

PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY

INFORMATION ANALYSIS ADVICE

QUICK GUIDE

RESEARCH PAPER SERIES, 2014–15

10 FEBRUARY 2015

Australian Government measures to counter violent extremism: a quick guide

Cat Barker

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Section

Countering violent extremism was highlighted as an ‘essential element’ of efforts to deal with the ‘foreign fighters’ issue in a United Nations Security Council resolution [adopted](#) on 24 September 2014 (Resolution 2178 (2014)). On 11 January 2015, the White House [announced](#) it would host a Summit on Countering Violent Extremism on 18 February 2015 ‘to highlight domestic and international efforts to prevent violent extremists and their supporters from radicalizing, recruiting, or inspiring individuals or groups ... to commit acts of violence’. The Attorney-General [told the Senate](#) on 9 February 2015 that he would represent Australia at the Summit. Against that background, this Quick Guide identifies broadly what is meant by violent extremism and outlines relevant counter-measures pursued by the Australian Government to date.

What is violent extremism?

There is no agreed definition of what constitutes violent extremism. The Australian Government [describes](#) it as follows (emphasis in original):

Violent extremism is the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals. This includes terrorism and other forms of politically motivated and communal violence.

All forms of violent extremism seek change through fear and intimidation rather than through peaceful means.

If a person or group decides that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change, and then acts accordingly, this is violent extremism.

Australian Government initiatives

Rudd-Gillard Government

One of the four elements of the February 2010 Counter-terrorism White Paper, [Securing Australia, protecting our community](#), was ‘resilience’, described as ‘building a strong and resilient Australian community to resist the development of any form of violent extremism and terrorism on the home front’. This was followed by the establishment of a [Countering Violent Extremism \(CVE\) Unit](#) in the Attorney-General’s Department (AGD) and provision of \$9.7 million over four years in the [2010–11 Budget](#) for ‘targeted programs to reduce violent extremism in Australia’. A [media release](#) issued by the Attorney-General on 11 May 2010 indicated the programs would focus on:

- 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.

CVE Strategy

The CVE Unit developed a national CVE Strategy in 2011, which according to AGD’s March 2012 [submission](#) to a Parliamentary committee, is a classified document. However, a publicly available [fact sheet](#) on the CVE Strategy outlines the following objectives and outcomes:

1. Identify and divert violent extremists and, where possible, support them in disengaging from violent extremism
2. Identify and support at-risk groups and individuals to resist and reject violent extremist ideologies
3. Build community cohesion and resilience to violent extremism
4. Communicate effectively to challenge extremist messages and support alternative narratives

The Australian Government has been working towards achieving those objectives through activities relating to identification and information sharing; motivation, recruitment and containment; referral and support, diversion and rehabilitation; education; and communication.

Building Community Resilience Grants Program

Over half of the funding announced for CVE in the 2010–11 Budget went towards grants administered by the Attorney-General’s Department. The [Building Community Resilience—Youth Mentoring Program](#) was [announced](#) on 13 November 2010 as a pilot project. Grants of \$5,000–200,000 were available to successful applicants for activities that ‘directly assist young people to disengage from intolerant and radical ideologies and encourage positive and constructive participation in the community’. Funding for seven projects totalling over \$1.1 million was [announced](#) on 22 February 2011. The projects are outlined in the announcement. Most involved training and mentoring young people with the aim of developing them into mentors for others.

In April 2011, the Government [announced](#) that in response to community feedback on the youth mentoring program, it was rolling out a broader CVE grants program (the [Building Community Resilience Grants Program \(BCRGP\)](#)), under which grants of \$5,000–20,000 and \$20,000–100,000 would be awarded for projects that:

- give communities the skills and resources to understand and actively address intolerant or extremist messages and discourage violent extremism;
- support people who may be vulnerable to extremist views due to personal experiences of disengagement and marginalisation; and
- educate groups and individuals about the avenues available to participate positively in the community.

