There are reports that Mr Monis lapsed into difficult and moody behaviour at an early stage in his marriage. His failure to move forward despite promise and patronage suggests other problems. One witness to be called next week, reports hearsay suggestions that Monis was also involved in sexual misconduct while in Iran.
101. As to this last suggestion - ordinarily lack of direct evidence of such an allegation means it would find no place in this inquest. But as we will see, Mr Monis is alleged to have engaged in sexual misconduct here in Australia over a long period from 2002 to 2010. They are of a nature that suggests a propensity for such conduct. We will come to those allegations.
102. I hand over now to Ms Callan, to address the early years of Mr Monis in Australia.

*Immigration and Entry to Australia**[Callan]*

103. Your Honour, as Mr Gormly has said, although there is considerable doubt regarding Mr Monis' time in Iran in the years leading up to his departure to Australia, what can be established is that in 1996 Mr Monis obtained an Iranian Passport.

[SHOW IMAGE OF PASSPORT #11]

104. On **10 October 1996**, Mr Monis was granted an Australian business visa.

105. And on **28 October 1996**, he departed Mehrabad Airport in Iran and arrived into Australia.

[SHOW IMAGE OF PASSPORT #12]

*Various names used*

106. Mr Monis arrived here as Mohammad Hassan Monteghi. He subsequently used various names whilst in this country, including 2 formal changes of name which correlate with different phases of his life.

[SHOW DOCUMENT LISTING NAMES USED BY MONIS #13]

107. Less than a month after his arrival, on **15 November 1996** Mr Monis lodged an application for a protection visa which was ultimately granted.

[SHOW PROTECTION VISA APPLICATION #14]

108. The circumstances of his entry to Australia are useful for this investigation, but the rights or wrongs of his emigration are not part of this investigation.

109. Mr Monis entered Australia 19 years ago. Since that time there have been extensive changes in Immigration policy, legislation and procedures. There is nothing to be gained from examining antique entry immigration procedures as they operated back then.
110. There is, in any event, no tenable causal link between allowing Mr Monis into Australia from Iran in 1996 and his actions 18 years later in the Lindt Café in December 2014. His arrival was four years before 9/11, a decade before the current catastrophes of Syria and about 15 years before the emergence of entities like ISIS - a body that did not even have its roots in Iran.
111. As Mr Gormly has already described, Mr Monis' protection application required a detailed interview with Immigration officials which took place on **16 September 1997** – the transcript will be tendered as part of the “Biography Brief” shortly. The most suspicious parts of Mr Monis' story emerge in that interview when his claims were pressed and tested.
112. Although the original statement presented by Mr Monis is a cohesive story, his performance in the interview with Immigration officials was much less adept.
113. Perhaps he assumed the Australian officials interviewing him did not know anything about Iran, Islam or the Ahmadis. The examination by Immigration officials however effectively demonstrated the implausibility of some of his story.
114. However, other parts of his claim of persecution came across plausibly and he was eventually granted a protection visa.

115. Whatever the reasons for his entry, the immigration interview undertaken in 1997 and the statement he submitted which preceded it, are useful pieces of evidence in understanding Mr Monis.
116. Ultimately on **23 August 2000** he was granted a protection visa. No decision record is available.
117. And on **20 October 2004**, some eight years after arriving in this country, he was granted citizenship in a private ceremony he had requested for (quote) “security reasons”; the name used was Michael Hayson Mavros.
118. The circumstances of his grant of citizenship, like his original entry and protection visa, is also not a matter with much causal utility in this inquest.

### ***Early employment and Gun Licencing***

119. Upon Mr Monis’ arrival in Australia in 1996 – he lived in a house in Auburn here in Sydney which he shared with several other men, one of whom will give evidence next week as this living arrangement formed the basis for a friendship which continued for many years.
120. Mr Monis presumably secured some employment here and there.
121. Whatever his first jobs, one of which was a Persian carpet salesman in North Sydney, he soon pursued work as a security officer. In **March 1997** he was issued with a Security Licence.

[SHOW SLIDE - #16]

122. And in April 1997 he commenced undertaking firearms training.

123. It will be recalled that gun laws were different then.
124. Although almost exactly a year after the Port Arthur Massacre, the national buyback had started but the new gun licencing controls had not.
125. Mr Monis has never held a gun licence during his life in Australia.
126. But for security work using handguns, however, he had to undergo some gun handling training.
127. As can be seen by these three certificates

[SHOW THREE CERTIFICATES #17, #18 and #19]

in April 1997 he initially failed revolver accreditation training, but in the following month he passed that and semi-automatic rifle training –

128. His performance in the initial course suggests he had not had much - if any – prior exposure to guns. It also seems he had little to do with firearms subsequent to completing this training.
129. That is consistent with a description of him by the hostages in the siege. He was clumsy trying to load the pump action shotgun he brought to the siege and seemed unfamiliar with it. The shotgun was old and worn, but it is not a difficult weapon to load for those accustomed to guns. More detailed evidence about that shot gun will be presented during the next segment of this hearing.
130. Achieving this firearms accreditation in May 1997 would have allowed him to work as an armed security officer as long as he

was employed by a licenced security firm. But in July 1997 the law changed, requiring security officers to have individual firearm licenses. As I've already said, Mr Monis never held a firearms licence.

131. Years later in 2012, Mr Monis sought a security licence with a view to working again as a security officer. By that time he was subject to charges for the letters he had sent, and the application was refused on the basis he was not 'fit and proper' – Mr Gormly will refer to this later.
132. But returning to 1997, Mr Monis got a job as a security officer at a shopping village in Edensor Park in NSW. He worked there for about two years until 1999. The Caretaker/Manager of the shopping village will give evidence about his performance in that job and impressions of Mr Monis at that time.
133. On **16 July 1999**, for reasons which are not entirely clear, Mr Monis registered a business name – Daftar E Ayatollah Manteghi Boroujerdi with the NSW Department of Fair Trading

**[SHOW REGISTRATION DOCUMENT #20]**

134. His use of the term Ayatollah as far back as 1999 gives an insight into the early threads of grandiosity he later exhibited with increasing regularity.

