



Australian Government

Safeguarding Our Community Together

Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2022

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P-21-02413

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PRIME MINISTER'S FOREWORD

There is no more important responsibility of the Commonwealth Government than to keep Australians safe.

In an increasingly uncertain world, our national and international partnerships work to ensure the safety of all Australians — so we can pursue our national interests and the peace and stability of our home and our region.

Terrorism is a global challenge that seeks to strike at the heart of our society. Australia is committed to the fight against this evil, and it is important that all Australians are aware of our approach and able to contribute to our collective safety.

For individuals and communities, this Strategy provides an understanding of how we prevent, prepare, respond to, and recover from terrorism.

Since 2015, Australia's world-class law enforcement and security intelligence agencies have been guided by our inaugural *Counter-Terrorism Strategy – Strengthening Our Resilience*.

Every level of government — as well as the private sector, not-for-profit groups and the broader community — have worked in partnership to prevent potential or imminent attacks.

However, the threat of terrorism is ever-changing. Ideologically motivated violent extremism looms large and poses a serious threat to Australia's security. *Safeguarding Our Community Together* is our response to this new threat environment.

New technologies mean it is easier than ever to broadcast violent extremist content, distribute propaganda, disseminate disinformation and coordinate malign activities. Moreover, new conflicts and emerging sites of instability are perpetuating the cycle of radicalisation.



We are also beginning to see the sentences of terrorists who were convicted over the last 20 years expire — making us alert to the continuing risk of religiously motivated violent extremism.

This renewed Strategy focuses on our global, regional and domestic partnerships as critical to preventing radicalisation to violent extremism and safeguarding Australia's interests. It also provides a framework to ensure our existing counter-terrorism arrangements keep pace with the shifts that are occurring.

Australia must make a strategic shift in response to this changing landscape. It is the primary purpose of this Strategy to reduce the threat of terrorism and violent extremism by providing an overview of the contemporary terrorism context in which we achieve and ensure our security.

I am pleased to present *Safeguarding Our Community Together* as a reaffirmation of our commitment to the cause of peace and freedom and to the constant vigilance required to deny the threat of terror.

The Hon Scott Morrison MP

Prime Minister of Australia

MINISTER'S FOREWORD

Sadly, terrorism remains a real and enduring challenge for Australia – for our national security, our social cohesion, and for the safety of each and every individual in this country.

At the time of publication, Australia's terrorism threat level remains at 'Probable'. Individuals, groups, and ideologies – both old and new – continue to plot and fantasise about doing us harm.

Encrypted communications and global digital networks give these people a secure voice to a worldwide audience, while disruption associated with the pandemic has seen the emergence of new conspiratorial narratives, some of which may provide false justification for violent activities.

In 2022, as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and once more gather in crowds, we cannot be complacent about the terrorist threat.

That's why this publication comes at a critical time.

Safeguarding Our Community Together, Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2022, reflects the collective national intent and capability of Australia's State, Territory and Commonwealth governments to protect Australia, Australians and our national interest from terrorism and violent extremism as we grapple with the new facets of an old problem.

Whilst global interconnectedness has made terrorist propaganda more accessible to more people, our strategy is grounded in Australian values – encompassing respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual, the rule of law and 'a fair go' for all – which are our best defence against terrorism and the violent extremism that fuels it.

That's why our strategy focusses on countering violent extremism, as well as terrorism, and stresses the value of partnerships across and within communities, businesses, State and Territory governments and with our international partners.



It is built on three foundational national objectives:

1. Counter violent extremism in all its forms by preventing radicalisation of individuals before an attack takes place, and rehabilitating and reintegrating violent extremist offenders.
2. Equip our law enforcement, security intelligence and other operational agencies with the resources and powers to tackle terrorist threats.
3. Ensure that our counter-terrorism arrangements are resilient, collaborative, consistent and proportionate both nationally and internationally.

The bedrock of this Strategy and the success of our counter-terrorism arrangements is the dedication, expertise and professionalism of the women and men on the frontline of the fight against terrorism – wherever they are. Australia’s world class law enforcement and security intelligence agencies continue to relentlessly investigate and disrupt terrorist plots and respond to incidents, while our justice and policy departments work tirelessly to support those on the frontline.

I thank them for their commitment, and commend this Strategy to the public.

The Hon Karen Andrews MP

Minister for Home Affairs



OUR PURPOSE

To safeguard Australia, its people and its interests from the harms of terrorism and violent extremism.



OUR OBJECTIVES

1

Counter violent extremism in all its forms by preventing radicalisation of individuals before an attack takes place, and rehabilitating and reintegrating violent extremist offenders.

2

Equip our law enforcement, security intelligence and other operational agencies with the resources and powers to tackle terrorist threats.

3

Ensure that our counter-terrorism arrangements are resilient, collaborative, consistent and proportionate, both nationally and internationally.



OUR APPROACH

PREVENT

Preventing attacks at an individual and systematic level

PREPARE

Being ready to respond to the threat

RESPOND

Intervening to protect lives

RECOVER

Supporting individuals and communities



PARTNERSHIPS

Safeguarding Our Community Together



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OUR NATIONAL STRATEGY

Over the past two decades, the spread and growth of all forms of violent extremism has continued despite the extraordinary efforts of nations, civil society and individuals around the world to counter terrorism and violent extremism domestically and internationally since 9/11.

This Strategy explains the changing nature of the terrorist threat to Australia and Australians and what is being done to counter it. It highlights the partnerships underpinning governments' responses and the community's role in preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from a terrorist attack. By understanding the threat, and the actions being taken to counter it, this Strategy helps to safeguard Australia from the harms of terrorism.

This Strategy sits above and is complemented by the National Counter-Terrorism Plan and associated documents, which further explain Australia's approach to countering terrorism.

