

OFFICIAL



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



**PREVENTING AND COUNTERING TERRORISM AND VIOLENT
EXTREMISM 2022-26: AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL
ENGAGEMENT UPDATE AND WAY AHEAD**

April 2022

INTERNATIONAL COUNTER-TERRORISM ENGAGEMENT NARRATIVE 2022-26

Australia is opposed to terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms. Violent extremism has no place in Australia, our region or the world.

As outlined in the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, it is our fundamental responsibility and highest priority to keep Australians safe and protect our freedoms, our way of life and our values. We are committed to ensuring Australians remain safe, secure and free from national security threats including terrorism.

Over many years, through our efforts responding to and countering terrorism, we have learned three hard-won and enduring lessons that underpin our national approach to counter-terrorism.

Lesson 1: Unity of effort works. Partnerships matter. Teamwork is key.

Lesson 2: A comprehensive, integrated approach works best – global, regional, and local.

Lesson 3: Sharing information and lessons saves lives and protects us all.

Looking ahead Australia is faced with a complex, dynamic international environment where competition is intensifying, and a range of uncertainties and challenges exist. The following observations will shape our approach to countering terrorism in the next five years:

Observation 1: The threat is persistent and dynamic; it is never static.

Observation 2: The world is rapidly changing, and the threat is changing with it. We need to anticipate, understand and effectively adapt to the changes as they arise.

Observation 3: The recurring root causes of terrorism and violent extremism can be better understood, identified, mitigated and reduced when we work collaboratively with our partners.

In a globalised, interdependent world, our multilateral, regional and bilateral partnerships have proven critical to achieving Australia's security and counter-terrorism objectives. Our international partnerships with governments and institutions are vital to achieving our objectives and must be sustained and deepened. We recognise private sector and civil society engagement is also critical. We actively support collective international responses to global and transnational Counter-Terrorism efforts. Our international engagement on counter-terrorism is consistent with and complements Australia's broader foreign policy priorities.

Our approach to international partners is based on and strengthened by the principles and core elements articulated in Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Our international engagement aims to promote Australia's counter-terrorism interests through effective advocacy, cooperation, and capacity and capability building. We seek to achieve four key objectives:

Objective 1: Sustain, strengthen, deepen and expand Australia's international counter-terrorism partnerships network.

Objective 2: Support and reinforce the achievement of national counter-terrorism objectives.

Objective 3: Work with international partners and stakeholders to reduce the appeal, influence and effectiveness of terrorism and violent extremism.

Objective 4: Increase sharing and access to counter-terrorism and counter violent extremism information, best practice and lessons with international partners.

FOREIGN MINISTER'S FOREWORD


Following the 20th anniversary of the 2001 September 11 terrorist attacks and marking 20 years since the Bali Bombings in Indonesia, the global nature of the terrorist threat not only remains but also is now more widespread.

The fall of Kabul and the ascendancy of the Taliban in Afghanistan has seen the emergence and proliferation of a violent extremist 'victory narrative' that inspires and rejuvenates extremists globally. This 'victory narrative' has likely resulted in subsequent lone-actor attacks and more coordinated terrorist efforts, like the recent knife attack in Auckland, New Zealand; and the ISIL attack on Ghwayran prison in north-east Syria, which left hundreds dead and drew American and British forces back into combat in support of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

Terrorist networks have also become increasingly global and interconnected even as they remain locally tethered. In a pandemic-affected world, isolated individuals have spent more time online, exposed to extremist messaging, misinformation and conspiracy theories – radicalising children and increasing the spread of Religiously and Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism. The transnational nature of both the real and virtual threat underscores the continued importance of international cooperation in all aspects of a response.