***Perth***

135. After a few years in Sydney, in the early part of 2000 Mr Monis went to Perth where he commenced work in the sale of Persian Carpets on or about **17 March 2000**.
136. He was apparently initially appointed Store Administrative Manager and two months after that, Store Manager.

137. Mr Monis' employment ended towards the end of 2000, and he brought a claim for wrongful dismissal in the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission. He said he had been demoted to a position described as Gate Keeper which he claimed was oppressive, unfair and amounted to political and religious discrimination.
138. The proceedings were not contested. He presented his case, gave evidence, and his claim was successful. He was awarded compensation of just over \$14,000. It is unclear whether he ultimately received those monies.
139. The findings of the Industrial Relations Commission include observations about Mr Monis which contrast markedly with judicial findings made many years later in the Family Court – this is worth looking at now.

**[SHOW IMAGE OF WA IRC and then FAMILY COURT FINDINGS #21]**

140. The contrast between the impressions he made on different judicial officers – albeit at very different points in time and in different circumstances – nevertheless tends to show up two features of Mr Monis.
141. The first is that he could be plausible, courteous and controlled. But he was also almost entirely consumed in his own self importance, and when challenged his self control occasionally slipped and his reaction disproportionate.
142. The other observation which emerges from these passages is there seem to have been some significant changes in Mr Monis between his early years in Australia (around 2000) and his last years a decade on.

143. During the middle of that year in Perth, Mr Monis' protection visa was granted, on **23 August 2000**.

[SHOW IMAGE PROTECTION VISA #22]

144. He appears to have returned to Sydney in early 2001.

### *First Public Notoriety*

145. But whilst in Perth, the story of the public life of Mr Monis began.

146. On **20 October 2000**, Mr Monis wrote a series of letters to public figures – which was a method he adopted repeatedly over subsequent years.

147. In this first instance so far as we are aware, he wrote nine letters to dignitaries and newspapers around the world

[SHOW LIST OF ADDRESSEES #23(a)]

148. The fact these letters were sent is established by registered post receipts which Mr Monis kept - subsequently located at his premises years later.

149. A copy of his letter to the United Nations, and the response he received, is on the screen now.

[SHOW LETTER TO KOFI ANNAN and RESPONSE #23(b)]

150. Then on **23 November 2000**, Mr Monis chained himself to a pole outside Parliament House in Perth and staged a hunger strike asserting that he was protesting against the Iranian Government for not letting him see his daughters.

[SHOW ARTICLE #24(a)]

151. He is described in a newspaper article at the time as Ayatollah Manteghi Boroujerdi.
152. Borujerd is of course from the name of the city of his birth- and it is apparently common for Ayatollahs to use a locality as part of their name.
153. In the same newspaper article he is reported as claiming that he was close to many leading figures in Iranian religious elite and had learned many of the secrets of the regime.

[SHOW OTHER PHOTOS OF PROTEST #24(b)]

154. At the scene of his hunger strike at Parliament House in Perth he had a sleeping bag and a bottle of water. The strike however came to an end within a few hours when someone called an ambulance. Mr Monis may have suffered from heat stroke and was taken to hospital.
155. Chaining himself to public places in protest became something of a modus operandi for Mr Monis.
156. On his return to Sydney he almost immediately commenced a protest at NSW Parliament House by chaining himself to the fence on **20 January 2001**, as these photographs depict.

[SHOW IMAGE #25]

157. By **31 January 2001**, his protest had attracted the attention of the press, in the form of an ABC journalist who interviewed him for the radio program 'Religion Report'

[SHOW EXTRACT FROM ABC TRANSCRIPT #26]

158. Again he was described as "Ayatollah Manteghi Boroujerdi" - a liberal cleric who fled Iran after being critical of the Iranian

regime. His wife and daughters were said to be under house arrest in Iran and he was hoping the Howard government would put pressure on the regime to allow his family to join him.

159. Your Honour might note towards the bottom of this page of transcript, which refers to his letter to the United Nations.
160. There is nothing to verify Mr Monis' claim about his wife and daughters in Iran. It is the case that they never joined him in Australia. His emails many years later, in 2014, indicate he maintained contact – at least with his daughters in Iran.
161. Whilst he was undertaking this protest at Parliament House, several people spoke to him, including friends who will be called next week to give evidence about this and other interactions.

### *Spiritual healing business*

162. On Mr Monis' return to Sydney, there is no evidence that he subsequently was ever formally employed.
163. The most significant work activity he undertook was the establishment of a so called clairvoyant and spiritual healing business which he advertised in local ethnic newspapers.
164. He registered several businesses through which it is apparent he conducted this work.
165. The first business name was 'Spiritual Power' – registered on **23 July 2001,**

[SHOW BUSINESS REGISTRATION DOCUMENTS #27(a)]

166. Mr Monis changed the name in October the following year to 'Spiritual Consultation'.
167. He must have made a calculated assessment about this business venture, aiming generally at poorly educated, impressionable people – particularly women – who would seek such services including those who believed in black magic or were cursed. Vulnerable women with troubles in their lives. This targeting is patent from the terms of his advertisements – here is an example.

