



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

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Our Ref:

Your Ref:

21 September 2021

Senator James Paterson
Senator for Victoria
Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Paterson

Thank you for your most recent correspondence dated 30 June 2021 and earlier invitation by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS). On behalf of the Queensland Police Service (QPS), thank you for the invitation to participate in public hearings regarding the Committee's Inquiry into extremist movements and radicalism in Australia.

In lieu of participating in a public hearing, the QPS provides the following information for the PJCIS's consideration. I have had the benefit of reviewing the formal Inquiry submissions provided to the PJCIS by our partner law enforcement and security agencies. My support for these submissions extends to the factual and operational information generally contained in those submissions and not any policy or legislative positions those agencies may be putting forward to the PJCIS.

In addition, on behalf of the QPS, I offer the following additional observations and considerations for the Inquiry. Please note that this is a QPS submission and does not purport to reflect the views of the Queensland Government.

Threat environment

The threat environment described in the submissions by our law enforcement and security partners are generally consistent with the current threat environment in Queensland. The primary threat in Queensland continues to emanate from Religiously Motivated Violent Extremism (RMVE) in the form of a small number of individuals who support a violent interpretation of Islam that is influenced, in part, by overseas terrorist organisations and activities. The most recent example of this was in March 2021 as identified in your correspondence.

Ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE)

The upward trend in cases of ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE) or right-wing extremism as previously described by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and others is also being experienced in Queensland. Recent and common examples include graffiti and signage in public spaces promoting extremist propaganda, allegedly perpetrated by individuals linked to IMVE groups.

Early this year Queensland representatives participated in Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee (ANZCTC) activities to examine challenges posed by IMVE ideologies and groups in Australia. As a QPS advisor on the ANZCTC, I am confident practical and effective outcomes will come from this work in the very near term.

On-line environment

As identified by other agencies the QPS has observed an elevated level of activity in the IMVE and RMVE online environment which corresponds with periods of COVID related restrictions. The QPS supports the view that there is no single pathway to radicalisation. People radicalise online or offline or a combination of both. People can be drawn into more extreme ideologies, both online and offline. In the online environment, in particular through social media platforms, there may be an increased likelihood that individuals may have greater interaction with and be exposed to influence from Australian and overseas based extremist individuals and groups.

By way of example, during COVID restrictions the QPS identified one individual, who as a result of increased isolation accelerated his engagement with Australian and overseas extremist influences and transitioned very quickly from being disaffected to adopting and promoting extremism utilising a range of platforms. Being prevented from attending school saw the removal of regulating and stabilising influences that were absent in the individuals locked-down home environment. In such situations, intervention strategies can help address underlying issues and successfully disrupt extremism influence.

National coordination of counter-terrorism

As active partners in Australia's national counter-terrorism arrangements, the QPS supports enhancement opportunities to existing arrangements. Through the QPS' membership on the ANZCTC and its role in chairing the Queensland Security and Counter-Terrorism Committee, a strong partnership approach continues to enhance our contribution to national counter-terrorism arrangements and the safety and security of Queenslanders. In that regard, many of the Inquiry's matters for consideration are likely to have been influenced and supported by the QPS in some form. Examples may include the QPS' contribution to the draft *Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy* and our support to the national Living Safe Together initiative by delivering an early intervention program for radicalisation in Queensland.

Queensland Inquiry into Serious Vilification and Hate Crimes

The Queensland Parliament's Legal Affairs and Safety Committee has commenced an Inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes in Queensland. The Inquiry will report on the nature and extent of hate crimes and serious vilification in Queensland and whether there is evidence on increasing instances of serious vilification in Queensland; and the effectiveness of section 131A of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) and other laws responding to hate crimes. Queensland Police Service made a submission and representatives appeared before Committee. The outcomes of this Inquiry may be of interest to the PJCIS.

Other issues and challenges being reviewed in the Inquiry

The QPS acknowledges the breadth of challenges and issues being reviewed by the PJCIS as part of the Inquiry's terms of reference and welcomes their close examination. Issues such as encrypted communications, the dark web, the operation of social media platforms, the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and terrorist organisation proscription are all challenges recognised by the QPS and our partner agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information for inclusion in the Committee's consideration. I will be keeping the Queensland Commissioner of Police and the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services informed of this submission to the PJCIS. The QPS recognises and supports the important work of the PJCIS in relation to threats to Australia's National Security.

Yours sincerely



Debbie Platz APM
Assistant Commissioner
Security and Counter-Terrorism Command