

Question on notice no. 128

Portfolio question number: 132

2017-18 Additional estimates

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, Defence Portfolio

Senator Fraser Anning: asked the Department of Defence on 28 February 2018—

Given the focus by Islamically-motivated terrorists to target Defence bases and given the fact that some hundreds of Muslims from Australia have joined or given material support to the Islamic State, are there any vetting processes in place to prevent insider attacks on Defence bases and personnel?

Given the fact that an imam who signed a petition supporting Hizb ut Tahrir was appointed to the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services, how can Australians have confidence in vetting processes?

Answer —

1. Defence applies the Australian Government Personnel Security Policy and undertakes security clearance vetting for all current and potential ADF and APS employees and service providers who require access to facilities and information of a classified nature. These guidelines include measures to mitigate the threat of malicious trusted insiders.

As part of Defence security policy, to further guard against malicious insider threats, all Defence personnel and external service providers are required to report contacts of security concern as a part of the Australian Government Contact Reporting Scheme, managed by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation. Defence policy also requires that any security incidents of concern are reported via a Security Incident Report. Where appropriate, the relevant authority investigates the incident.

2. The Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (RACS) is responsible for providing religious support to the Australian Defence Force. The RACS recruitment process involves several stages. Initially, Defence engages with the recognised religious peak body for the particular faith seeking nominations for RACS. Nominees undertake a baseline security check.