**[SHOW ADVERT #27(b)]**

168. It seems his business attracted his future wife – <sup>Monis' ex-wife</sup> . She doesn't appear to have fallen into that category of vulnerability, but visited him out of curiosity. I deal in a few moments with some further detail of that relationship.
169. Returning to Mr Monis' spiritual healing business, it appears to have been a financially successful one. The NSW Police found records in his flat which suggested a clientele of at least 500 people over the years of the business from 2002 to 2007.
170. According to Tax office records, in one year Mr Monis seems to have grossed \$125,000. It seems to have largely been a cash business but typically of the apparent compliant aspect of Mr Monis, he seems to have declared the cash income. Whether he declared all of it, of course, is not known but he declared substantial income for a number of years.
171. From 2002 to 2007, this business seems to have been his main source of income. It is not entirely clear on present evidence

when that work came to a halt – it seems to have wound down by 2008 and had ceased by 2010.

172. It is not known where he got the idea for this business. He claimed no qualifications for the work. He just did it and he made considerable sums of money as a result. Evidently, it did not trouble Mr Monis that clairvoyance is disapproved of in Islamic faith.
173. This clairvoyant business also provided Mr Monis with predatory opportunity for sexual assault – the topic to which I will now turn.

### ***The sexual assaults***

174. Ultimately in 2014 charges were laid against Mr Monis on 43 counts of aggravated indecent and sexual assault - allegedly committed from 2002 to 2010 in respect of six victims – all in the context of his clairvoyant business.
175. The facts and circumstances of the various charges indicate a pattern of conduct by him.
176. He appears to have used a number of addresses for his clairvoyant business, but generally they were premises which involved privacy and a sofa bed.
177. The frequency of consultations with a particular client was generally fortnightly but for some women as often as twice a week.
178. Initial consultations were used to engage with the women, listen to their problem or concern, and he would confirm they were the subject of black magic or a curse – or some other

affliction. Mr Monis was quite capable of adapting his approach to meet the level of sophistication of the people he purported to treat.

179. After this, he would frequently advise the women that he would need them undressed at least partially - but usually completely – in order to undertake the treatment. He would leave the room as one would expect a doctor to, and once they were undressed return with a bowl of water and a brush. He would initially paint areas of the woman's body, talking to them and preparing the way for a sexual advance. His conduct extended from indecent touching under the guise of massage to full penetration.
180. When he was met with objections from the client, he used various levels of argument to overcome their resistance. The lower level of argument was to assure the woman that sexual energy was needed to overcome the problem of a curse or black magic. Another of his responses was to point to the harm they would suffer if they did not permit him to complete a treatment. Finally, with some he indicated that he would himself impose curses or other harm if the woman did not submit.
181. If Mr Monis had been criminally tried for the large number of assaults he conducted, it seems more than likely that he would have been convicted and sentenced to a lengthy period in custody.
182. Of course, the charges had not been tried when Mr Monis died. But doing the best we can on available material, the likelihood that these offences would have been proved seems objectively

high. Numerous women who did not know one another and were from different ethnic backgrounds described assaults and behaviours which were remarkably similar.

183. At the time of the siege, it was not known whether Mr Monis had decided on a plea to these charges but his options would have been limited.

***Initial Relationship with <sup>Monis' ex-wife</sup> and other conduct***

184. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, Mr Monis met his future wife <sup>Monis' ex-wife</sup> in 2002 through his clairvoyant business. It is convenient at this point to say something further about that relationship.

185. <sup>Monis' ex-wife</sup> was a biology student at UWS from a non-Islamic background.

186. She apparently saw an advertisement for his business and attended in 2002 twice a week. She knew him as Michael Hayson Mavros.

187. And I pause for a moment to note that on **17 September 2002**, Mr Monis changed his name from Mohammad Hassan Manteghi to Michael Hayson Mavros.

**[SHOW SLIDE #28]**

188. The following month on **11 October 2002**, he lodged an application for Australian Citizenship.

**[SHOW SLIDE #29]**

189. Mr Monis told <sup>Monis' ex-wife</sup> and her family was that he was born 2 June 1976, of an Egyptian mother and a Greek father. He said he was born in Egypt, was Muslim but non-practising. Your

Honour will note he was in fact born 19 May 1964 - so he was reducing his age by 12 years from 38 to 26.

190. Their relationship progressed, and on **2 February 2003** they married, although their union was never legally registered. These photographs show two phases of the wedding

[SHOW PHOTOGRAPH OF WEDDING #30]

I note Mr Monis was not divorced by his Iranian wife until 3 years later on 26 July 2006.

191. After the marriage, he apparently commenced staying over a few nights a week with <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife</sub> at her parents home. No real plans for the future seem to have been developed.
192. <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife</sub> became pregnant in mid-2003. She later asserted that when Mr Monis was informed he remained uninvolved, and gave an angry refusal to sign the birth certificate when their son was born; he provided no assistance to <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife</sub> though he continued to visit and stay with her after the birth.
193. We will refer later in this opening to the course of Mr Monis' relationship with <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife</sub>, but at this point it is convenient to note several other events during 2003 and following years.
194. On **17 September 2003**, Mr Monis flew to Fiji, returning to Sydney five days later.

[SHOW PASSENGER CARD #31(a)]

195. This was the first of a number of short overseas trips he made between 2003 and 2007. Here is another passenger card he completed, this time for a trip to Thailand in 2007.

[SHOW PASSENGER CARD #31(b)]

196. A list of all these trips is now on the screen.

[SHOW LIST OF OVERSEAS TRAVEL # 31(c)]

197. It is not presently known what the purpose of these multiple trips were. But the frequency is striking.

198. As I mentioned earlier, Mr Monis was granted Australian Citizenship on **20 October 2004**.

[SHOW CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE #32]

199. The next day he was issued an Australia passport.

[SHOW PASSPORT #33]

### *The Airport Problems*

200. Talk of Mr Monis' travel brings me conveniently to the next chapter in his dealings with public authorities.

201. In January 2005 there commenced some correspondence between lawyers acting for Mr Monis and the Australian Customs Service, concerning his complaints about Customs Officers in their treatment of him when arriving into Sydney International Airport.