SAFEGUARDING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Partnerships underpin our national approach to terrorism. As any single terrorist incident is born out of a range of local and global dynamics and circumstances, national leadership requires deep engagement with those precursors and effective action towards building a more benign national and global environment.

This Strategy provides an overview of the terrorism context for Australians and highlights the changing nature of the threat and the implications for Australia. It also outlines the counter-terrorism arrangements, governance, capabilities, and mechanisms that governments, police and security intelligence agencies draw on to address the issue and how Australian governments seek to achieve security through collaboration.

By understanding the context of terrorism, the implications for Australians, and the actions we take in response, this Strategy aims to better inform and equip all Australians to protect our community against terrorism. Together we can safeguard Australians from the worst harms of radicalisation and terrorism, counter violent extremism in all its forms, and seek to disrupt attacks before they take place.

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL COUNTER-TERRORISM PLAN

Australia's National Counter-Terrorism Plan outlines the arrangements, governance and operational responsibilities of Australian governments and agencies engaged in countering terrorism. It sets the framework for prevention activities, the response to, investigation of, and recovery from, terrorist acts. It also outlines the preparations needed to support these activities.

The Plan sits below and complements Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It is underpinned by the National Disaster Management and Recovery Continuum and the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework, recognising that the activities required to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from a terrorist incident are interconnected and often occur at the same time.



AUSTRALIA'S COUNTER-TERRORISM ENVIRONMENT

TERRORISM AND AUSTRALIA

Australia's security environment is becoming more complex and challenging; changing the nature of the terrorism threat to Australia, Australians and our overseas interests. The diversity and disaggregation of extremist beliefs is broad and not easily categorised. They span nationalist, racist, revolutionary, anarchist, religious and specific issue ideologies, but they can all involve a propensity to violent acts.

Tackling the complexity of terrorism and violent extremism demands a vigilant and ever-agile response, founded on effective partnerships, collaboration and networks – international, national, state, local and inclusive of all elements of government and civil society. That is why, in all things, this Strategy puts partnerships first.

Safeguarding Our Community Together maintains an enduring focus on religiously motivated violent extremism (RMVE) and ensures resources are devoted to the evolving threat of ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE).

The threat of terrorism will endure while overseas and domestic groups – both religious and ideological – espouse violent ideology. In collaboration with our partners, we must take a range of coordinated actions. This includes combating these ideologies directly, working globally to prevent violent movements from gathering pace, and countering the means by which they undermine our society.

RELIGIOUSLY MOTIVATED VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Online engagement with persuasive propaganda and violent messaging enables radicalisation to violent extremism for a significant number of individuals in our community, including young people.

Permissive operating environments for violent extremists overseas also continue to have an impact on the Australian environment.

Globally, Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), al Qa'ida and associated groups remain the most significant RMVE threat. These groups are motivated by a selective, violent and extreme interpretation of Islam not shared by the vast majority of Muslims.

IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENT EXTREMISM

IMVE groups and individuals, especially nationalist and racist violent extremists, are increasingly active in Australia, and pose a serious threat to our security.

Individuals, groups and movements pursue their aims by drawing on international networks, ideas and personalities to mobilise others, often using the internet.

VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Violent extremism is a willingness to use unlawful violence, or support the use of violence by others, to promote a political, ideological or religious goal.

It includes terrorism, other forms of politically motivated violence and some forms of communal violence, such as racially motivated violence.

GLOBAL CONTEXT

Terrorism is a global challenge that resonates locally and impacts our safety and security. The emergence of nationalistic and isolationist narratives globally, including online, is normalising aspects of IMVE ideology, including national, racist and specific issue violent extremism. Moreover, the use of the internet enables a borderless environment for terrorists and violent extremists to disseminate information, imagery and propaganda to garner support. Overseas, these factors have led to large-scale terrorist attacks targeting minorities, including in Christchurch, New Zealand (March 2019), El Paso, United States (August 2019), and Halle (October 2019) and Hanau (February 2020) in Germany. Tackling this challenge requires global effort and cooperation.

Australia is not alone in needing to address multiple threats, including traditional RMVE threats, emerging ideologies fuelling IMVE and the enduring risk presented by terrorist offenders after release from custody.

Global or regional events like COVID-19, and significant civil unrest and divisiveness, provide extremists with opportunities to exploit the concerns of groups and individuals, especially where governance is weak and security conditions are vulnerable. COVID-19 lockdowns have increased the likelihood of impressionable people spending time alone accessing extremist or radicalising material online.

While politically motivated and communal violence in Australia is rare, the reality is that violent extremist material - regardless of its underlying motivation - has a detrimental impact on Australia's social fabric. As trends observed for the last two years continue and accelerate, specific issues and overseas events will resonate with individuals and groups in Australia. This has the potential to inflame communal tensions that can lead to violence.

ATTACK METHODOLOGIES

Terrorist attack methodologies are shaped in part by the success of Australia's counter-terrorism efforts. Our world-class policing and security intelligence agencies include multi-agency investigations by Joint Counter-Terrorism Teams (JCTTs) that span the nation. These extensive capabilities are a substantial deterrent to terrorist cells attempting to coordinate larger numbers of people, develop sophisticated capabilities, or execute complicated attack plans. While the likelihood of large-scale terror attacks, like 9/11, is substantially reduced in Australia because of our capability and approach, they are possible. However, by their nature, small-scale attacks by unsophisticated lone actors are harder to detect and prevent.

The most likely form of terrorism in Australia remains an attack by a lone actor or a small group using simple attack methodologies and rudimentary weapons. Similarly, attacks on crowded places continue to feature in terrorist incidents in Australia and overseas, and are likely to endure as a preferred methodology, regardless of motivation.

