

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2017

Attorney General's Department

Program: 1.2 AGD Operating Expenses - National Security and Criminal Justice

Question No. BE17-175

Senator Hanson asked the following question on 02 June 2017:

- (a) The Department recently issued a Request for Tender (AGD 2016-17-001) seeking the provision of services to counter violent extremism. In 2017 'violent extremism' refers to those who justify their terrorist actions by the readings of Islam and the Hadith. What purpose does it serve to deny the link to Islam?
- (b) A survey of Muslims in Canada was published in 2016. It found that second generation Muslims were more likely to identify as Muslims than Canadians. There are no similar studies here. Given the Government's preventative role, will it ask ASIO or some other area of Government to commission a similar study?

The response to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:

- (a) 'Violent extremism' refers to the use or support of violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals, whatever those goals may be.

Australia is home to a diversity of faiths, united by tolerance, mutual respect and a commitment to democratic traditions. All Australians are free to choose their religion, and are entitled to express and practise their religion and their beliefs, without intimidation and without interference, as long as those practices are within the framework of Australian law. Australia has strong laws prohibiting the urging of violence and advocating terrorism. Violence and promoting violence in the name of an ideology or political cause are criminal acts for which the Government has no tolerance.

- (b) The Government is investing in research to inform policy and program delivery in the field of countering violent extremism (CVE). Academic research is crucial to our understanding of violent extremism, including the reasons for individuals becoming radicalised.

We are working with the research community to strengthen our understanding of the causes of violent extremism and to support us in guiding our program of CVE work.