- *Senator the Hon Marise Payne, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Women*

1. More than 20 years since the September 11 terror attacks in the United States and in the year of the twentieth anniversary of the Bali Bombings in Indonesia, it is timely that we reflect on our collective efforts to counter-terrorism (CT) and violent extremism (CVE). While terrorism is not a new phenomenon, the 9/11 attacks refocused attention on it, and changed our world forever. The attacks brought down the Twin Towers and took the lives of 2,977 people including 10 Australians. It was the 9/11 attack that launched global efforts to prevent future attacks and to counter the appeal, reach and impact of extremists wherever they are located, whatever their motivation. The Bali bombings in 2002, which killed 202 and wounded many more, reinforced our resolve and reminded us that international cooperation is essential to managing, mitigating, and disrupting extremism, and to protecting our communities, values, and freedoms.
2. Then, as now, the first duty of government is to do everything possible to keep Australians safe and protect our freedoms, our way of life and our values. Our experiences have reinforced that while we are responsible for our security and prosperity, our efforts are amplified when we cooperate with our partners.
3. Our national efforts combined with our international partnerships have proven critical to protecting Australia and Australians from violent extremism. The support and assistance provided by Indonesia's government and people in the wake of the catastrophic 2002 Bali bombings is a seminal example of the importance of our partnerships, especially those in the Indo-Pacific region. Australia has worked tirelessly, collaboratively, and quietly at the global, regional, and bilateral levels to build, support, and expand our networks in support of countering terrorism and violent extremism. This internationally-focused work has been complemented by the efforts of State/Territory governments, local communities and individuals across Australia. This effort by so many has delivered us protection at home and abroad.
4. However, in this rapidly changing world, terrorism and violent extremism have proven resilient and persistent threats. Significant societal changes over the last 20 years including the rapid expansion of the internet, rise in great power competition, climate change, disinformation, and foreign interference — all impact societies and their resilience to violent extremism, and must be factored in our CT priorities and approach. Therefore, it is imperative to ensure that our approach is future-focused and avoids complacency.

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5. Australia now faces the ongoing challenges of COVID and a world that is potentially poorer, more dangerous, and more disorderly. While Australia has long benefited from a rules-based international system and norms that have delivered stability, this is now increasingly contested by State and non-State actors.
 6. Violent extremists have proven adept at operating and evolving in this contested environment; taking advantage of the globally connected information environment. Terrorists and violent extremists do not respect borders and relentlessly seek to exploit them. To reduce the threat they pose, we must work collaboratively with our international partners, many of whom face similar threats.
 7. Therefore, we too need to adapt and respond to the threat they pose, the methods they employ and their sources of motivation. But with only finite resources available, collaboration with partners is key to supporting each other to reduce the risks we face and to maintaining a focused, high quality and effective CT effort. We must tirelessly advocate to sustain these partnerships. However, we must also make new partnerships, particularly where they can deepen our understanding of the extremism threat in all its manifestations.
 8. With this in mind, it is timely for us to re-examine our international engagement plans and objectives for CVE out to 2026. This update is founded on the international lessons and experiences of the last 20 years and sets out our way ahead.
 9. We must remain true to our values and use them to counter violent extremists' messaging and their insidious appeal at every opportunity, in the open and in every dark corner of the world. We must employ modern tools and systems to present a compelling counter-narrative. Simultaneously, we must focus more effort on reducing the conditions that enable violent extremism to flourish and thrive. While governments have a responsibility in countering violent extremism, we all have a role to play and can each take action against violent extremism in our communities. Ultimately, we will achieve our objective to disrupt extremism and reduce its threat when we share the commitment to stand up to violent extremism and live by common values and principles.

INTRODUCTION BY THE AMBASSADOR FOR COUNTER-TERRORISM

Planning for an uncertain decade is inherently difficult. Agile policy and regular reviews of our foreign, defence and national security frameworks will be important.

2017 Foreign Policy White Paper

10. The 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper recognises our response to national security threats, such as terrorism, must be 'long-term and flexible' and we must continually review our approach and be mindful of emerging challenges and their solutions.
11. Australia's CT approach has evolved in response to a dynamic threat, a changing threat environment and an analysis of the hard-won lessons of experience – both our own and those of our partners.
12. This paper focusses on our international engagement in CT from now until 2026 and sets out our approach to achieve our key objective – to keep Australians safe and protect our interests. We will:
 - optimise our multilateral, regional, bilateral, and domestic partnerships; and
 - ensure our efforts are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Our CT approach will identify the enduring principles required for effective international engagement, the priorities for the next five years, and the core CT narrative and its critical objectives. At every step it seeks to assist, reinforce, enable, and amplify Australian international engagement to ensure successful collaboration.