LONE ACTORS

Lone actors operate on the periphery or independently of known extremist networks. They are therefore difficult for law enforcement and intelligence agencies to detect. The low capability required for their attacks, such as a kitchen knife, means there may be little time between violent extremists deciding to and then committing an act of terrorism.

CROWDED PLACE

A crowded place is a place regularly used by large numbers of people. It includes, but is not limited to, sports stadiums, transport infrastructure, shopping centres, pubs, clubs, places of worship, tourist attractions, movie theatres and civic places.

When terrorists attack crowded places, they aim to disrupt our lives and cause fear. Even a lone actor using a basic weapon can achieve this. Future terrorist attacks in Australia are likely to use low-cost and relatively simple weapons and tactics. The targeting of government, military, police or critical infrastructure also remains possible.

Densely populated major cities are the most likely geographic targets of terrorism. However, the threat is not confined to Australia's major cities. An attack could occur anywhere.

In understanding and anticipating attack methodologies we need to recognise the differences between RMVEs and IMVEs. While a RMVE attack is more likely to be confined to larger metropolitan cities, IMVE individuals and groups can be geographically dispersed across the country, including in rural and regional areas. This change alone is driving, and will continue to drive, the need for agile counter-terrorism capabilities and arrangements.

RMVEs and IMVEs may also adopt different approaches to selecting targets. While violent extremists across the ideological spectrum are most likely to target easily accessible crowded public places, the types of places and crowds will differ.

IMPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIA

The current environment presents complex ideas and ideologies, fuelled by social media, conspiracy theories and, in some cases, anarchist, racist and revolutionary beliefs.

Key drivers continue to affect Australia's counter-terrorism environment. These include the ability of terrorists to adapt emerging technology to aid their cause, the release of prisoners convicted of terrorism offences or who have become radicalised to violent extremism in prisons, and persons returning from overseas conflict zones.

Australia continues to be influenced by global terrorism trends, acting as push-and-pull factors for individuals mobilising towards violence.



USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNET

Changes in the technological environment have a direct impact on the global security environment, with violent extremists and terrorists adapting technology to their cause. Manipulation of the internet and social media; the use of encrypted messaging applications and file-sharing platforms; the operation of drones for reconnaissance, as weapons and to record/capture violent imagery; and using aircraft as weapons demonstrate the varied capacity of violent extremists to adapt and exploit current and emerging technologies.

The growing availability of violent extremist material online reflects the growing diversity of violent ideologies that fall within the extremist spectrum. The online environment is fertile ground for sharing ideology, spreading propaganda, radicalising and recruiting supporters, and inciting people to act violently. It has become a primary operating environment for realising ideologies, planning attacks and mobilising people. Violent extremist and terrorist messaging is also drawing on a younger audience accessing this material online.

With the digital world increasingly the operating environment of choice, violent extremists are adapting and seeking to elude the measures aimed at countering their extremist messaging and ideologies. Persuasive technologies, specifically designed to change or shape user behaviour, are being used to amplify the influence of online violent extremist content.

Working with industry and international partners to establish global expectations is fundamental to combating malicious cyber activity, as is harnessing the tools and systems of the digital world to counter extremist narratives. *Australia's Cyber Security Strategy 2020*¹ highlights the importance of these partnerships in achieving greater national cyber security resilience and ensures our agencies have the necessary powers and capabilities to confront the rapid evolution in violent extremism.

¹ www.homeaffairs.gov.au/cyber-security-subsite/files/cyber-security-strategy-2020.pdf

INCREASING RADICALISATION OF MINORS

The number of Australian minors attracted to extremism – RMVE and IMVE – is increasing and their age lowering. Factors contributing to radicalisation of minors include extremist propaganda online, and radicalisation in-person by peers or older associates. The radicalisation of minors can occur quickly and without the knowledge of family or friends. Minors who adhere to a violent extremist ideology present a threat similar to that posed by adults. Globally, minors have planned and conducted terrorist attacks, occupied leadership positions in violent extremist groups, and radicalised other youths.

HIGH-RISK TERRORIST OFFENDERS

In Australia more than 100 people have been convicted of terrorism offences or are in prison charged with terrorism offences. To date, only a small portion of this cohort has been released from prison, including some being managed on post-sentence orders.

International experiences, such as the Fishmonger's Hall and Streatham stabbings in the United Kingdom in 2019 and 2020 and the stabbing attack in Auckland in September 2021, indicate that this cohort poses a high-risk. Domestically, a high proportion of released terrorist offenders have been charged with breaching their control orders. Some released terrorist offenders continue to be motivated by violent extremism and are capable of further offending, even after extended periods of inactivity.

Convicted terrorists will complete their sentences during the life of this Strategy, requiring additional efforts towards this stream of counter-terrorism effort. At least 19 convicted terrorists are due for release between 2022 and 2027. The effort required to manage this cohort is compounding and requires an effective long-term solution. Governments have prepared for this, including by strengthening the continuing detention order regime with extended supervision orders, and increasing resources across relevant agencies and jurisdictions. The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have worked cooperatively to develop new governance arrangements and ways to manage offenders subject to court orders. The introduction of therapeutic tools that sit alongside traditional law enforcement approaches is an evolved way of thinking about mitigating risk and attempting to divert individuals. Partnerships across jurisdictions and disciplines are, and will remain, critical to success.

Despite coordinated efforts and a range of risk mitigating options, enduring risk is unavoidable. The threat of terrorism will be enduring and the threat posed by this group cannot be entirely eliminated. However, new governance arrangements and other approaches established for this cohort will continue to evolve and be refreshed over the life of this Strategy.



FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS

Australians have travelled to Iraq, Syria and Eastern Europe. Despite COVID-19 travel restrictions, international violent extremist groups continue to influence networks of people to travel overseas to train and fight. Both religiously and ideologically motivated groups continue to encourage others to use violence in their home countries.

A small number of Australians continue to consider travelling to conflict zones. We should anticipate a potential increase in Australians seeking to travel, including to Afghanistan and other emerging ungoverned international spaces, to train and develop capability or to fight in conflict zones.

People who have joined violent extremist groups overseas could be a terrorism threat if they return to Australia. The seriousness of the threat posed by these individuals will depend on their experiences, capability, ideology at the time of their return, and their inclination to participate in or support violence in Australia. The enduring power of violent extremist ideologies means that some of these individuals may re-engage in violent extremist behaviours and seek to use their skills, expertise or knowledge when they return to Australia. They may have developed or maintained connections with other violent extremists in different parts of the world, and these connections or networks may only emerge in the future.



AUSTRALIA'S COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY

The purpose of Australia's counter-terrorism effort is to safeguard Australia, its people and its interests from the harms of terrorism and violent extremism. This will be achieved through:

1. countering violent extremism in all its forms by preventing radicalisation of individuals before an attack takes place, and rehabilitating and reintegrating violent extremist offenders
2. equipping our law enforcement, security intelligence and other operational agencies with the resources and powers to tackle terrorist threats
3. ensuring that our counter-terrorism arrangements are resilient, collaborative, consistent and proportionate both nationally and internationally.

These objectives will be realised by governing effectively, developing and maintaining capability and legislation that is fit for purpose, and engaging with communities, the private sector and our international partners across the prevent, prepare, respond and recover phases of the National Disaster Management and Recovery Continuum².

PARTNERSHIPS THAT UNDERPIN ALL OUR WORK

The success of Australia's counter-terrorism arrangements is built on strong and sustainable partnerships across governments, with communities, internationally, and with the private sector.

We work with our domestic and international partners, communities, academia and the private sector to better understand and counter the drivers of violent extremism, build resilience, protect critical infrastructure and sectors of the economy, and enhance our ability to respond to and recover from terrorism.

GOVERNANCE TO GUIDE AND COORDINATE OUR ACTIONS

All Australian jurisdictions are joined in a cooperative partnership to maintain comprehensive and effective arrangements that prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from terrorist incidents. While recognising the legitimate rights of individuals to peaceful protest, free speech and dissent as part of Australia's vibrant democracy, these arrangements prioritise the protection of lives and the rule of law to deliver consistent and interoperable national counter terrorism capabilities.

2 The National Disaster Management and Recovery Continuum provides the framework for Australia's crisis management arrangements (Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (recovery.gov.au)). *Safeguarding Our Community Together* focusses on preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from terrorism and violent extremist incidents.

States and Territories have primary responsibility for responding to domestic terrorist attacks and investigating threats and incidents in close cooperation with Commonwealth law enforcement and security intelligence agencies. They also manage the delivery of frontline community services, including working directly with individuals to build resilience and enable diversion and early intervention.

Australia has a robust post-sentence order regime to manage the ongoing unacceptable risk posed by high risk terrorist offenders at the end of their custodial sentence. To support this regime, the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have arrangements in place to ensure effective and timely cooperation between multiple agencies for sharing information and developing and implementing policies, programs and operational activities. These arrangements are fundamental to the planning and execution of activities to manage these offenders.

The Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee (ANZCTC) is the primary and most senior forum for developing and coordinating nationally consistent approaches to countering terrorism that emphasise interoperability across jurisdictions. The ANZCTC is also responsible for developing and managing national counter-terrorism coordination strategies, plans and capability. It comprises senior official representatives from Commonwealth agencies, each State and Territory police service and first minister departments, and New Zealand counterparts.

The Counter-Terrorism Coordination Centre (CTCC), within the Department of Home Affairs, coordinates national efforts to prevent terrorist activities by ensuring our security intelligence, law enforcement and other operational agencies have access to the powers, information and capabilities needed to combat violent extremist or terrorist groups and individuals.

The CTCC, headed by the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, leads a mature and multi-tiered governance structure designed to make federal counter-terrorism efforts strategic, coordinated, timely and effective.

The Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, coordinates Australia's international counter-terrorism efforts by building international links and ensuring the valuable efforts of Commonwealth agencies are internationally consistent, prioritised, well-focused and effective. The Ambassador leads the negotiation of Australia's counter-terrorism arrangements with partner countries and advises on international developments to ensure that Australia has access to international best practice.

LEGISLATION TO TACKLE TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Australian governments cooperate to ensure that the framework of Commonwealth, State and Territory counter-terrorism laws reflect our shared commitment to human rights and the rule of law. This provides our security intelligence, law enforcement and other operational agencies with the legislative backing they need to meet both enduring and emerging needs, including:

- strong laws to counter violent extremism and terrorism
- enhanced powers for removal and blocking of online terrorist or violent extremist content
- enhanced powers to protect Australians from convicted terrorist offenders who may be motivated and capable of further offending and persons of counter-terrorism interest returning to Australia from overseas
- Australian Defence Force (ADF) support when responding to and recovering from terrorist incidents
- stronger critical infrastructure and transport security regimes
- identity verification requirements for key sectors and areas of vulnerability
- a strong and dynamic counter-terrorism financing regime.

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING (AML) AND COUNTER-TERRORISM FINANCING (CTF)

Australia's AML/CTF regime seeks to regulate those activities and services that have a higher money-laundering/terrorism financing risk. The response to AML/CTF is multifaceted and is a cooperative effort between law enforcement, regulatory, intelligence and policy agencies, as well as industry, international partners and the broader community. The regime:

- provides disincentives to perpetrate crime by reducing its profitability
- reduces the pool of money available to finance future criminal activity
- aids the detection and prosecution of crime
- protects the integrity of the financial system and reputation of Australian business, and
- avoids economic and competitive distortions.

