

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

Program: 1.7 National Security and Criminal Justice

Question No. BE16/019

Senator McKim asked the following question at the hearing on 5 May 2016:

Senator McKIM: This is the last question from me. I asked this at last estimates and I cannot see that a response has been provided since then, so I will just ask it again. Are you able to inform the committee of how many service providers are currently on the Directory of Countering Violent Extremism Intervention Services and how often the directory has been used?

Senator Brandis: I think the officials should know the answer to that.

Ms Lowe: The directory of intervention services was established quite some time ago in order to facilitate the department being able to procure services directly in support of individuals at risk and in response to referrals. With the way the model has evolved, those services are being more directly procured by the states—so a working partnership with the states. The states procure all those services to support intervention.

The directory of intervention services is an evolving document, and as organisations develop more capability and willingness to participate in this program they get added to the service. One of the biggest contributors to the development of the directory is, in fact, 40 grants recipients that are coming to the end of their current grants process. There was a grants process launched about a year ago that was designed to build the capability of NGOs to deliver those referral services. As their capability increases and improves and they undergo training delivered by the department and others, they will continue to be added to the directory.

In terms of the numbers on the directory and who is on the directory, it is not something that we publicise. Organisations want to be on the directory on a confidentiality basis. They provide services directly to government, but it is not something that we publish or publicise.

Senator McKIM: Ms Lowe, I do accept that in terms of the identity those organisations, but I cannot see the argument against revealing the number of organisations on the directory.

Ms Lowe: I am happy to take on notice the number as is currently the case, because, as I said, it is a developing service and so the number changes. I can take that on notice and give you the most accurate response.

Senator McKIM: Thank you.

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

Forty-five organisations that can provide a range of support services, including counselling, mentoring, employment and vocational training and sports programmes are currently included on the Directory of Intervention Support Services. Information about these organisations is available to jurisdictions, who can then procure services directly as required. The department is also continuing to work with States and Territories and community groups to identify additional support services that may assist at-risk or radicalised individuals to disengage from violent extremism and reintegrate back into their community.

As the relationship that the support services have with their local community is sensitive and trust is critical, details of the support services on the Directory are not public.