Funding for 22 projects totalling over \$1.7 million was awarded in July 2011. The recipients and projects are outlined in the [media release](#). Recipients were from a range of types of organisations, including councils, universities, sports clubs and religious and other non-government organisations, while activities funded included:

- Intercultural and interfaith education in schools;

- Peer support and team building activities for at risk individuals;
- Development of common curriculum frameworks;
- Sports activities that promote understanding and inclusion;
- Teacher education;
- Skills and leadership training to improve social and economic opportunities; and
- Online resources and activities to connect with international scholars.

The BCRGP continued until 2013. In total, approximately \$5.3 million was awarded under the BCRP across 59 projects (note, however, that some appear to be continuations of previously funded projects). A table of recipients, projects and funding amounts is in the **Appendix**. Full details of projects funded in each financial year are available from the '[Previous Building Community Resilience Program grants recipients](#)' page of the AGD website.

Other activities

Less information is available about other activities pursued under the CVE Program. However, details available in AGD's [2011–12](#) and [2012–13](#) annual reports and its 2012 submission and [answers to questions on notice](#) indicate they included:

- community engagement forums
- the Resilient Communities website (since replaced by the [Living Safe Together](#) website), designed to provide information on the CVE Strategy and support services and encourage dialogue on related issues
- market research on public awareness of, and attitudes to, CVE
- a [literature review](#) (March 2011), development of a CVE research database and establishment of a research panel
- support to state and territory agencies for CVE initiatives, including prisoner rehabilitation and '[deradicalisation](#)' and programs to prevent radicalisation of other inmates
- working with state and territory governments through the CVE Sub-Committee of the National Counter-Terrorism Committee (now the [Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee](#)) and
- [international engagement](#).

Evaluation

In its 2012 submission and answers to questions on notice, AGD indicated that the CVE Program would be evaluated for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, with a full assessment of the initial four years to be made after 2013–14. AGD stated that some aspects of the evaluation would be made public and others would not, due to national security considerations. As at the date of publication, it was not clear if the assessment had been completed.

Abbott Government

While the CVE Strategy itself is not publicly available, a comparison of the fact sheet available at the time of publication and that provided to a Parliamentary committee as part of AGD's 2012 submission indicates that the overarching strategy has remained the same. However, the Government [announced](#) a [new CVE Programme](#) in August 2014. The prominence of the 'foreign fighters' issue is evident in the aim of the Programme, which in addition to preventing home-grown terrorism, includes discouraging and deterring Australians from travelling overseas to participate in conflicts. An AGD officer [explained](#) at a Senate Estimates hearing in December 2014 that this represented a new phase, involving identifying and intervening with 'individuals who perhaps were contemplating travelling to participate in foreign conflicts, had returned or perhaps had been frustrated in their attempts to travel overseas'.

The CVE Programme was allocated \$13.4 million over four years as part of a \$64 million [package of measures](#) aimed at countering violent extremism and radicalisation, itself part of a broader \$630 million counter-terrorism package [announced](#) on 5 August 2014 and detailed in the [2014–15 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook](#).

Directory of CVE Intervention Services

The Government has sought applications from organisations for inclusion in a [Directory of CVE Intervention Services](#) (the Directory) that ‘will be used by state, territory and Commonwealth authorities when coordinating specific intervention programs for individuals in need’ (but not made publicly available). The [Guidelines for Applicants](#) state that to be successful, a service will need to clearly demonstrate that it ‘will assist to divert and disengage individuals from ideologies of violence and hate’. The Directory will initially include six broad categories of services—religious and multicultural mentoring, specialised mental health services, education and employment counselling, youth and community work, case management and telephone and/or online counselling.

Living Safe Together Grants Programme

The Government has allocated approximately \$1 million for the [Living Safe Together Grants Programme](#) (LSTGP) in 2014–15 only, stating ‘there will be no further funding rounds available in coming years’. The deadline for applications is 2 March 2015. The purpose of the LSTGP is somewhat different from the BCRGP. It is [specifically directed](#) at helping organisations build their capacity to deliver services for inclusion in the Directory through either the design and development of new services, improving the sustainability of existing services or refocusing existing services to address radicalisation, [not at the implementation](#) of those services.

