

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

Program 1.2

Question No. 108

Senator Trood asked the following question at the hearing on 25 May 2010:

According to the Counter-Terrorism White Paper '[a] second shift apparent since 2004 has been the increase in the terrorist threat from people born or raised in Australia, who have become influenced by the violent jihadist message'. The Government will provide \$9.7m over four years for targeted programs to reduce violent extremism in Australia.

- a) How will this money be allocated?
- b) Which department and agency will be responsible for administering these funds?
- c) How many additional staff will be employed under this funding to counter violent extremism in Australia?

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

a) How the \$9.7 million will be allocated?

The Attorney-General's Department will undertake significant research and consultation to inform the appropriate allocation of the \$9.7m in funding. In particular, the Department will work closely with other Commonwealth agencies and the States and Territories, and will arrange consultations directly with communities through a series of community engagement forums. The Attorney-General has already met with community leaders in Sydney as part of this consultation, and further consultations are proposed across the country.

The intention is to fund new activities aimed at countering violent extremism, and the drawing together of existing programs, which are aimed at building a stronger and more resilient community.

New activities will need to focus on such things as:

- identifying and diverting people at risk of violent extremism;
- supporting rehabilitation and de-radicalisation programs conducted by State and Territory police and correctional services;
- engaging with communities to improve social cohesion and resilience, including through local meetings and focus groups;
- developing mentoring programs for 'at risk' youth in partnership with relevant community groups;
- examining the role of the internet in the radicalisation process, and

- improving responses to violent extremist messages and ensuring they are evidence-based and appropriate to Australian circumstances.

Any new initiatives will serve to complement existing initiatives which form part of the Government's broader social inclusion and national security agendas, including:

- the National Counter-Terrorism Committee funding program committed to countering violent extremism across Australia;
- the Diversity and Social Cohesion program under the Department of Immigration and Citizenship;
- work being conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission on building resilience in vulnerable communities and addressing social exclusion;
- the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's international counter-terrorism engagement activities; and
- community engagement and counter-terrorism initiatives conducted by agencies within the Attorney-General's portfolio.

b) Which department and agency will be responsible for administering these funds?

The Attorney-General's Department.

c) How many additional staff will be employed under this funding to counter violent extremism in Australia?

Two additional staff will be employed. Existing staff are funded from departmental funds.