

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2017

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation

Question No. BE17-113

Senator Hanson asked the following question on 02 June 2017:

- a. The public has recently become aware of a number of schools, said to be 15 to 20 in Sydney where radicalisation of young Muslim men is an issue. In the case of Punchbowl High School the police liaison officers were excluded from the school. What is ASIO doing to ensure second generation children of parents, who migrated here from Islamic Countries, are being integrated into society and not becoming radicalised?
- b. Second generation Muslims in Australia are the source of home grown terrorism. What is ASIO doing to address this problem?
- c. Janet Albrechtsen in her article 'Enough-it is time for us to get angry' published in the Weekend Australian May 27-28, cites the Coroner in NSW who says the immigration system, the court system and senior policing failed ordinary people at the Lindt Café. When will ASIO do something the systemic failures, which allow second generation children (who see our way of life as a threat to Islam) to terrorise Australians.
- d. What has ASIO done to stop hate preaching in Australian mosques?
- e. What is ASIO doing about access to Islamic hate sites available in Australia. It was reported that 350,000 Muslim Australians are face-book followers of Yusha Evans recently invited to Australia by the Australian Imams Council. What is ASIO's policy towards these hate sites and how can Australians feel safe when 350,000 Muslims are followers of a hate preacher?

The response to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:

- a. Questions regarding high school police liaison officer programs should be directed to the Department of Education or relevant State or Territory Police.

The Attorney-General's Department (AGD) works with State and Territory Governments to support schools, through, for example, funding to develop and deliver training materials to assist school leadership teams to recognise early warning signs of radicalisation and provide appropriate forms of support.

ASIO supports the AGD in this regard, both by providing strategic advice and by assisting police identification of candidates for referral to CVE programs.

The role of ASIO is to protect Australia and its interests from threats to security, through intelligence collection and assessment, and advice for government, government agencies and business.

- b. The sources of terrorism in Australia are diverse. The principal terrorist threat in Australia emanates from the small number of Australia-based individuals who remain committed to an anti-Western violent Sunni Islamist extremist ideology. These individuals come from a range of backgrounds. There are first, second, third-generation Australians and beyond. There are people from families with no historical connection to Islam, and who have converted to a radical interpretation of Islam.

A less common, but still significant source of terrorism emanates from people who espouse radical right-wing views. One of the recently thwarted terrorist attacks in Australia was planned by a right-wing extremist.

ASIO's investigative focus is on individuals and their activities of relevance to security, not on broader sections, to groups or to classes of people within the community.

Across all these investigations, ASIO is focused on the most critical threats and ensuring we, and our intelligence and law enforcements partners, are positioned to counter them.

In all cases, we are seeking to identify signs indicating that individuals or groups may seek to use violence against the Australian public or institutions, so we can work with our colleagues in police and other agencies to prevent these activities and keep Australia safe.

- c. As announced by the Attorney-General, the Australian Government will accept all the recommendations of the Lindt Café siege inquest report that relate to the Commonwealth.

The Australian Government will work cooperatively with the states and territories, consistent with our already strong national arrangements, to give effect to these recommendations.

- d. All Australians are free to choose their religion, and are entitled to express and practise their religion and their beliefs, without intimidation or interference, as long as those practices are within the framework of Australian law.

Australia has strong laws prohibiting individuals from urging violence and advocating terrorism or genocide. Violence and promoting violence in the name of an ideology or political cause are criminal acts for which the Government has no tolerance.

- e. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is responsible for investigating online material that is considered offensive or illegal. If there is something inappropriate or offensive including material that advocates violence or a terrorist threat, an individual can report it via the ACMA website.

Any online material that promotes violent extremism, or could encourage radicalisation towards violence, can be reported via the National Security Hotline, which is managed by the Attorney-General's Department.

Members of the public are encouraged to report objectionable material to either social media companies or through the Report Online Extremism tool at www.reportextremism.livingsafetogether.gov.au

AGD also works with digital industry and regulatory and operational agencies to take down violent extremist material.

ASIO supports the AGD in this regard, both by providing strategic advice and by assisting police identification of candidates for referral to CVE programs.