20 years on from September 11 and the Bali Bombings: the lessons of 20 years of collaborative CT

13. The last 20 years have given rise to many observations and lessons that have shaped Australia's approach to CT and CVE. Some of these were hard won through adversity by us and our friends and deserve ongoing respect and attention. Three key lessons shape our future approach and underpin our way ahead.

The Bali Bombings: The Price Paid, the lessons learned, and the 'What Right Looks Like'

At about 11pm on 12 October 2002, three bombs were detonated in Bali, two in busy nightspots – the Sari Club and Paddy's Bar – and another in front of the American consulate. The explosions killed 202 people, including 88 Australians, and wounded hundreds more. Carried out by terrorist organisation Jemaah Islamiyah, the attacks represent the single largest loss of Australian life due to an act of terror. Three years later (1 October 2005), terrorism again struck in Bali killing 20 people, including four Australians, and injuring more than a hundred more.

The devastating attacks in Bali, combined with bombings in Djakarta (2003) and the Australian Embassy (2004) began a strong and deepening CT/CVE collaboration between Indonesia and Australia on various CT/CVE issues. This collaboration is supported through information sharing and best practice initiatives between Australian and Indonesian government agencies as well as the private

sector and civil society organisations. It is also indicative of the capacity for countries to collaborate positively and overcome great tragedy.

Adapted from 'The Jakarta blasts and Indonesia — Australia CT Cooperation', Dr John Coyne (Australian Strategic Policy Institute, The Strategist, 15 January 2016).

Lesson 1: Unity of effort works. Partnerships matter. Teamwork is key.

14. The trilogy of united efforts, partnerships, and teamwork to deliver effective CT and CVE is the seminal lesson. The team needs to be global, regional, bilateral, national, and local. It needs to bring together efforts across law enforcement, international engagement, military, diplomacy, CT financing, international law and information communications and technology. It should be inclusive and embrace civil society and communities, at home and overseas.

15. The US 9/11 Commission Report (2004) concentrated on global and domestic unity of effort, advocating that we need to unify 'the efforts of the many CT participants. This lesson is as relevant in 2021 as it was in 2004. It's a team effort. The areas where united efforts are required will evolve and adapt with the times, and the team will need to adapt, change, and expand to meet challenges too. In a complex and uncertain world, efforts to sustain the team must be constant to mitigate and manage challenges from violent extremism.

Lesson 2: A comprehensive, integrated approach works best – global, regional, local.

16. Australia's network of stakeholders has helped foster and develop initiatives targeting violent extremism's effectiveness and appeal, with the goal of reducing its capacity to attack Australians and Australian interests. Global commitment and collaboration on CT/CVE since the Bali bombings have been unprecedented and led to demonstrably positive results.

17. Our success in CT/CVE will be amplified by a comprehensive, integrated approach that harnesses global, regional, bilateral, national, and local collaboration to support best practice that is relevant to the issue, community, and the prevailing environment. Best practice employs all resources available to organisations, partner agencies, individuals, and communities in Australia and internationally to reduce violent extremism's appeal, and its reach and influence in the virtual and 'real' worlds. Strengthening and deepening these efforts will deliver increased security and protections to Australia and Australians.

The Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS

At its height, ISIL or Daesh, held approximately 30 per cent of Syria and 40 per cent of Iraq. In response, the Global Coalition against Daesh was formed in September 2014. The Global Coalition's 84 members, including Australia, committed to tackling Daesh on all fronts and countering its global ambitions: financial, economic, and military.