202. His lawyer, Mr Arguedas, who will be called in a few days, wrote on behalf of Mr Monis seeking video tape or surveillance evidence to confirm aspects of questioning of Mr Monis by the Customs Officer.

203. He complained about being targeted by these officers, that he was called up too often and checked too frequently when he came through customs. Multiple subsequent letters followed

repeating similar complaints; although somewhat perversely his final complaint some 12 months later was about having not been stopped on passing through immigration, and his suggestion that Customs officers were too lax.

204. A manager from Customs working at Sydney Airport dealt with Mr Monis and his lawyers through most of this time – he will give evidence about this including a meeting with Mr Monis at the airport.
205. The short point about this dispute is that, at all times Mr Monis was treated with a remarkable degree of courtesy and consideration. He was given a tour of the customs area with his lawyer. Detailed explanations were given in correspondence. Time was spent explaining Customs procedures and on any review of that material it would be difficult to find fault.
206. This incident is raised in the biographical phase primarily because it showed a marked persistence by Mr Monis, at his own legal cost, in unreasonably persisting with the complaint to the point of obsession. In one instance Mr Monis caught a plane to New Zealand and returned immediately on another flight for the sole purpose of demonstrating unreasonable behaviour by Customs officers.
207. Your Honour, Mr Gormly will now address Mr Monis' transition from Michael Mavros to Man Haron Monis, his website, and subsequent events.

***Man Haron Monis and the website [Gormly]***

208. On **21 November 2006**, Mr Monis changed his name from Michael Hayson Mavros to Man Haron Monis. A similar change was made in relation to his drivers licence.

[SHOW CHANGE NAME CERTIFICATE #34]

209. Six days later he was issued with a new passport in that name.

[SHOW PASSPORT #35]

210. On **30 August 2007**, Mr Monis created the website sheikharon.com.

[SHOW IMAGES OF WEBSITE #36]

211. He almost immediately began posting provocative and inflammatory statements including media releases, copies of letters he sends to various persons, and their responses. From time to time he also posted videos containing specific messages he wished to articulate. Examples of the content of his website can be seen on the screen now.

212. From **November 2007**, Mr Monis commenced writing letters to the families of deceased soldiers; such letters were ultimately the subject of charges against him laid in 2009, for which he was convicted in 2013. He posted a number of these letters on his website.

213. In **January and March 2008**, Mr Monis wrote first to the Queen of England and then to the Pope.

[SHOW LETTERS TO QUEEN AND POPE #37 and #38]

214. Sometime in 2007, 5 years after their relationship commenced, Mr Monis told <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife</sub> that he had been a spy in Iran and that he was a wanted man in Iran. This was the first she had heard of it.
215. In **January 2008**, she gave birth to their second son. Mr Monis seems to have shown a similar lack of interest and again his name does not appear on the birth certificate.
216. I should note that although not recorded in their birth certificates as their father, Mr Monis certainly treated these sons as his own, and sought full custody after his relationship with <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife</sub> finally came to an end in 2011.
217. In 2008 <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife's</sub> parents built a granny flat for income but gave it to their daughter. Mr Monis had keys and stayed regularly, but seems to have kept separate premises at one of his various addresses.
218. According to <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife's</sub> affidavit sworn in the Family law proceedings dated September 2011, he did not want to be seen by neighbours, he would close blinds, would not be photographed, would not be questioned, was over-protective and silent. He spent time on his laptop studying Islamic matters and working on his website. He provided no money and did not assist with the children. <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife</sub> described a significant change in his behaviour from the person she met in 2002.
219. He took greater interest in his Islamic heritage than he had previously and attempted to require <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife</sub> to comply with Islamic requirements, to cover her hair, to stop the boys socializing with non-Islamic boys. It led to conflict between them.

220. She felt there was a marked deterioration in his behaviour.

221. On **6 June 2008**, Mr Monis sent a fax to the Israeli Embassy. It was titled “Media Release: Sheik Haron’s Fatwa about suicide bombing coming”.

[SHOW IMAGE OF MEDIA RELEASE ‘FATWA’ #41]

222. In June 2008, Mr Monis staged two protests in Martin Place relating to a story that had aired on Sunrise about the arrest of Dr Mohammad Haneef. This was the subject of one of two complaints he made about Channel 7 to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), which will be in evidence before you.

223. The first protest was on **6 June 2008**. Here are photos of that.

[SHOW IMAGE OF PROTEST #42]

224. The second protest was on **27 June 2008**. And we have a photo of that.

[SHOW IMAGE OF PROTEST #43]

225. On **3 September 2008**, Mr Monis changed the name of one of his companies which had been named “Australian United Muslim Clerics” – changing it to “Hizbullah Australia”. He appears to have no connections of any kind with organisations with a similar name.

[SHOW IMAGE OF ASIC EXTRACT #44]

226. On **6 November 2008**, Hizbullah Australia sent a letter to the Commonwealth Attorney General stating the group had recently registered in Australia and hoped to begin activity as an Islamic Organisation.

**[SHOW LETTER FROM HIZBULLAH #45]**

227. It seems to have been sometime in 2008 that Mr Monis' relationship with Amirah Droudis became established.
228. Moving to 2009, on or about **1 July 2009** Mr Monis delivered a lecture in Granville – the lecture was recorded and we can show a portion now.

**[SHOW VIDEO #46] [first minute then from 5 minute mark to end]**

229. Roughly translated portions of this video includes statements such as:
- 'Your intelligence service is not working. There is criminal activity in your country'; and
  - 'The core of an Islamic society is justice. Society should behave in an Islamic manner'; also
  - 'Koran says that the God is the controlling power of the world. You have to say no to polytheism.'

