

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES
28 February 2017**

Home Affairs Portfolio

Question number and title: AE17-152 - Countering Violent Extremism

Senator Louise Pratt asked:

1. How much funding does the Government commit to CVE programs annually?
2. How does this compare with funding allocated to intelligence and law enforcement agencies?
3. Does the Department allocate resources to reactive measures such as law enforcement and prosecution at the expense of prevention and intervention measures?
4. Does the Government believe that prevention and intervention are an effective approach to counter-terrorism?
5. What CVE measures are currently being pursued by the Department?
6. What stage of implementation are these measures at?
7. How does the Department measure the success rate of CVE programs?
8. Are there any CVE programs internationally that could be adopted in Australia?
9. The Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery recommended that the Government seek COAG agreement to a new national CVE strategy for endorsement in 2015. Was a new national CVE strategy adopted?
10. If yes, why has it not been publically released?
11. Has the Government established and expanded community and public-private partnerships to better reach at-risk or radicalised individuals?
12. Has the Government expanded Commonwealth efforts to address the causes of violent extremism in Australia?
13. In December 2015, COAG agreed to take forward a range of initiatives to counter violent extremism. How are these initiatives progressing?
14. In January 2015, the Department published a tender for a 'living safe together directory of countering violent extremism intervention services'.

- a) Who has applied to be included in the directory? (take list on notice)
- b) When will the directory be publically available?

15. In August 2015, Minister Keenan launched the Australian Intervention Support Hub.
- a) How much funding was provided for the hub?
 - b) What have been the outcomes of the hub?
 - c) The hub was tasked with identifying international best practice in countering violent extremism and evidence-based research, and facilitating independent evaluation of CVE programs. Has any of this occurred? Will any of this research be published?"

Answer:

1. Since August 2014, the Australian Government's investment in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) initiatives has increased to more than \$45 million over four years.
2. Funding for CVE initiatives complements a range of other initiatives funded by the Australian Government to support implementation of Australia's 2015 Counter Terrorism Strategy.
3. No.
4. Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2015 emphasises prevention as the first line of defence against terrorism. This includes CVE programs as well as a range of social policy investments that are relevant to CVE policy objectives. CVE remains an emerging field and the challenge of measuring effectiveness and success is recognised globally. We have strong indications the work of the CVE Centre is having a positive impact within the Australian community. Our colleagues in law enforcement have repeatedly expressed their gratitude for CVE Programs and for the additional and valuable support that they provide to their efforts to keep Australia safe.
5. The Australian Government is focused on a range of CVE measures and initiatives. The CVE Centre focuses on six lines of effort to deliver these measures:
 1. Working with frontline workers and communities to support 'at risk' individuals.
 2. Providing tailored case management plans to help individuals to disengage from violent extremism.
 3. Managing the return of children from conflict zones.
 4. Supporting corrections staff to manage and rehabilitate terrorist offenders.
 5. Addressing the impact of online propaganda.
 6. Delivering capacity building initiatives in Southeast Asia and in multilateral forums.
6. Since the Australian Government announced additional funding in 2014-15, a range of initiatives (including those outlined in response to question 5) have been

established and are being implemented across Australia to strengthen our nation-wide CVE capabilities. This supplements work being progressed through the CVE Sub-Committee of ANZCTC, other CVE initiatives being funded by State and Territory governments, and initiatives funded by all levels of Government that support social cohesion and economic and social participation. As CVE is a relatively new discipline and like other countries, we are trialling a range of innovative policies and programs to identify those that are most effective and suitable for our domestic context as well as ensuring that we are meeting the evolving threat environment.

7. As a relatively new discipline, we are constantly monitoring research and sharing best practice with our state and territory counterparts, as well as international partners, to build an evidence base to inform the Australian approach. In appropriate circumstances we also engage external experts to assist in developing evaluation plans and conduct evaluations of CVE programs.

As part of the COAG CVE Taskforce, a Research and Evaluation Working Group was established to develop a national CVE evaluation framework and guide. The framework offers guidance on incorporating evaluation into program design and the designing and implementation of evaluations. The framework encourages sharing of best practice and lessons between jurisdictions and builds our evidence base of the effectiveness of our programs.