By December 2017, Daesh had lost 95 percent of its territory, including Mosul (Iraq's 2nd largest city) and Raqqa (in northern Syria). On 23 March 2019, ISIL's campaign finally ended after Syrian Defence

Forces captured Baghouz, Syria. As Commander Mazloum Kobani declared: “We announce today the destruction of the so-called Islamic State organization and the end of its ground control in its last pocket in Baghouz”. Six months later, ISIL’s leader, Baghdadi, was located and killed during a US special operations raid in Idlib, Syria.

In March 2021, the Global Coalition reaffirmed its belief that a comprehensive and collective effort remains necessary to achieve a full and enduring defeat of Daesh/ISIS worldwide. The Global Coalition has proven it is a cohesive, adaptable and successful vehicle that will continue this important endeavour through stabilisation, political, military, communications, counter finance, and law enforcement lines of effort.

Adapted from Timeline: The Rise, Spread, and Fall of the Islamic State, Wilson Center (28 October 2019) and the Global Coalition – Mission

Lesson 3: Sharing information and lessons saves lives and protects us all.

18. The adage ‘it takes a network to defeat a network’ is born from CT experience. Australia’s extensive partner network works collaboratively to share experiences and knowledge on violent extremism. This collective sharing reduces shared risks and secures shared protections. We can and have learned from each other, minimising the likelihood of repeating past mistakes or others’ missteps. The benefits from sharing experiences and efforts extend into multiple areas that counter violent extremism directly and indirectly. Australian experience and solutions are valued by our partners, and we value theirs. It makes sense to pursue, expand and adapt our approaches to address changing circumstances and evolving threats.

Australian assistance to the Philippines: beyond the here and now

Australia’s engagement with the Philippines before, during and after the conflict in Marawi last year [2017] was more than just a humanitarian response. It signalled Australia’s maturation as a regional security actor and ‘provider of choice’ for our neighbours. Australia has a strong interest in stopping Islamic State from taking root in Southeast Asia and providing operational and policy support to regional partners remains a priority. It’s worth examining both how Australia delivered help to the Philippines in Marawi, and the lessons learned from the operation because it’s likely that similar help will be required in the region in the future.

In 2017, when the Philippines Government put its armed forces in charge of restoring law and order in Marawi, Australia was able to offer technical expertise, lessons drawn from years of fighting and training local forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the loan of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities that the Philippine military [was] still developing. The combination of defence and humanitarian support made Australia the largest international humanitarian donor to Marawi: A\$920,000 for humanitarian recovery, peace and stabilisation initiatives.

The decisions to limit defence help to an advisory role reflected Australia’s respect for Philippine leadership and policy priorities. Australia also recognised the Philippine’s existing capacity and experience. Perhaps our most significant contribution to the post-conflict environment was co-hosting a seminar to share the Philippine Government’s lessons learnt from whole-of-government post-conflict operations and to build networks across government. It gave voice to more than 100 delegates from across the civil and military landscape. The goal was to provide an understanding of

the importance of civil– military partnership, but it also allowed the 80 Australian personnel deployed to the Philippines to influence the post-conflict environment. In setting the framework and program for the event, Australia was able to nurture working relationships with Philippine decision-makers in the task force. This helped Australian efforts to ensure a successful recovery operation that aimed to avoid creating conditions that would allow extremists to regain a foothold in disaffected communities.

The key message for Australian policymakers is that we can expect more Marawis in our region. The risk to regional stability posed by Islamic State’s goal of creating a ‘caliphate’ in Southeast Asia has not passed, and the urban conditions which led to this conflict remain widespread. The Asian Development Bank calculates that by 2020, 13 of the world’s 25 megacities will be in littoral environments in Asia and the Pacific. Megacities will bring new opportunities, but also new challenges, as disenfranchised and alienated communities develop around ethnic and sectarian lines. Violent non-state actors may seek out this environment because it provides concealment, serves recruitment and funding purposes, and can negate the technological advantages of local security forces.