Australia's AML/CTF response complements the work undertaken by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which has primary responsibility for Australia's United Nations Security Council Resolutions, autonomous sanctions regimes, and compliance with sanction requirements.

CAPABILITY TO ENABLE US TO REDUCE THREATS

State and Territory governments, their agencies, police and emergency services are highly trained and well-equipped to respond to terrorist incidents in Australia.

The ANZCTC supports these efforts by coordinating national arrangements to counter terrorism and by working with partner agencies to promote consistent approaches, with an emphasis on interoperability across the National Disaster Management and Recovery Continuum. This includes overseeing the national counter-terrorism training program and developing capability by identifying gaps, implementing strategies to mitigate risks and building national consistency.

Close cooperation across governments, including through JCTTs in each jurisdiction, is effective in detecting and disrupting acts of terrorism in Australia. As the threat environment evolves, JCTTs focus on early disruption to prevent terrorist attacks.

The Australian Defence Force can be called on to support the law enforcement response and the community during or following a terrorist incident. Changes to the *Defence Act 1903* (Cth) gives greater access to specialised capabilities of the Australian Defence Force by State and Territory governments. Like our police and emergency services personnel, the Australian Defence Force is highly trained and equipped to support law enforcement and emergency responses and support the needs of Australians affected by terrorism.

MANAGING AUSTRALIAN TERRORISTS OFFSHORE

Where possible, those who return to Australia will be held to account for any terrorist acts and foreign incursions they may have committed. Where this is not possible, returning individuals are carefully assessed to ensure appropriate mechanisms are put in place to support either their diversion from radicalisation or reintegration into Australian society. Security and intelligence agencies monitor and manage these individuals and they continue to be of counter terrorism interest.

Managing the reintegration of Australians returning from conflict zones poses long-term, multi-generational security and social policy issues, particularly for State and Territory government agencies leading reintegration efforts. Specifically, where children return from a conflict zone, each child's individual circumstances are considered, including:

- their welfare needs, from counselling support through to education and reintegration
- their family circumstances, and how they may be cared for in Australia
- community safety risks that they, or their families, may pose.

ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERS

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN ALL ITS FORMS

Today, security and intelligence agencies are challenged by a growing cohort of individuals who are somewhere on the spectrum of disaffection, radicalisation and mobilisation.

Australia's countering violent extremism framework aims to prevent people from radicalising to violent extremism – whether religiously or ideologically motivated – by delivering nationally consistent approaches to managing at-risk individuals, including those in the justice system.

Community engagement is central to our efforts to increase awareness of violent extremist ideologies and behaviours, and the pathways available to refer individuals to countering violent extremism programs.

Programs to counter violent extremism build resilience and cohesion in our communities and protect, divert and disengage individuals from violent extremism. Countering violent extremism programs complement social cohesion activities that strive to bring our communities together.

Our countering violent extremism programs seek to:

- improve community awareness of the indicators of violent extremism and how to connect people to support
- actively disengage people at risk of radicalising to violent extremism through tailored intervention programs
- rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremist offenders where possible
- limit the ability of terrorist and violent extremist groups to exploit the internet for planning, fundraising, and communicating online, including through the referral of terrorist and violent extremist material to service providers for removal
- promote community resilience to extremist ideologies online by fostering positive alternative narratives.

SOCIAL COHESION

Australia's strong social cohesion, based on our shared liberal democratic values and inclusive national identity, underpins our security, prosperity and unity. Our cohesion supports civic engagement and trust in democratic institutions and harmonious communities. Community resilience is built by maintaining and strengthening cohesion, and collectively confronting forces that threaten our safety, values and national identity. This includes violent extremist ideologies. All levels of government, communities, individuals, non-government organisations, and business contribute to keeping the cohesion of our liberal democratic and multicultural society strong. Cooperation across society, to keep all of Australia's communities united, supports our counter-terrorism objectives.

STRENGTHENING AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL APPROACH TO COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Australia's countering violent extremism measures must continue to adapt to address evolving threats, including the increase of nationalist and racist violent extremist ideologies, and the use of the internet for radicalisation and recruitment driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to implement Commonwealth investments in the following areas to further strengthen our national approach.

INTERVENTION PROGRAMS



Early intervention is vital to ensure individuals at risk of radicalising to violent extremism are diverted into tailored and effective programs. This preventative approach is a key feature of our national security framework. Expanded and effective countering violent extremism intervention programs, which are Commonwealth funded and delivered in partnership with the States and Territories, reduce the risk of violent extremist incidents by identifying and referring at-risk people to countering violent extremism support and disengagement services.

ONLINE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS



The online environment presents complex challenges for Australia's national efforts to contest and prevent violent extremism. Strategic communication plays a key role in Australia's countering violent extremism efforts, serving to undermine extremist narratives and redirect vulnerable audiences away from radicalisation pathways. Our strategic communications will be extended and intensified to ensure Australia is well positioned to identify and counter the circulation of violent extremist content; track and contest violent extremist propaganda and narratives; and counter online extremism by building resilience and strengthening digital literacy among young Australians.

COMMUNITY GRANTS



Australia's national countering violent extremism response will be further strengthened through the delivery of community grants for grassroots, localised initiatives to empower and mobilise Australian communities to work together against extremism. These grants will support initiatives that build community awareness of violent extremism and the risk factors and indicators of radicalisation. They will also support and deliver activities tailored to support vulnerable young people and their families.