***Postal Offences***

230. On **20 October 2009**, the AFP conducted a search of <sup>Monis' ex-wife's</sup> premises. They wished to arrest the man they described to her as Sheikh Man Haron Monis. She says this is the first she heard of him using this name or titling himself as Sheikh. She was shown a list of names that he had used but she had only known him as Michael Hayson Mavros.
231. Mr Monis was not present at her house when the AFP attended. He was found later that day, and arrested and charged with 7 counts related to sending offensive letters, which had been written over a two year period from 26

November 2007 to 14 August 2009. He was released on bail with various reporting conditions.

232. The letters were sent to families of soldiers killed in service in Afghanistan and an Australian Trade Commission official killed in a bombing in Jakarta. An example of the letter the subject of one of the first charges, from **December 2007**, is on the screen now.

[SHOW IMAGE OF LETTER #39(a)]

233. When Mr Monis first began sending these letters, the police adopted a moderate approach, with an officer visiting him in **April 2008**. That officer's account of their conversation is worth examining for Mr Monis' response to a fair attempt to have him change his ways.

[SHOW EXTRACT OF STATEMENT #39(b)]

Mr Monis never really altered that view, and sent several subsequent letters – which often commence with expressions of sympathy but then descend into calculated criticism and vitriol. The first page of one such letter is on the screen now.

[SHOW LETTER #39(c)]

234. When a story about these letters aired on television, Mr Monis received hate mail by email.

[SHOW EMAIL #40]

235. Mr Monis was initially charged in October 2009 with 7 counts of sending offensive letters in the post. A further 6 counts were subsequently laid.

236. He brought a constitutional challenge to the charges which went to the High Court. Ultimately his challenge was unsuccessful and in September 2013 he plead guilty and was convicted. He was sentenced on these charges to a total of 300 hours of community service.
237. A number of things emerged from the proceedings. The first is that despite his plea of guilty, he seems to have had little insight into the pain his letters caused. Secondly, in his bail requirements he was apparently always compliant. Finally, there is some useful evidence we will call from lawyers who represented him in relation to the charges - including his long time lawyer Mr Conditis and from Mr Chris Murphy - about the attitudes and media-behaviour of Mr Monis in the course of the proceedings.
238. Several of the witnesses you will hear from in the coming days dealt with Mr Monis in relation to the Community Service he performed during 2013 and 2014. What becomes apparent is that Mr Monis attempted to complete his hours as soon as he could; and although he was compliant and cooperative in some regards, Mr Monis made complaints about people and was troublesome and difficult.
239. But returning to 2009, as you will hear Mr Monis' protest activities intensified after the charges were laid for these postal offences.
240. On **10 and 11 November 2009**, Mr Monis chained himself to the railing outside Downing Centre Court complex holding an Australian sign 'Kevin stop killing Afghan civilians'.
241. Here is a video from the protest on 10 November 2009.

[SHOW VIDEO OF PROTEST #49] [all]

242. And this is a video from the protest on 11 November 2009.

[SHOW VIDEO OF PROTEST #50] [1<sup>st</sup> min, 4<sup>th</sup> min, 7<sup>th</sup> min to end]

243. Mr Monis staged another protest at the Downing Centre a fortnight later on 25 November 2009

[SHOW IMAGE OF PROTEST #51]

244. On **19 January 2010**, Mr Monis attended court and engaged with the media on the steps of the Downing Centre afterwards.

[SHOW FOOTAGE #52]

245. As this last image depicts, he again staged a protest at the next court date a fortnight later on **2 February 2010**.

[SHOW IMAGE #53]

246. On **9 February 2011**, Mr Monis registered “ISIIO” as an association,

[SHOW BUSINESS REGISTRATION #54]

247. Its objects were said to be to “provide humanitarian assistance to mankind”. This is repeated on an extract from the Facebook page for this organisation.

248. On **3 July 2011**, Mr Monis attended the 2011 conference of Hizb-ut Tahrir.

[SHOW CONFERENCE POSTER #56]

249. Hizb-ut Tahrir is an international pan-Islamic political organization which is commonly associated with the goal of all Muslim countries unifying as an Islamic state.

250. By 2011, Mr Monis' relationship with <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife</sub> had ended and family law proceedings were commenced concerning custody of the boys. You will hear evidence from several lawyers who represented Mr Monis in these proceedings, and a social worker who interviewed Mr Monis for the purpose of presenting an independent expert report to the Court.
251. In the course of those proceedings, Mr Monis filed an affidavit sworn **7 June 2012**, which referred to having \$1 million ready to transfer to a trust account for the children.

[SHOW EXTRACT OF AFFIDAVIT #58]

252. At present it is not possible to verify whether he had sources of funds overseas, but such sweeping declarations are consistent with a pattern of falsehoods and grandiosity that can be detected in the evidence.

*Further education and training,*

253. I'll now turn to a separate topic. For reasons which are somewhat opaque, Mr Monis enrolled in a number of courses between 2009 to 2014. Possibly this was to qualify for Austudy benefits.
254. In **September 2009**, he enrolled in a Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice through Open Universities accredited by Griffith University.

[SHOW OPEN UNI TRANSCRIPT #47]

255. He achieved a 30% grade average and therefore failed to complete the course.

256. In **July 2011**, he enrolled at TAFE NSW for a course in Information Technology focussing on websites – but he never commenced.

[SHOW IMAGE TAFE NSW CARD #55]

257. In **February 2012**, Mr Monis obtained a Certificate in Security Operations from Allies Security – you will hear some evidence from the individual, Mr Ali, who delivered the training course.

[SHOW IMAGE #56]

258. On 1 July 2012, he enrolled in the TAFE NSW - Certificate III in Information, Digital Media and Technology at the Blacktown campus. MONIS is recorded as either "Not Yet Competent" or "Withdrawn No Penalty".

