

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

Program: 1.2

Question No. SBE15/045

Senator McKim asked the following question at the hearing on 20 October 2015:

Senator McKIM: Can you tell us how many service providers are currently on the directory and how many times the directory has been used?

Ms C Jones: We are really still in the middle of mapping right now—

CHAIR: Before you answer that, I will stop the clock. Senator Whish-Wilson has agreed to put his questions to AUSTRAC on notice.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: If I could ask for a quick turnaround, that would be appreciated. Thank you.

CHAIR: No conditions! So thanks to the AUSTRAC people for coming along and staying, but you can have an hour earlier than the rest of us.

Senator McKIM: I understand it is a work in progress and thank you for your overview, but how many are currently listed on the directory and how many times has it been used?

Ms C Jones: I will have to take that on notice. As I said, the process of developing the directory is still a work in progress and we are midway through mapping, so I do not have a set number yet.

Senator McKENZIE: Okay. I will put all the questions I asked at the start of this exchange on notice. I might offer Senator Siewert an opportunity with the brief moments that we have left.

Senator SIEWERT: Thank you. I want to ask some questions about preventing violent extremism and radicalisation in Australia. Did the minister's office sign off on the final version of that publication before it was published?

Ms K Jones: I think it was finalised prior to Ms Jones coming into that role, so I just need to take it on notice in terms of what the approval process was for that.

Senator SIEWERT: Could you take on notice the approvals process in terms of approving the final version and whether the minister eyeballed it before it was published?

Ms K Jones: We will take that on notice.

Senator SIEWERT: I am particularly interested in the example of the process that you used, the shark photo, how you made that decision and when you made the decision to take that photo off.

Ms C Jones: The purpose of the booklet is to provide some clear information to people about what radicalisation is and what it is not. The page that that photo appeared on was about making some clear statements that peaceful protest is a legitimate form of expression. The photo was intended to demonstrate exactly that. There is some text highlighted on that page which makes that statement really clearly.

Senator SIEWERT: But the heading under it is, 'What is radicalisation?' and you have got the photo of the shark protest.

Ms C Jones: Yes, and then the first paragraph below that heading talks about what are legitimate, reasonable forms of expression. We took it down when we had the reaction. That document had been out in circulation for some months, but, obviously in response to the more recent concern about the photo and misinterpretation about what its intention was, we took it down so as to avoid any further confusion.

Senator SIEWERT: What date was that?

Ms C Jones: I will take that on notice, but I believe it was on the Friday. It was soon after the media.

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

Can you tell us how many services providers are currently on the directory and how many times the directory has been used?

As at 20 October 2015, the directory is a resource to help governments understand and target assistance to community organisations and groups who are willing to work with individuals who may be identifying with a violent extremist ideology.

This is sensitive work and trust is critical. Service providers may also attract negative attention from others in the community. For this reason, the directory is not intended to be a public resource.

Ministerial approvals process for the Radicalisation Awareness Information Kit

The Radicalisation Awareness Information Kit was approved by the Attorney-General's Department prior to being made publically available (fact sheets were first released in July 2014 and the Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation in Australia booklet was released in April 2015). The Minister for Justice was provided with a copy of the Radicalisation Awareness Information Kit prior to its provision to Education Ministers and education sector peak bodies in September 2015.

What date was the shark photo removed from the online version of the Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation in Australia booklet?

25 September 2015.