RESEARCH, RISK ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING



As violent extremist narratives and tactics continue to evolve, we need to remain well informed of drivers of violent extremism and the strategies employed by extremists, and ensure that our countering violent extremism programs are evidence-based and delivered by trained professionals. We will continue to focus on driving violent extremism research, improving risk assessment capabilities, and delivering nationally consistent training for practitioners and frontline officials engaged in countering violent extremism and counter-terrorism programs.

PREVENT ONLINE TERRORIST AND VIOLENT EXTREMIST CONTENT

The Australian Government continues to engage with internet hosting and content service providers to ensure there is an effective regulatory framework to quickly and efficiently remove terrorist and violent extremist content from the internet. Part of this work involves developing a crisis response protocol for industry and government to prevent the viral spread of terrorist or violent extremist content online.

Internationally, Australia is a member of the Christchurch Call to Action, the Kingdom of Jordan's Aqaba Process and the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. These associations include membership from international governments, digital industry, civil society and academia. Australia collaborates with these associations to improve international standards, policies and practices to prevent the spread of terrorist and violent extremist content online.

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND CROWDED PLACES

A disruption to critical infrastructure could have serious implications for business, governments and the community, impacting supply security and service continuity. In order to protect critical infrastructure from terrorism, owners and operators need to maintain an awareness of their operating environment and actively apply risk-management techniques. Commonwealth, State and Territory governments work closely to assist owners and operators in performing these functions, including by providing protective security guidance and advice about the local and national security threat context.

Similarly, *Australia's Strategy for Protecting Crowded Places from Terrorism*³ has been developed to protect the lives of people working in, using, and visiting crowded places by making these places more resilient. It is based on strong, trusted partnerships between all levels of government and those responsible for crowded places. It aims to make crowded places as resilient as possible to terrorist attacks while preserving our use and enjoyment of these places.

³ www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/crowded-places-subsite/Files/australias-strategy-protecting-crowded-places-terrorism.pdf



INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY, OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENTS

Strong international partners are critical to the successful prevention and mitigation of terrorist and violent extremist threats. We aim to sustain and deepen our network of enduring international, national, state and local partnerships as the foundation of our national counter-terrorism effort. Our robust network enables us to understand, anticipate and adapt to contemporary and emerging threats as they evolve and change.

We cooperate with our key regional partners and global institutions to establish harmonised legal standards, build capability and capacity with our neighbours, share information and maintain strong partnerships.



OUR APPROACH

PREVENT

- Divert and disengage people from violent extremism.
- Harness intelligence.
- Investigate and disrupt terrorist threats.
- Manage high-risk individuals.
- Work with international partners and stakeholders.

PREPARE

- Maintain effective and robust laws and arrangements.
- Enhance public awareness.
- Empower communities and the private sector.
- Improve our capabilities.
- Support international partners to strengthen their counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism capacity and capabilities.

RECOVER

- Restore services and support communities following a terrorist incident.
- Support affected persons to cope with and recover from a terrorist incident.
- Increase community resilience to terrorism and violent extremism and reduce the potential for harm.
- Increase sharing and access to counter-terrorism information, best practice, and lessons with international partners.

RESPOND

- Respond immediately to terrorist incidents.
- Investigate incidents and prosecute suspected offenders.
- Provide accurate, appropriate and timely public information.
- Work with international partners on immediate operational issues and longer term policy development.



PARTNERSHIPS

GOVERNANCE • LEGISLATION • CAPABILITY • ENGAGEMENT



PREVENT

WE CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT DETERS TERRORISM FROM SPREADING AND DISRUPTS THE ABILITY OF TERRORISTS TO OPERATE SUCCESSFULLY.

Prevention occurs at multiple levels and remains an important part of our approach to countering terrorism. Efforts to prevent terrorism range from working with international partners and being alert to changing environments, curtailing the ability of propaganda to spread into Australia, controlling our borders, and disrupting terrorist cells and individuals, to hardening infrastructure and public places, and limiting access to effective weapons or precursor chemicals.

Governments, law enforcement and security intelligence agencies work together to share information and intelligence, investigate potential terrorist threats, disrupt identified terrorist plots and secure our borders from terrorist exploitation.

Partnerships are critical to Australia's approach to countering violent extremism. The Australian Government coordinates efforts across Commonwealth agencies, State and Territory governments, the private sector and non-government organisations. These efforts include intervention programs to divert people from radicalising to violent extremism or to disengage individuals who may have already radicalised to violence. Australia's countering violent extremism intervention programs are coordinated nationally and delivered locally through State and Territory governments. This approach supports national consistency while ensuring the programs meet the specific needs of the individual and the community.

We also operate the High-Risk Terrorist Offenders regime that, through a range of court orders, allows targeted action against those who are at the highest risk of offending. Through post-sentence orders, we minimise the opportunity for these offenders to act on their violent extremist beliefs and cause further harm to our community.

APPROACH	ACTIONS
<p>Divert and disengage people from violent extremism</p> <p>(Objectives 1, 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing development and implementation of the national <i>Living Safe Together Intervention Program</i>⁴ and building awareness of violent extremist indicators and referral pathways. • Preventing and countering the dissemination of narratives that motivate and sustain terrorism and violent extremism. • Developing new intervention programs that enhance the national capability to divert and prevent people from radicalising to violent extremism. • Managing the radicalisation of at-risk individuals, including individuals in the justice system and those affected by mental illness. • Promoting social cohesion and connections with community support. • Ensuring that publicly available material to counter violent extremism, including websites, are fit-for-purpose and encourage appropriate referrals to services.
<p>Harness intelligence</p> <p>(Objective 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering information and intelligence to support investigations and assist in understanding, preventing and disrupting terrorism and violent extremism. • Analysing information and intelligence effectively and providing timely advice to decision makers, investigators and policy makers.
<p>Investigate and disrupt terrorist threats</p> <p>(Objectives 1, 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a nationally consistent mechanism, through JCTTs, for preventing, disrupting and investigating, terrorist threats. • Continuing to investigate, detect and disrupt acts of terrorism in Australia. • Contributing to the global reduction of the terrorism threat. • Proactively target and identify terrorist organisations that plan, finance and carry out terrorist acts.
<p>Manage high-risk individuals</p> <p>(Objectives 1, 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the management of high-risk terrorist offenders post-sentence who continue to pose a risk if released. • Managing the rehabilitation and reintegration of convicted terrorist offenders and review risk-management tools. • Continuing to effectively manage foreign terrorist fighters and their families who may return to Australia.