[SHOW IMAGE OF ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPT #59]

259. Also in **July 2012**, Mr Monis' application for a security licence was refused.

[SHOW IMAGE OF DECISION #60]

260. His application had been made in April 2012. It was initially declined in June 2012 on the basis he was not a fit and proper person to hold such a licence. This was primarily in light of the pending postal offence charges. Mr Monis sought a review of that decision and in July 2012 the refusal was confirmed.

261. As a separate issue, but in keeping with the chronology of events, on **5 July 2012** Mr Monis withdrew his family law proceedings against <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife</sub>. From this point onwards, it seems he had continued contact with his sons on a weekly basis.

262. But returning to the topic, whilst undertaking his 300 hours community service, Mr Monis did gardening and maintenance work at the Salvation Army Booth College. Whilst at the college, he expressed an interest in studying there, and in **February 2014** he submitted enrolment documents for courses conducted by the College.

[SHOW BOOTH COLLEGE ENROLMENT FORM #67]

263. In an application form he wrote “I am interested in spiritual matters, I like to know more about Christian Studies”. He was enrolled in two courses the first being “Introduction to the Old Testament” and the second “Introduction to Christian History”. However, he was ultimately unable to demonstrate his English proficiency so did not attend more than 1 lecture, although he was reportedly disruptive and difficult on that single occasion.

264. Subsequently, Mr Monis’ community service changed to the PCYC at Bankstown. Not long thereafter, **on 5 August 2014**, he enrolled in a Certificate III and IV of a fitness training course conducted at that PCYC.

[SHOW PHOTOGRAPH #70]

265. Mr Monis attended only one of the 10 sessions relating to the business element of the course. He did attend the fitness elements of the course.

266. Then on **25 September 2014**, he undertook a Royal Lifesaving Society First Aid Certificate which he completed. It is one of the few courses in which he was successful.

[SHOW CERTIFICATE AND GROUP PHOTOGRAPH #72]

267. Whatever course Mr Monis did, he appears to have created difficulties. He would seek Fee-help for which he was not entitled. He would enrol in courses which demanded a level of English which he did not have. He would fail to attend. He would make unreasonable administrative demands concerning the precise statement of his name. He would be disruptive in class and he would complain.

268. As has been mentioned, several of the witnesses to be called will address the courses he attended, namely the Booth College application and his security training at Allies Security.

***Social (friends, associates, relationships with women)***

269. I now turn to a broader topic which is of general significance to this Monis biography segment.

270. That is, your Honour will hear evidence next week from several of Mr Monis' friends and associates. It is apparent from their evidence, and also from the investigative steps which have been taken to date, that Mr Monis was a relatively isolated individual. He did not have much of a social network at any time whilst in Australia. It seems this was largely caused by his own behaviour.

271. In particular it seems Mr Monis formed little connection with the Iranian community in Australia. You will hear from one if not more witnesses next week who will tell you that in his early days in Australia, in the late 1990s, it seems he actively avoided the Iranian community.

272. The use by Mr Monis of the title of Ayatollah would have marked him out immediately. His protest conduct by chaining

himself in situations of apparent self-promotion would not have endeared him to anyone.

273. As I've already mentioned, in later years, he moderated his claimed religious position to the more plausible rank of sheikh (which is a term for religious teacher who forms and develops an active following).
274. It seems he was endeavouring to attract a following but other than a handful of individuals – including one man he shared a cell with in jail in 2014 - he was unpersuasive and unsuccessful.
275. It would seem that mosques did not warm to him and he seemed never to have had a regular association with any mosque.
276. There is no evidence he actively connected with the Ahmadi in Australia and it seems unlikely that he did.
277. The few friends he had, he saw infrequently. They did not find out about <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife</sub> or their children until years after the children were born. Long gaps formed between visits from Mr Monis - although he would not hesitate to impose on his friends for assistance – usually financial - in whatever he was doing at the time. We will hear from some of those friends.
278. Mr Monis sought out female company but he appeared to make no attempt to distinguish between women who came to him for assistance through the clairvoyant business and those he would meet in other circumstances. Not including the sexual assaults in which he engaged through the clairvoyant business, he appears still to have conducted a number of

relationships with various women at various times, often simultaneously.

***Mental health history***

279. I'd like to deal now with what evidence there is about Mr Monis' mental health history.

280.

281. It would seem that from **2005** he was developing difficulties. Dr Murray, a psychiatrist to whom Mr Monis was referred, no longer has medical records for this period but some documents survived and Dr Murray himself has recollections of Mr Monis arising from the fact that Mr Monis was the only patient that he could recall who wanted to pay cash to avoid leaving a Medicare record.

282. There is a letter **24 November 2005** headed "To Whom It May Concern" which certifies that Dr Murray had provided psychiatric medication for a stress induced major depressive disorder and panic disorder. The letter appears to have been written for an airline or for some similar purpose.

283. In **2006** a general practitioner refers Mr Monis again to Dr Murray for assessment of possible depression. Dr Murray considers that he saw Mr Monis twice in that year. Mr Monis conveyed the impression of being persecuted by the State. Mr Monis did not return after an initial review and follow up appointment, but Mr Monis attended once again in 2010.