8. Australia's approach is informed by international best practice, including research and evolving approaches in CVE. Australia continues to collaborate closely with international partners in responding to current and emerging issues in CVE and the sharing of information and learning.
9. In response to the Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery, Australia's Counter Terrorism Strategy was developed and endorsed by COAG in 2015. That Strategy incorporates CVE including focus on challenging violent extremist ideologies and prevention and early intervention efforts to steer people away from violent extremism.
10. Australia's Counter Terrorism Strategy 2015 is a public document, available at www.nationalsecurity.gov.au.
11. The Department works closely with state and territory agencies, industry, regulatory agencies, international partners, not-for-profit organisations, communities, and individuals to deliver CVE policies and programs.

Government is continually exploring new ways to coordinate services to reach at-risk individuals and address the factors that lead to radicalisation and the use of violence. This includes through partnerships with the community and industry, and through ongoing dialogue with our international partners. For example, in 2016 and

2018, the Government partnered with the Digital Industry Group (representing Facebook, Twitter, Oath, Microsoft and Google) to host a Digital youth forum to support young people to counter hate speech and extremism online.

12. Since August 2014, the Australian Government has invested over \$45 million to support a range of CVE initiatives. This is an expansion on previous funding allocated to CVE programs and has funded new initiatives including:

- development of general awareness materials and education programs to increase awareness and understanding about violent extremism such as the Radicalisation Awareness Information Kit,
- intervention programs to support diversion and rehabilitation activities,
- establishment of a social media research capability to assist with limiting the spread of online terrorist propaganda, and
- engagement with communities to understand and undermine the appeal of violent extremist ideologies.

13. At its December 2016 meeting, COAG noted the progress against implementing CVE initiatives. This included:

- The COAG CVE Taskforce developed training resources for senior leadership teams in schools that provide information and advice on how to recognise the signs of radicalisation and reach out to young people who may be at-risk. The training package is available nation-wide.
- The Office of the Children's E-Safety Commissioner is developing new and expanded digital resilience programs to equip young people, their families and their support networks with the skills and knowledge to manage online risks. This supplements training and information sessions that were run by a civil society organisation to help parents to better understand the online behaviours of young people and how they can help to support their children to engage safely online.
- Under the auspices of the CVE Taskforce, the Attorney-General's Department partnered with the DIGI Group to host two digital youth forums (in 2016 and 2018) to support young people to counter hate speech and extremism online. Separate to the 2016 event, social media workshops were held in four capital cities, which aimed to equip young people and their mentors with the knowledge and tools to effectively use social media to communicate against hate speech and violent extremism.
- The COAG CVE Taskforce oversaw work to consider approaches to strengthen advice and support services for concerned family and community members.
- The COAG CVE Taskforce has developed a national CVE evaluation framework and guide to ensure consistent evaluation of CVE projects across Australia.

The CVE Subcommittee of the Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee is continuing to progress these initiatives.

14. As at 19 March 2018, there are 37 organisations included on the Directory of Intervention Support Services. There are a further 55 organisations who have agreed to be included on the Directory once they receive the appropriate training.

The Directory is not publicly available owing to the sensitive nature of the relationships between the support services and recipients of their services.

15. In June 2015, the department provided one-off funding of \$700,000 to the Australian National University to contribute seed funding to support the establishment and operational costs for the first financial year of the Australian Intervention Support Hub (AISH). The AFP contributed an additional \$225,000.

The AISH helped inform government and community approaches to CVE, and enhanced linkages between academia, government agencies and community groups in developing and implementing nationally consistent, but locally delivered, evidence based CVE programs. AISH conducted research with community organisations to identify service providers with the capacity and capability to assist with case management of individuals at risk of violent extremism. AISH established a web resource to share CVE best practice with researchers, policy makers and CVE practitioners. AISH also conducted a study into the impact of media skills training projects that aimed to challenge negative media representations of Australian communities.

AISH produced and published peer reviewed articles about risk factors for radicalisation to violent extremism. The remainder of the research that was undertaken by AISH as part of its contract with AGD will not be published but is being used by government officials to inform ongoing policy development.