

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management
Minister for Local Government

Level 5, 4 Salamanca Place, Parliament Square Building HOBART TAS 7000 Australia
GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001 Australia
Ph: +61 3 6165 7770

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Hon Anthony Byrne MP
Deputy Chair
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Byrne

On behalf of the Tasmanian Government, I am pleased to make a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security's Inquiry into extremist movements and radicalism in Australia. The Tasmanian Government recognises the important work undertaken by the Parliamentary Joint Committee in relation to threats to Australia's National security.

Tasmania is committed to national security through its membership of the Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee (ANZCTC), on which it is represented by members of Tasmania Police and the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC). Tasmania notes that ANZCTC is undertaking a review into Countering-Violent Extremism (CVE) and conducting a deep-dive into extreme right-wing movements. The Tasmanian Government will provide input to this work over the coming months.

This submission focuses on the response of Tasmania in CVE and building social cohesion, as well as offering some general comments against the Terms of Reference.

Tasmanian Context

Tasmania Police is the lead agency for counter-terrorism preparedness and response in Tasmania. Together with other emergency response agencies, Tasmania Police maintains specialist response capabilities and participates in regular training activities and exercises.

The Special Response and Counter-Terrorism (SRCT) command within Tasmania Police is the central coordination point for Tasmanian Government counter-terrorism measures and establishes the arrangements in relation to terrorist threats. It provides expertise and advice on counter-terrorism activities in Tasmania. Tasmanian Government policy and legislative co-ordination for terrorism related matters is undertaken jointly by SRCT and the Office of Security and Emergency Management (OSEM) at DPAC.

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) measures

Tasmania Police continues to work with government agencies, non-government organisations and support services in identifying those vulnerable to radicalisation in violent extremism in the community. This includes direct intervention with individuals who have been influenced by online extremist material and/or social and family influences, including that of an extreme right-wing nature.

A risk framework for CVE, lone actor grievance fuelled violence and fixated threats has been developed which includes extensive networks, processes and collaboration with outside agencies to address and respond to forms of extremism.

Tasmania's Fixated Threat Assessment Capability (FTAC) deals with fixated individuals who have an intense preoccupation with a highly personalised cause that they pursue to an obsessive and irrational degree. The FTAC is also designed to respond to individuals who may have a mental illness or mental health needs, who pose a risk to themselves and others by engaging in problematic and high risk behaviour.

Tasmania Police collaborates with mental health services concerning CVE / fixated person threats where a mental health response is required. This includes improving processes for information sharing between health professionals and law enforcement. However, there is a potential gap where a person of interest is not clearly requiring mental health intervention, and where their behaviour does not constitute clear criminal behaviour. If a person falls in this area, there is a risk that they will not be identified, and appropriate action not taken to disrupt any path to violence. Further research, which would be best coordinated nationally, is required to identify the scale of this gap and to take remedial action.

Broader social cohesion measures

Tasmania's Multicultural Policy provides a shared values framework that underpins a three year Action Plan 2019-21. The Action Plan is focused on measures to ensure accessible and affordable services, facilitate economic opportunity and a harmonious, respectful and inclusive State.

Tasmania is home to people from all faiths, cultures and backgrounds. The Tasmanian Government works closely with non-government organisations and local communities to foster social cohesion in Tasmania.

Alongside direct interventions, Tasmania Police can support social cohesion initiatives by building trust so community members come forward with concerns and/or information. This has facilitated Tasmania Police in providing appropriate support and other services to affected groups.

In responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tasmanian Government's approach to social cohesion has been premised on active and collaborative engagement with multicultural communities. Tasmanian Government agencies have been working with the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs and Department of Social Services to address issues for Tasmanian multicultural communities as they occur to ensure multicultural communities across Tasmania have access to information and support mechanisms they require in relation to COVID-19.

Working with the Australian Government

Tasmania has a capability regarding countering-terrorism, however much of this ability to respond to threats is through a significant working relationship with the Australian Government. The ongoing work addressing the threat posed by extremist movements and individuals in Australia will continue through collaboration.

Intelligence sharing

The Tasmanian Government works closely and relies on intelligence and information sharing with the Australian Government to understand and assess threats and security risks in Tasmania. Ongoing information sharing is crucial to understanding the threat picture and to inform any response.

Extended Supervision Orders (ESOs)

The resourcing by Tasmania Police to support systems such as ESO, under the High Risk Terrorist Offenders regime, will be challenging. Whilst a model for state and territory reimbursement of agreed costs has been proposed, this is unlikely to cover all associated costs. In addition, personnel required for ESO related activities will result in a significant deviation of Tasmania Police resources from other operational matters, impacting sustainability of the activities surrounding management of a single ESO in Tasmania.

Commonwealth's Terrorist Organisation Listing Process

The Intergovernmental Agreement on Counter-Terrorism laws, signed on 25 June 2004, requires consultation with all States and Territories before the Australian Government may list an organisation as a terrorist organisation under section 102.1 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

Once an organisation is listed, relevant Commonwealth agencies could consider undertaking national public communication campaigns to ensure community awareness of prohibitions under Australian law and potential consequences for becoming a member or providing support to that listed terrorist organisation.

It is noted that organisations listed so far primarily relate to Islamist extremism with violent activities undertaken overseas, no right-wing extremist groups or groups advocating the doing of terrorist acts onshore have been listed.

Online extremist communication

The disruption of online communication by extremist groups is particularly difficult for Tasmania Police. Online extremist communications are likely to become increasingly encrypted with the location and the origin of messages difficult to identify. Ultimately the coordination of response to extremist use of the cyber domain is best managed centrally by Commonwealth agencies.

I thank the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security for this opportunity to make this submission and look forward to reviewing your final report.

Yours sincerely



Hon Mark Shelton MP
Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management