Any conflict or stabilisation operation larger than Marawi would almost certainly see Australia being part of a coalition where even its whole-of-government response would make it a bit player. But when the next ‘Marawi’ happens, Australia can constructively contribute by replicating the considered, back-of-house and collegiate way it engaged to support the Philippines. Acknowledging Philippine ownership of the situation, Australia indicated its willingness to contribute to a transregional security issue with ramifications far beyond the southern Philippines. Australia provided the appropriate support for, and augmented, existing Philippine capabilities and strengths—and can do so again. Australia needs to capitalise on its capacity to provide this type of security assistance so that neighbours can see Australia as a preferred security partner and collaborator.

Adapted from Australian assistance to the Philippines: beyond the here and now, Samuel J. Cox, 2 May 2018, The Strategist

THE FUTURE CT CHALLENGE – 2026

We have credible intelligence that individuals and groups have the capability and intent to conduct terrorism onshore. Let me be clear; this threat is significant, and it's not going away.

Director-General of Security, Annual Threat Assessment, 17 March 2021

19. While terrorism and violent extremism have proven resilient there is ample evidence that concerted, considered and collaborative action can effectively reduce violent extremism's appeal and effectiveness. We can, and do, protect ourselves and we do reduce the threat. Experiences of the last 20 years have reinforced the iterative nature of the relationship between violent extremism and the efforts to counter it. The need to adapt and respond to changes in motivations, methods and root causes is a constant, demanding requirement. An evidence-based analysis of the future challenge is essential to design an effective strategy.

20. There are three key observations underpinning our future approach to international engagement that are of worthy further explanation.

Observation 1: The threat is persistent and dynamic; it is never static.

21. The motivations, objectives and reach of terrorism and violent extremism are never static. They are continuously evolving. Alongside religiously motivated violent extremism (RMVE), ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE) has become a notable global trend, significantly increasing among western societies over the last five years. IMVE actors are often young, well-educated, articulate, middle class, unaffiliated, making them difficult to identify. ISIL's appeal and affiliates have migrated across the globe, becoming prominent in sub-Saharan Africa. ISIL and its affiliates' have extended their reach into the Indo-Pacific, most starkly evident in the 2017 Marawi siege in the southern Philippines and the lone actor knife attack in Auckland, New Zealand, in September 2021. Locally based networks' appeal has sustained the reach of violent extremist ideologies.

The impact of terrorism and the persistent and dynamic nature of the threat

After peaking in 2014, terrorism related deaths fell for the 5th consecutive year to 13,826, in 2019. This decline mirrored a reduction in the number of countries impacted by terrorism, to 103. ISIL's strength and influence also declined, with deaths and terrorist attacks attributed to the group both falling in 2019.

However, the decrease in ISIL's activity in the Middle East and North Africa did not reduce ISIL-affiliates' activities across the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where 27 countries experienced a terrorist attack.

More worryingly, far right extremism has surged over the last five years, with at least 35 attacks occurring every year. While attack numbers are low compared to other forms of terrorism, they have increased significantly. Since 2014, far-right extremist attacks in North America, Western Europe, and Oceania increased by 250 percent and deaths grew by 709 percent. In 2019, the Christchurch attacks, attributed to far-right extremism, killed 51 individuals.

Many factors are linked to increased terrorism, including high levels of group grievances and weak rule of law. The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to worsen the impact of terrorism, and present complex challenges for national and international CT responses.

Adapted from Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism Institute for Economics and Peace



**ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
INTO THE TERRORIST ATTACK
ON CHRISTCHURCH MOSQUES
ON 15 MARCH 2019**

**TE KŌMIHANA UIUI A TE WHAKAEKE
KAIWHAKATUMA I NGĀ WHARE
KŌRANA O ŌTAUTAHI I TE
15 O POUTŪ-TE-RANGI 2019**

The individual is a white Australian male who was 28 years old who displayed racist behaviour from a young age. His life experiences appear to have fuelled resentment and he became radicalised, forming extreme right-wing views about people he considered a threat. Eventually, he mobilised to violence.

The individual arrived in New Zealand on 17 August 2017. As an Australian, he was entitled to live in New Zealand. Shortly after arriving, he moved to Dunedin and from this time, his life was devoted to planning and preparing for the terrorist attack. We looked at his use of online platforms before and during the terrorist attack. We examined how he obtained a firearms licence and was legally able to acquire firearms and ammunition. We tracked how he trained for the terrorist attack, developing firearms expertise and working out at a gym and taking steroids to bulk up.

