

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

Program: 1.2

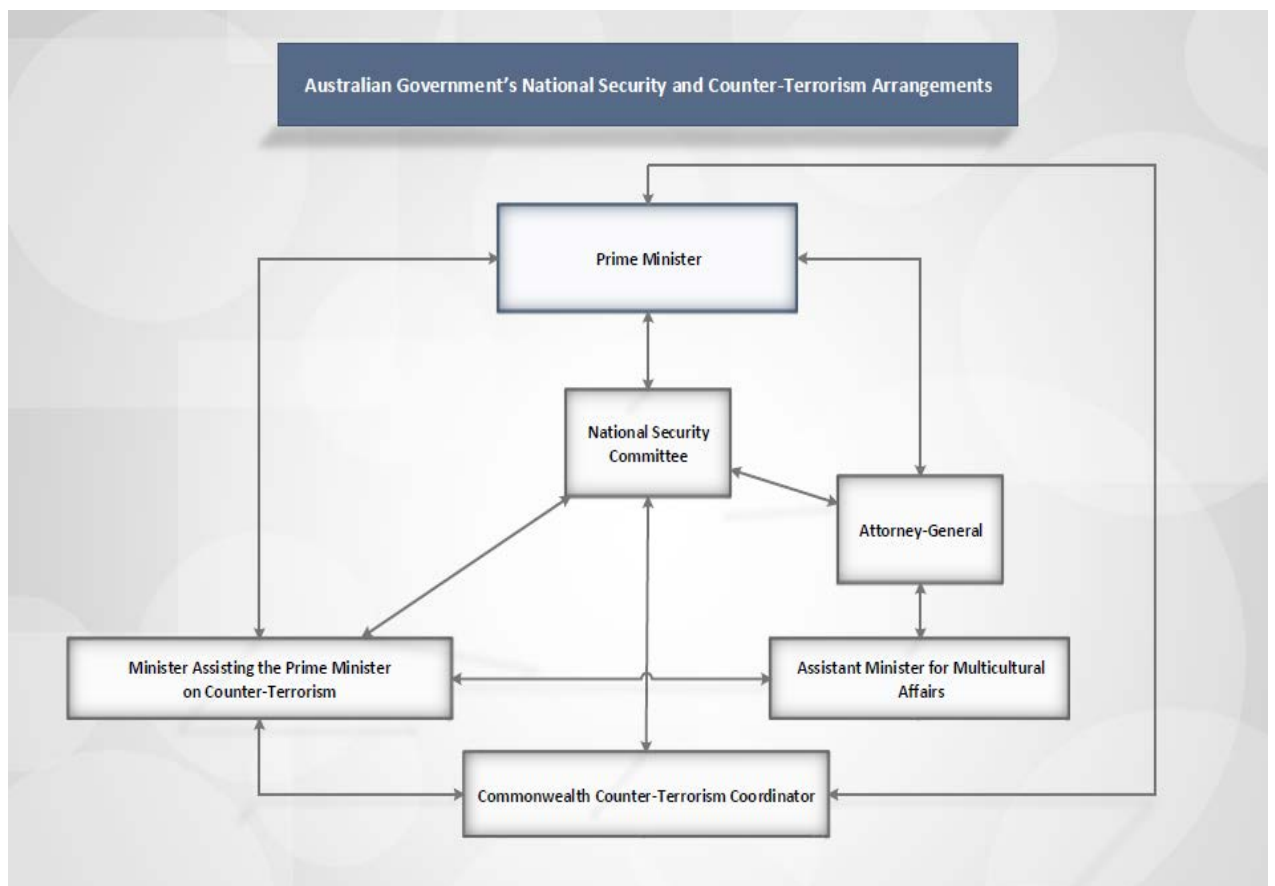
Question No.: SBE15/091

Senator Collins asked the following question at the hearing on 20 October 2015:

1. Please provide a flowchart explaining the responsibility for national security, counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation work under the new ministerial arrangements implemented by the Government in May 2015.
2. Does the Attorney-General retain ultimate responsibility for these areas of policy?
3. Does the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Counter-Terrorism report to the Prime Minister directly, or through the Attorney-General?

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

1. The following flowchart reflects the ministerial arrangements since September 2015.



The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, takes the lead role in Australian Government counter-terrorism policy coordination.

The Attorney-General, Senator the Hon George Brandis QC, supported by the National Security Committee (NSC) of Cabinet and other ministers, is responsible for national security issues, including counter-terrorism law and policy and critical infrastructure protection (including cyber security).

The NSC is made up of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Treasurer, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Defence, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Cabinet Secretary. NSC officials include the Secretaries of each respective department, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Deputy Secretary National Security, the Chief of the Defence Force, and the Directors-General of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, the Office of National Assessments and the Australian Secret Intelligence Service. The Counter-Terrorism Coordinator is regularly co-opted as appropriate. The NSC focuses on major international security issues of strategic importance to Australia, border protection policy, national responses to developing situations (either domestic or international) and classified matters relating to aspects of operation and activities of the Australian Intelligence Community.

The Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Counter-Terrorism, the Hon Michael Keenan MP, is responsible for criminal law and law enforcement and for matters relating to counter-terrorism, including leading the Government's countering violent extremism (CVE) strategy.

The Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, is responsible for community engagement in support of Mr Keenan's CVE role.

The Commonwealth Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Greg Moriarty, coordinates Australia's approach to countering terrorism across agencies and provides advice on counter-terrorism policy, legislation and program implementation.

2. As indicated by the Administrative Arrangements Order of 30 September 2015, the Attorney-General has responsibility for, among other things, national security, protective security policy and coordination, protective services at Commonwealth establishments and diplomatic and consular premises in Australia, and critical infrastructure protection coordination.
3. In his capacity as the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism, Mr Keenan assists the Prime Minister, and works closely with the Attorney-General and other relevant Ministers as necessary.