4 Living Safe Together is an Australian Government initiative to protect our communities against all forms of violent extremism (www.livingsafetogether.gov.au)

APPROACH	ACTIONS
<p>Work with international partners and stakeholders</p> <p>(Objectives 1, 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to target our efforts, and support our partners, to address the root causes and influences of violent extremism. • Prioritising research and knowledge on effective countering violent extremism to support evidence-based decision making and policy development. • Sustaining, deepening, and sharing a compelling countering violent extremism narrative in Australia and among the international community that reinforces tolerance, understanding, adherence to the rule of law and respect for human rights. • Supporting collaboration with international and domestic partners and stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, academia, and the community to learn from and share lessons on radicalisation and effective de-radicalisation across the full range of ideologically and religiously motivated violent extremism.



PREPARE

WE PREPARE SO THAT WE ARE READY TO RESPOND TO THE THREAT.

We will continue to work to understand the evolving terrorist threat and build strong partnerships to identify and disrupt terrorist and violent extremist activities. This includes enabling communities to recognise and respond to people who radicalise to violent extremism and who plan or conduct terrorist acts. We also support the private sector to mitigate risks from terrorism to their Australian businesses through *Australia's Strategy for Protecting Crowded Places from Terrorism* and bolstered critical infrastructure protection arrangements.

APPROACH	ACTIONS
Maintain effective and robust laws and arrangements (Objective 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustaining effective and robust laws that support human rights and uphold the rule of law, and allow intelligence, law enforcement and other operational agencies to effectively combat terrorists and violent extremists, both online and offline.• Developing and reviewing counter-terrorism legislation to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose and protects Australians against the evolving terrorist threat.• Supporting the review of laws by oversight bodies, including the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security and the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor.• Working collectively across governments, law enforcement and security intelligence agencies to enhance national capabilities.• Testing and reviewing our counter-terrorism arrangements so they remain effective and robust.
Enhance public awareness (Objectives 1 and 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting awareness about the role of the private sector, community groups and individuals in safeguarding our community together.• Continuing to build the capability of staff delivering frontline services to understand, identify and manage security risks.• Delivering and promoting improved national security public information capabilities that support Australia's counter-terrorism arrangements.• Fostering responsible reporting of terrorist incidents and minimising distress arising from widespread dissemination of images, footage and propaganda.

APPROACH	ACTIONS
<p>Empower communities and the private sector (Objectives 1 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that publicly available material to counter violent extremism is accurate, effective and encourages appropriate referrals to services. • Building capability within the private sector to plan for and mitigate terrorism risks. • Helping private sector partners to reduce terrorist and violent extremist exploitation of social media and internet platforms.
<p>Improve our capabilities (Objectives 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the ability of operational agencies to understand, investigate and disrupt terrorist and violent extremist activities. • Implementing lessons identified following terrorist incidents and disaster events in Australia and overseas, including outcomes of inquiries, to continuously improve our arrangements and capabilities. • Employing contemporary counter-terrorism capabilities. • Maintaining a national exercise program to validate and strengthen Australia's counter-terrorism capabilities. • Strengthening the evaluation of national counter-terrorism programs.
<p>Support international partners to strengthen their counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism capacity and capabilities (Objectives 1, 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and deepening our relationships with international stakeholders to enable information and intelligence sharing that increases our mutual awareness and understanding of threats and factors supporting the appeal of violent extremist ideologies. • Maintaining a robust network of relationships with international partners, so that Australia will continue to be prepared to respond to violent extremism. • Assisting in the adoption and implementation of effective legal and policy tools including international instruments, sanctions, and other agreements by international partners, that significantly contribute to our preparedness.





RESPOND

WE WILL INTERVENE TO PROTECT LIFE AND MINIMISE INJURY AND DAMAGE.

We recognise the primacy of jurisdictions in responding to terrorist incidents. Loss of life is minimised through effective intervention. We will take action to prevent or minimise loss of life, injury, damage to property and damage or interruptions to infrastructure and services. Terrorist incidents will be investigated and suspected offenders prosecuted in accordance with Australia's laws.

APPROACH	ACTIONS
Respond immediately to terrorist incidents (Objectives 2 and 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intervening to protect life and minimise injuries and damage.• Determining operational responses including seeking assistance from other jurisdictions.• Deploying specialist capabilities when responding to terrorist incidents.• Utilising a consistent national framework, including under the JCTT procedures, to respond and investigate terrorism.• Supporting emergency service directions and engaging with impacted communities and groups.• Coordinating the provision of national capabilities to assure an effective and timely response to a terrorist incident in Australian jurisdictions.• Providing immediate essential needs and support to people affected by terrorist incidents, including family liaison and victim support services.• Providing Australian Defence Force assistance to support State and Territory responses to terrorist incidents where requested.
Investigate incidents and prosecute suspected offenders (Objectives 2 and 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working through JCTTs, domestic and international partners and the broader intelligence community to identify and investigate terrorist activities in Australia.• Investigating and prosecuting those who commit acts of terrorism or who seek to commit such acts, in accordance with the rule of law.

