

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Group: 2

Program: 1.6

Question No. SBE14/187

Senator Collins asked the following question at the hearing on 20 November 2014:

1. On 5 August 2014 the Government announced \$630 million in funding over four years for national security activity. Please provide a breakdown of that funding by year, agency, and program.
2. Has any part of the \$630 million been provided to relevant agencies yet? If so, please provide details.
3. As part of the national security spending, the Government announced \$13.4 million in funding for community engagement work. What activities will be funded? Has the Government made any decisions to fund particular programs? Has the Government begun to assess potential projects?
4. Will the Government revive the 'countering violent extremism' community grants program conducted by the former Government?
5. Will the Government provide funding for any de-radicalisation programs working with prisoners?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

1. On 15 December 2014, the Government released the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2014-15 (MYEFO). A breakdown of the Government's new counter-terrorism funding is provided on page 135 of MYEFO (refer to Attachment A). A breakdown of the Attorney-General's Portfolio funding by programme is provided at Attachment B.
2. Funding for these measures will be provided through the 2014-15 Additional Estimates Appropriation Bills. The Appropriation Bills are to be tabled in Parliament in the first week of the Autumn sittings commencing Monday 9 February 2015. Funding is expected to be made available to agencies by April 2015.
3. The Government's \$13.4 million Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Programme is part of Australia's broad approach to addressing violent extremism, which draws on the collective work of many departments. The emphasis of this particular programme is on intervening early before a law enforcement response is required, including to assist with the management of returned foreign fighters. The programme will include the following elements:
 - *Community Engagement* – working with communities so they can help prevent at-risk individuals from moving down the path of radicalisation to violence
 - *CVE Intervention Framework* – early intervention and counter radicalisation activities to help and support at-risk individuals to deradicalise and disengage from violent ideologies including diversion activities such as mentoring, education and employment support and counselling, and

- *Online radicalisation* – addressing online radicalisation through a community reporting tool, education, promoting alternative messages online, and working with industry to remove certain classes of extremist content.

To assist organisations to build capacity to support individuals to deradicalise and disengage from violent ideologies, the Australian Government has established the *Living Safe Together Grants Programme*. Applications are open until 5pm Monday 2 March 2015.

4. The *Building Community Resilience (BCR) Grants Programme*, which ended on 30 June 2014, will not be re-established as part of the new CVE Programme. The BCR grants programme provided funding for community-based pilot projects across Australia with the aim of building resistance to violent extremism. The BCR programme was part of the \$9.7 million over four years from 2010-11 to 2013-14. These pilot projects resulted in CVE becoming a well-embedded element of the Government's national security efforts and the lessons learned informed the design and development of the new \$13.4 million CVE programme.

Evaluation of the BCR grants found that there is a need for intervention support services which are aimed at intervening prior to a law enforcement response. This is the key objective of the \$13.4 million CVE programme, including the \$1 million *Living Safe Together Grants Programme* established on 7 January 2015 to help organisations build their capacity to deliver services to support radicalised individuals to move away from violent extremism.

5. Prisons and corrective services are the responsibility of state and territory Governments. The CVE Sub-Committee of the Australia New Zealand Counter Terrorism Committee (ANZCTC) coordinates the development and implementation of CVE projects and facilitates cross-jurisdictional collaboration and knowledge sharing, including in relation to prisons. Decisions about future funding for programmes targeting the needs of prisoners are a matter for the CVE Sub-Committee of the ANZCTC.

The Australian Government provides ongoing funding to the ANZCTC—\$12.4 million per annum from 2013-14—which is directed towards building a modern counter-terrorism capability that is able to keep pace with increasingly sophisticated adversaries and technological change. Of that funding, \$2 million a year is committed to funding and coordinating CVE projects across Australia.

Since 2010, the CVE Sub-Committee has provided \$6.99 million to 35 projects across Australia.

These projects include activities in the areas of prison rehabilitation, and training on the Indicators of Radicalisation for Corrections Officers. Training and resources are made available nationally.