The [Programme Guidelines](#) state that organisations may generally apply for funding of \$10,000–50,000 and indicate that to be successful, an organisation ‘must clearly demonstrate that their project will enhance their organisational capacity to contribute to encouraging individuals away from violent extremism’.

Other activities

Less information is available on the remaining components of the CVE Programme. In addition to the Directory and LSTGP, the ‘[Countering violent extremism](#)’ page of the AGD website lists the following measures, many of which appear to build on activities initiated under the previous CVE Program:

- Working with communities so they can identify and help prevent people from moving down the path of radicalisation to violence.
- Addressing online radicalisation and reducing the impact of terrorist's use of the social media by helping people to develop the digital skills needed to critically assess terrorists' claims and promote alternative messages online.
- Working with state and territory governments to support the rehabilitation of people imprisoned for terrorism related offences, as well as prevent the radicalisation of other prisoners.
- The [Living Safe Together](#) website showcasing how communities and the government are building resilient communities.
- A research panel through which countering violent extremism research can be commissioned.
- An international engagement strategy.
- Whole-of-government education and communication frameworks and products, including curriculum-based materials.

However, it does not outline how they will be pursued or how the approximately \$12.4 million in funding remaining after the LSTGP is accounted for will be distributed across the different initiatives.

Appendix: BCRGP recipients

Grant Recipient	Project	Total Value (inc GST)	Date of effect
Anglicare Sydney	Aussie Youth Connect	\$194,363	22/02/2011
Australian Multicultural Foundation	Australian Muslim Youth Leadership and Mentorship Program	\$200,000	22/02/2011
Centre for Multicultural Youth	Unite 4 Justice	\$138,098	22/02/2011
Hume City Council	Hume Anti-Violent Extremism Youth (HAVEY) Project	\$199,964	22/02/2011
Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria	Aman – Youth for Peace Building	\$200,000	22/02/2011
JobQuest	Mentoring and Resiliency Development (MARD) Project	\$140,131	22/02/2011
Multicultural Media Exchange	Media Makers	\$96,952	22/02/2011
Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre	Voices for Change	\$142,993	22/02/2011
Forum on Australia's Islamic Relations	Southern Crescent Online Peace Initiative	\$32,538	7/07/2011
Islamic Council of Queensland	Empowering Youth to Say No to Radicalisation	\$45,650	7/07/2011
Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia	Teaching Democracy – political extremism, global lessons for local educators	\$43,283	7/07/2011
Horn of Africa Relief and Development Agency	Somali Youth Outreach Project	\$21,670	7/07/2011
Australian Somali Communities Association	Somali Community Resilience Project	\$26,782	7/07/2011
Burwood Council	Different People Different Voices Project	\$52,800	7/07/2011
InterAction	iAct Interfaith Youth Leadership Program	\$21,483	7/07/2011
The Youth Centre	Building Resilience to Violent Extremism in the Canterbury-Bankstown Region: A Focus on our Youth	\$110,000	22/07/2011
Victorian Arabic Social Services	Curbing Radicalisation through Youth Resilience	\$100,802	22/07/2011
North Melbourne Football Club	Connect @ THE HUDDLE	\$102,300	26/07/2011
Pace e Bene	Building Community Capacity in Nonviolent Leadership: An Interfaith Program for Young People	\$88,957	26/07/2011
Youth Development Australia	inSite Projects	\$220,000	26/07/2011
City of Darebin	Salam Alaykum – Darebin's Muslims Reaching Out	\$110,000	1/08/2011
Centre for Multicultural Youth	Unite 4 Justice	\$158,120	1/08/2011

