

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

**Program:** 1.7 National Security and Criminal Justice

**Question No. SBE16/126**

**Senator Fawcett asked the following question at the hearing on 12 December 2016:**

Senator FAWCETT: I am just wondering if there are specific programs that we are funding in universities here in Australia and, if so, could you give us the dollar figures that we are providing to universities for running research or evaluation type programs? Are there any partnerships where we are funded partners with overseas bodies, like the Institute for Strategic Dialogue in London, for example?

Ms Jones: Certainly we have been working closely with academia here in Australia. Deakin University, the Australian National University, Monash University and others around the country, like the University of Queensland, have been working with us, to help us, in some circumstances, develop tools to assist us in our programs, and sometimes to help us in terms of doing mapping exercises around appropriate community organisations that we could work with in the countering violent extremism area, and in terms of commissioning research to help us in terms of better development and refinement of our programs. In terms of the specifics, I can take on notice to provide you with a little bit more detail around that. Suffice it to say that we recognise that there is good expertise out there in certain universities and with certain academics, and we do try to work closely with them where appropriate.

In terms of partnering with overseas organisations, there are a range of organisations that we have worked with who have specialist expertise. If I could mention just a couple: there is the Hedayah institute, which operates out of Abu Dhabi, which has world-renowned expertise in terms of developing countering-violent-extremism programs and research, and we partnered with them to develop some material around counter-narratives for use in South-East Asia that were particularly focused on developing messages that would resonate in our region, and so we have partnered closely with them. I am not sure if perhaps Ms Sherburn can add anything more to that; otherwise, we can take that on notice.

Ms Sherburn: We engage a lot with expertise and think tanks from around the world, and we will certainly take on notice if we have procured any research. But certainly there is an ongoing dialogue and discussion with the leaders of CVE research and thinking—in fact, there was a CVE research summit, facilitated by the Hedayah institute, in Jakarta last week, to which we sent an officer.

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

The department has funded a range of research and evaluation projects to inform the development of CVE initiatives. These include currently funded and completed projects. Projects have been commissioned from universities and other research and evaluation consultancies.

Three current projects in universities are being funded by the department (amounts are GST exclusive):

- **Youth resilience to violent extremism (Victoria University)**  
This project will develop a standardised measure for identifying and strengthening young people's resilience to violent extremism at community level. The project is a collaboration between researchers at Victoria University and Dalhousie University (Canada). The department is providing a total of \$159,324 to support this project in 2016 and 2017.
- **CVE Evaluation (Victoria University)**  
This project will evaluate CVE services for the purpose of improvement and informing the design and evaluation of other services nationally. The department is providing a total of \$181,818 for this project from 2016 to 2018.
- **Establishment of a network of Civil Society Organisations (Deakin University)**  
This project is establishing a network of civil society organisations that are working in the Southeast Asia region to counter violent extremism. The project is aimed at facilitating peer-to-peer learning and partnerships. The department is providing a total of \$342,342 for this project in 2016 and 2017.

In addition, the Australian Government provides \$1.945M per year to the Countering Violent Extremism Sub Committee of the Australia-New Zealand Counter Terrorism Committee (CVESC) for research and national capacity building projects. CVESC is funding three projects in universities with a total value of \$561,365 in 2016-17 on the topics of:

- Psychological wellbeing and connectedness of families returning to Australia from Syria and Iraq;
- Media training and education resources for Australian media practitioners and journalism educators;
- Development of a national CVE evaluation framework and guide.

The department has partnered with Hedayah, the International Centre of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism in Abu Dhabi, to support two research projects:

- **Development of a regional counter-narrative compendium**  
The department contracted Hedayah to develop a practical 'how-to' guide to assist Australia and our regional partners with developing counter-narratives to challenge extremist propaganda. The guide was published on 30 August 2016 and is available on the Hedayah website. The department provided \$140,862 to Hedayah for this project.
- **International CVE Research Conference**  
The International CVE Research Conference, held in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 6-8 December 2016, brought together experts in the field of preventing and countering violent extremism, and focused on developing better, more comprehensive evidence-based strategies, programs and policies for CVE. The department provided a grant of \$60,000 to Hedayah to support the conference.