APPROACH	ACTIONS
<p>Provide accurate, appropriate and timely public information</p> <p>(Objectives 1, 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing factual and timely information about terrorist incidents to the Australian community. • Requiring industry transparency reporting about harmful online content. • Coordinating government and industry online crisis response protocols to remove harmful terrorist and violent extremist content from the internet expeditiously. • Reducing the dissemination of, and minimising distress arising from, widespread images, footage and propaganda available through mainstream and social media channels.
<p>Work with international partners on immediate operational issues and longer term policy development</p> <p>(Objectives 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and sustaining diverse, regional and global, multi-agency relationships in policy development, operational plans and crisis response. This includes partners from local, national, and multilateral institutions as well as the private sector, academia and civil society.





RECOVER

WE SUPPORT COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS TO RECOVER FROM TERRORIST ATTACKS.

We will support affected communities in the restoration of social, economic and environmental wellbeing and their reconstruction of buildings and infrastructure. This includes working closely with critical infrastructure and key service providers, including the electricity, gas, water and transport sectors, to reduce the impact of any terrorist attack.

We recognise that recovery is a complex, long-term, multilayered process that helps individuals and communities who have been affected by a terrorist incident to address the impacts the event has had on the trajectory of their lives. We support communities to rebuild livelihoods and build more resilient and effectively functioning communities.

A timely and efficient recovery will undermine the success of a terrorist attack and help improve community resilience, so we will work together to ensure that we restore normality as promptly as possible.

APPROACH	ACTIONS
Restore services and support communities following a terrorist incident (Objectives 2 and 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-establishing infrastructure and services following a terrorist incident.• Supporting access to insurance cover for eligible terrorism losses involving commercial property, associated business interruption losses and public liability through the Australian Reinsurance Pool Corporation.• Assisting business owners directly impacted by a terrorist incident with the support required to quickly re-establish business activities.
Support affected persons to cope with and recover from a terrorist incident (Objectives 2 and 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing individuals directly impacted by a terrorist incident with the physical, psychological and economic support necessary to assure their wellbeing.

APPROACH	ACTIONS
<p>Increase community resilience to terrorism and violent extremism and reduce the potential for harm</p> <p>(Objectives 1, 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing business owners and operators with increased access to threat advice and protective security information. • Continuing implementation and review of <i>Australia's Strategy for Protecting Crowded Places from Terrorism</i>. • Working with communities to address the community impacts of violent extremism in the wake of an attack, including community activities designed to build social cohesion. • Working with digital industry partners to reduce the availability of violent extremist content online.
<p>Increase sharing and access to counter-terrorism information, best practice, and lessons with international partners</p> <p>(Objectives 1, 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing and building lessons and best practice globally. • Supporting and enabling collective efforts to analyse and prepare for new and emerging threats. • Directly and indirectly supporting the development of partners' understanding, resilience and recovery capacity.





PARTNERSHIPS

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP UNDERPINS EVERY EFFORT TO SAFEGUARD OUR COMMUNITY.

We will continue to prioritise partnerships and use relationships to strengthen Australia's counter-terrorism strategy.

APPROACH	ACTIONS
<p>Work together proactively</p> <p>(Objectives 1, 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working in partnership through JCTTs, domestic and international partners and the broader intelligence community to identify and investigate terrorist activities in Australia, with an emphasis on preventative operations.• Harnessing the strengths of Australia's diversity to continue building a more cohesive society that is resilient to the threat of terrorism and violent extremism.• Maintaining trusted relationships with our domestic partners and ensuring effective safeguards.• Supporting solution-focused research, innovation and knowledge practices to enhance our ability to safeguard Australia, its people and our interests against terrorism and violent extremism.• Working collaboratively in the evaluation and validation of relevant assessment and prioritisation tools, and supporting research into effective disengagement strategies.• Understanding the messaging and tactics used by terrorists and extremists in order to develop effective counter-narratives that promote community resilience.• Engaging local communities and community organisations to understand their concerns, identify the drivers of violent extremism and help them to access intervention programs for those at risk of radicalising to violence.• Working in partnership with mental health professionals to deal with fixated individuals who pose a threat of lone actor attacks and who may or may not suffer from mental illness.

APPROACH	ACTIONS
<p>Strengthen international partnerships</p> <p>(Objectives 1, 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining, strengthening, deepening and expanding Australia's international counter-terrorism partnerships network. • Supporting and reinforcing the achievement of national counter-terrorism objectives across the National Disaster Management and Recovery Continuum. • Working with international partners and stakeholders to reduce the appeal, influence and effectiveness of terrorism and violent extremism, including online. • Increasing sharing and access to counter-terrorism information, best practice and lessons with international partners.
<p>Implement lessons learned</p> <p>(Objectives 1, 2 and 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying gaps and vulnerabilities in our counter-terrorism arrangements and implementing solutions that strengthen national resilience. • Disseminating best-practice outcomes to partners, including the private sector. • Aligning national crisis management and counter-terrorism protocols for a nationally consistent response to terrorist incidents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Terrorism and violent extremism in all forms represents a serious threat to Australia's national security, the safety, security and trust of our citizens, the prosperity of our businesses and economy, the integrity of our institutions, and ultimately our Australian way of life.

This Strategy outlines the framework in which governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and the community will work together to achieve our vision of an Australia that is prosperous, secure and united against the harms of terrorism and violent extremism.

Safeguarding Our Community Together, Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2022 was endorsed by the Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee on 23 February 2022.

We thank the many and diverse stakeholders who have collaborated with the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Centre to develop this Strategy.

IMAGE CREDITS

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