Grant Recipient	Project	Total Value (inc GST)	Date of effect
Islamic Council of Victoria	Audio/Film Production for Youth Engagement and Training	\$68,661	1/08/2011
University of New South Wales	Fairfield-Liverpool Youth Exchange	\$98,780	1/08/2011
Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University	Young Australian Muslim Leadership Program	\$99,990	2/08/2011
Auburn Community Development Network Inc.	Dream Big Project	\$108,130	9/08/2011
The Lebanese Moslem Association	Sharing Humanity	\$110,000	9/08/2011
Bali Peace Park Association	Beyond Bali Education Kit	\$56,297	20/09/2011
Townsville Intercultural Centre Ltd.	Building a Resilient Refugee Community in Townsville	\$33,000	29/08/2012
Institute for Judaism and Civilisation Inc.	A teaching manual of the shared values of the major world religions— Judaism, Christianity and Islam	\$22,000	6/09/2012
Australian Multicultural Foundation Limited	Peer to Peer: Building Capacity and Resilience	\$99,000	13/09/2012
Newcastle City Council	Welcome Stranger	\$35,200	13/09/2012
Horn of Africa Relief & Development Agency of Australia (HARDA)	Somali Youth Outreach Project	\$35,800	13/09/2012
All Together Now	Building Resilience to Extremism - Planting a Seed of Doubt in Young Men	\$65,670	17/09/2012
The Association of Hazaras in Victoria Inc.	Tackling Extremism in the Afghan Community	\$11,000	17/09/2012
The Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Cairns (Centacare Cairns)	International Human Rights Day 2012	\$16,280	17/09/2012
Islamic Society of South Australia Incorporated	Defining Moderate Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims	\$22,000	17/09/2012
Metro Migrant Resource Centre	Resist Within - Development of a Building Community Resilience Educational DVD Resource	\$19,800	17/09/2012
Footscray Football Club Limited	Generation M Project	\$99,000	26/09/2012
University of New South Wales	South Western Sydney - Youth United	\$99,000	26/09/2012
North Melbourne Football Club Limited	Connect 2 Project	\$90,200	26/09/2012
Islamic Council of Victoria Inc.	The Community Reconnect Project	\$110,000	28/09/2012
The Lebanese Moslem Association	The Positive Intellect (Pi) Project	\$110,000	5/10/2012
Burwood Council	Different People Different Voices Project (DPDVP) - Stage 2	\$99,000	15/10/2012
Fellowship of Australian Writers (FAW) Inc.	Hive Television	\$90,000	18/10/2012

Grant Recipient	Project	Total Value (inc GST)	Date of effect
Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative Ltd	Respect You... Respect Me	\$51,040	22/10/2012
Victorian Immigrant & Refugee Women's Coalition Inc.	Women Against Violent Extremism (WAVE): Women Building Respectful & Resilient Communities	\$76,799	31/10/2012
Australian Football League	Bachar Houli Cup: Islamic Schools & Leadership Program	\$110,000	21/11/2012
University of South Australia	Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Muslims but Were Afraid to Ask	\$107,804	12/12/2012
Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory Inc.	Asylum Seekers Community Education Project	\$56,100	12/12/2012
Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights	Dialogue Across Sectarian Divide	\$126,302	1/11/2013
Eelam Tamil Association	Filling the Gap	\$77,458	1/11/2013
People Against Violent Extremism	PAVE website and Walk Away From Extremism	\$115,700	1/11/2013
Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre	Lead to Achieve	\$85,051	1/11/2013
University of New South Wales (Football United)	Youth Connected, Youth United	\$131,505	1/11/2013
All Together Now	Exit White Power	\$72,857	5/11/2013
Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF)	Community Awareness Training Manual – Building Resilience in the Community	\$110,000	5/11/2013
SalamCare Incorporated	From Rage to Salam	\$56,500	24/11/2013
Australian Football League	Bachar Houli Islamic Program	\$120,000	29/11/2013
TOTAL		\$5,342,810	

Sources: AGD, [BCR grants: 2010–11](#), [BCR grants: 2011–12](#), [BCR grants: 2012–13](#) and [BCR grants: 2013–14](#), [Grants register from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012](#), [Grants register from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013](#) and [Grants register from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014](#).

Note: In some instances, the amount of funding recorded in a grants register differed from that recorded in the relevant BCR Grants document. The funding amounts in the table above are all taken from the grants registers, except for 2010–11, for which there is no grants register available.



© Commonwealth of Australia



Creative Commons

With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, and to the extent that copyright subsists in a third party, this publication, its logo and front page design are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Australia](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/au/) licence.