284. Dr Murray will give evidence later this week.

285. In **2009** a general practitioner notes that Mr Monis was stressed or angry and 6 months later records lethargy and stress recommending symptomatic treatment and relaxation.
286. On **17 April 2010** Mr Monis was taken to hospital by ambulance after being found in the street apparently collapsed with leg weakness and mild dizziness. Mr Monis reports personal problems and stress which resulted in a follow up with social worker specialising in mental health, Ms O'Brien. She in turn recommended a psychiatrist but in the meantime Mr Monis suffered a collapse in the street and was brought into hospital with what one ambulance officer refers to as bizarre behaviour and another as a psychotic episode.
287. On **10 May 2010** Mr Monis saw psychiatrist Dr Barrett – this came about from Ms O'Brien's referral. The court will hear from Dr Barrett who saw Mr Monis on a number of occasions and took a history which shows some paranoid features.
288. Dr Barrett trialed some medication with improvement and concluded that Mr Monis was suffering from a form of schizophrenia but with a high level of function.
289. In DSM IV schizophrenia was at the time a broad term used to describe a collection of features which may be present in varying ways.
290. In the meantime during 2010 Mr Monis attended Mr Abaie, psychologist of Bankstown. He told Mr Abaie that he was feeling stressed because he lives alone and has not seen his family for 13 years.... he was worried about returning to Iran where his two children live because he would be in danger. Mr Abaie is being called to give evidence – again later this week.

291. The year 2010 has Mr Monis in fairly regular attendance on various mental health professionals, including Dr Murray again, overlapping with his sessions with Dr Barrett.
292. Then in **2011** Mr Monis sees Dr Barrett in March and June but by September he informed her that he no longer wishes to see her as he had improved.
293. Mr Monis' health conditions however may have persisted in other ways. In **July 2012** he suffers chest pains and is admitted to Hospital – he is assessed, with serial troponin level, ECG and a chest x-ray all showing no abnormality.

**[SHOW PHOTOGRAPHS IN HOSPITAL #61]**

The next day an exercise stress test is reported positive by a cardiologist. Mr Monis is offered exploratory admission as an inpatient including an angiogram but Mr Monis declined and signs himself out of hospital.

I should note that nothing on autopsy of Mr Monis indicated any notable cardiac disease.

294. On **20 August 2013** Mr Monis attends Dr John Wen at Ashfield Station Medical Centre. Dr Wen notes that Mr Monis is on Corrective Services community service and is informed that Mr Monis has been in gaol for a “family thing”.
295. There are no further psychiatric assessments but Justice Health professionals examined Mr Monis on further occasions while he was in custody. We will hear evidence from two of those who assessed him in April 2014.

296. The evidence of the psychiatrists Dr Murray and Dr Barrett will be of considerable value in assessing Mr Monis' mental health at the particular times that they saw him. They will be asked to assist the court in clarifying diagnoses at the time and explaining the significance of those diagnoses. Both have agreed to provide assistance to Dr Jonathan Phillips should he required it.
297. Ultimately, Dr Phillips will have the benefit of this and all other evidence to provide an opinion about the psychiatric condition and history of Mr Monis.
298. Ms Callan will now address events in 2013.

***Rebels Motorcycle Gang Membership***                      ***[Callan]***

299. Your Honour, at some point in late 2012 or early 2013 there commenced a chapter of Mr Monis' life which might on first blush seem incongruous.
300. Namely, he actively sought to be involved with members of the Rebels Motorcycle Gang. He purchased a motorbike, and adjusted his appearance accordingly – as these photographs show

**[SHOW PHOTOGRAPHS #62]**

Your honour will hear evidence later this week about the individuals in these photographs.

301. There is also evidence in the brief of the police investigation which included speaking with a number of members of the Rebels Mt Druitt chapter who had dealings with Mr Monis. Those persons have declined to make statements. One individual said no one in the club really liked him and he was weird. Another said he was strange and weird, that things didn't add up. He would say he had a lot of money but never had any. Mr Monis also attempted to ingratiate himself with the Ingleburn chapter of the Rebels. His attempts to progress membership of these clubs barely got off the ground.
302. Ultimately he was rejected by the Rebels, and they took his motorbike around the middle of 2013.
303. As I said, this initially might seem incongruous. But on reflection Mr Monis' willingness to change his appearance, adopt the garb of a new persona, and his attraction to a group he perhaps saw as exercising power and influence, is not so surprising. His

constant goal in life appears to have been achieving significance.

Monis' ex-wife's **murder**

304. I now return to <sup>Monis' ex-wife</sup>. As will have become apparent the relationship between her and Mr Monis had never been a strong one. At no point did they properly reside together, and it transpires she knew little about him. As already mentioned, their relationship ended in 2011.
305. On **21 April 2013**, <sup>Monis' ex-wife</sup> was murdered.
306. Ms Amirah Droudis has been charged with the murder.
307. Mr Monis has been charged with being an accessory before and after the fact.
308. Those charges were laid on **15 November 2013**. Initially he was refused bail and remained in custody until released on bail on **12 December 2013**. Whilst in custody, Mr Monis complained of having been 'tortured' referring to being denied food and kept in a cell with blood and faeces smeared on the surfaces. Investigations determined these complaints were not well founded.
309. The relevance of <sup>Monis' ex-wife's</sup> murder to this inquest is discrete. And as Mr Gormly has already said, we are concerned to ensure that the pending prosecution is not prejudiced.
310. But the charges against Mr Monis are relevant in terms of security assessments of him – that is, assessments of the risk he posed to the community - which will be a matter for later consideration in this inquest.

311. Shortly after her murder, <sup>Monis' ex-</sup><sub>wife's</sub> mother commenced proceedings in the Family Court for custody of the two boys. Mr Monis again found himself in legal proceedings; you will hear some evidence from lawyers who acted for him in this respect.
312. Not long after Mr Monis was released on bail, he conducted a protest at Parramatta on **22 January 2014** – we have footage of him there. It is apparent the subject of his protest was his alleged torture in custody.

[SHOW PROTEST VIDEO #66]

313. Then on **14 April 2014**, Mr Monis was charged with three counts of sexual assault, arising from conduct in 2002 in respect of a patient of his clairvoyant business. Initially bail was refused, and he remained in custody until bail was granted on 26 May.
314. About a month after his release, Mr Monis attends a conference for Hizb-ut-Tahrir on **27 June 2014**. This photograph shows him in the audience.

[SHOW IMAGES #69]

315. On **18 September 2014**, Mr Monis attended a protest at Lakemba opposing a police counter terrorism operation.

[SHOW IMAGE #71]

316. Mr Monis was photographed wearing a white robe and an Islamic headband with his fist clenched in the air. It was not known if he organised the event, but he shared photographs on his Facebook page.

317. On **1 October 2014**, Mr Monis wrote to Attorney General George Brandis asking if it was legal for him to send a letter to Caliph Ibrahim, the leader of the Islamic State.

[SHOW IMAGE #73]

318. On **9 October 2014**, the Family Court made an interim decision granting sole custody of the boys to their grandmother.

319. Also on **9 October 2014**, Mr Monis was served with an additional 40 counts of sexual and indecent assault, committed between 2002 and 2010 in the course of his clairvoyant business. These are filed in court at a mention on **10 October 2014**; his bail was continued.

320. In November and early December 2014, Mr Monis' website included some provocative material, including a pledge of allegiance to the Caliph. Your honour will see evidence in relation to the content of his website at this point in time, from a police witness who will be called later this week.

321. On **12 December 2014**, Mr Monis' application to the High Court for leave to appeal his conviction for the postal offence is dismissed.

322. Your Honour, Mr Gormly will now address you with some observations about this final year of Mr Monis' life – and also his concluding remarks concerning this segment and future issues.

**FINAL REMARKS****[Gormly]**

323. The survey we have undertaken in this biographical opening, of Mr Monis' life leading up to 2014, suggests his life was deteriorating. We will be better off in attempts to assess this by hearing the first hand oral evidence of those who personally dealt with him.
324. Subject to that oral evidence it does seem that he arrived in Australia expecting to make a mark.
325. It's not difficult to develop a summary of Mr Monis life in Australia that makes him look like as man spiralling downwards. For example, by 2014 he seems to have had no money. He owned no property. He was in debt. He had developed no employment skills. His attempts to develop a personal, religious following as Sheiks can do, had failed. Indeed the Islamic community in Australia did not accept him, surmising no doubt, that Mr Monis' various activities were about him, not about Islam and were more a utilization of religion than an acceptance of it; a story familiar beyond the bounds of Islam.
326. He had few friends and no standing with any group or institution. His attempts to join other groups, even the bikies, who tolerated him for a short period, had failed. He had a criminal record. He was facing future serious criminal charges. He had lost the custody battles for his children. He had lost his other contested battles in courtrooms. He had made no public impact of note on the Australian political scene although that seems to have been a goal. The likelihood of his serving a substantial gaol sentence for sexual assault seemed high. He

had already spent some time in custody. His grandiose self-assessments of the past were not coming to fruition.

327. He may have found it all puzzling. He had been administratively compliant. He had maintained some secrecy about his private life. He had previously kept his sexual behaviour hidden for a long time. He had declared himself a pro-Australian Pacifist, but all his efforts for a public profile had come to nothing, or worse. But bad as all this might sound for a person who had such an elevated view of himself, his insight into his own position seemed to be poor. He denies understanding the offence he had caused with the letters. He may not have interpreted his life as one might now in hindsight. That is also something about which psychiatric evidence might help, especially if one takes into account whatever problems may have troubled him enough to submit to psychiatric treatment. We will hear oral evidence about that.
328. This biographical segment is intended to lay foundations for an examination of his motivation and intentions in the siege. Biography is not the only place to look for that. There is obviously other material that can contribute and we will be looking at that in later segments.
329. For example we know that he had some intent to hold a siege before he entered the café because he took a gun and ammunition in with him. He had particular clothing, a flag (even if not the right one), and a carefully filled backpack designed to look like he had the bomb that he said he had. The gun was almost certainly recently obtained. No gun was found on earlier search warrants. Just how much earlier he had been planning the siege remains to be assessed. That timing of his actions

leading up to the siege is a matter we would like to understand as best we can.

330. Another reason for undertaking this biographical segment is to contribute to the material that might assist Dr Jonathon Phillips to look at Mr Monis' developing mental position from a psychiatric point of view in the time leading up to the siege. From our discussions with Dr Phillips it looks like that time period may be one best investigated historically over years rather than days or months.
331. There has been some public speculation as to whether Mr Monis expected to emerge from the café alive. That seems to be a legitimate question. Not only is it one to which we would all like answers but it may be a question the answer to which, if knowable at the time, could have influenced the management of the siege.
332. Mr Monis may have formed a clear understanding or, in his grandiose and occasionally delusional way, expected to negotiate or talk his way out of the café with his various demands met. On the other hand he may not have formulated any clear outcome. Reality for him, may not have hit home until many hours into the siege. It is useful to formulate these questions and to rationally and objectively investigate them to the best conclusion available; but we need his background to do it. We stop the biography just before the siege started.
333. After this biographical segment, we will from 17 August undertake public hearings to address Mr Monis' gun, the issue of bail, some evidence about terrorism and some other shorter matters, that help explain this siege and its deaths. As I

indicated at the outset, the following segment after that will include closed or private hearing – although I anticipate it would commence with a public opening

334. After that, we will start the largest segment of the inquest being the siege evidence. Ultimately, and in the nature of this jurisdiction, everything is directed to establishing, in proportion to the significant nature of the event, a satisfactory body of evidence that goes to the manner and cause of death and any coronial recommendations that might flow from the evidence.
335. That concludes the opening remarks that Ms Callan and I would like to make for this biographical segment.
336. I understand that Your Honour would now wish to adjourn to enable some re-arrangement of the Courtroom. After that I propose to tender the brief, to seek some associated orders and call the first witness, Detective Inspector Angelo Memmolo.