The individual had no close friends, avoided social situations and was socially isolated. He was financially independent and widely travelled. In his preparation and planning for the terrorist attack, he was methodical and single-minded. The individual could present well and conduct himself in a way that did not attract suspicion. He was not identified as someone who posed a threat.

[The individual] was convicted of terrorism, the murder of 51 people and attempted murder of 40 people. He is now serving a sentence of life imprisonment without parole.

Adapted from the findings of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch mosques on 15 March 2019

Observation 2: The world is rapidly changing and the threat changes with it. We need to understand and effectively adapt to those changes.

22. In 2021, we are confronted with a more complex global environment and a world that is markedly different and more contested, potentially poorer, more dangerous, and more disorderly. In the years following 2001, a period of relative collaborative consensus and cooperative norm setting ensued. CT concerns brought together international actors united in a common interest. However, CT and CVE have proven complex challenges, where success and failure exist simultaneously. Identifying what is needed, what works and where, why, and how, are continuous learning experiences. In the contemporary contested world,

where dynamic challenges including COVID-19, climate change, cybercrime and global power competition operate alongside violent extremism. This means resources are limited and its increasingly important to ensure scarce resources are used efficiently and effectively. CT must be viewed within this context. Failure to understand this contemporary environment is a significant risk that must be avoided.

23. Changes in the technological environment directly impact the global security environment. Failure to anticipate the use of passenger aircraft as weapons in the 9/11 attacks and ignoring the warning signs suggesting this ‘novel’ tactic, is a clear example of violent extremists’ capacity to adapt and exploit the modern world. The rapid expansion of the internet and social media platforms have multiplied violent extremists’ sphere of influence and operations. In the cyber domain, borders mean little and geography even less.

24. However, the tools and systems of the modern world can be used to counter the extremist narrative. To be successful, and to keep ahead of the most innovative extremists, collaboration is key to reducing their appeal and the impact of their messaging.

Violent extremism in the modern world: the internet and online extremism

Today, the Internet is no longer just one part of the spectrum of extremist activism – it has become a primary operational environment, in which political ideologies are realised, attacks planned, and social movements made.


While trends in online extremism are subject to constant and rapid evolution, there is no doubt that the Internet will remain of utmost importance to extremist causes across the ideological spectrum for decades to come – just as it will for everyone else that uses networked communication technologies. It cannot be inoculated from extremism: history shows that as technology improves, extremists will adapt their approaches to optimise the new operational environment and elude the measures working to under-mine them. While the menace they present cannot be eradicated, it can be mitigated through informed policy choices.

From Online Extremism: Research Trends in Internet Activism, Radicalization, and Counter-Strategies, 2020

Observation 3: The recurring root causes of terrorism and violent extremism can be better understood, identified, mitigated and reduced by effective, complementary and collaborative efforts.

25. Increased levels of terrorism and violent extremism are consistently linked to a recurring range of factors including local grievances, weak governance and rule of law, religious or ethnic tensions, corruption, social disenfranchisement and exclusion. Conflict remains a primary driver of terrorism. In 2019, 96 per cent of terrorism related deaths occurred in countries already in conflict.

26. Significant advances have been made in countering violent extremists and reducing terrorism’s impact, in the Middle East and our own region. Australia has significantly contributed to global, regional, bilateral, and national efforts to mitigate and reduce violent extremism’s root causes. Australia’s efforts take



account of our foreign policy objectives and seek to capitalise our relationships with international partners and their capabilities.

THE AUSTRALIAN APPROACH TO CT: AN INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

27. Australia pursues a single integrated strategy that seeks to enable a broad unity of effort towards the achievement of our national goals. Australia's CT and CVE approach has evolved over time and reflects the Lessons discussed above. Our national approach is inclusive. It engages stakeholders at all levels of government, Australia's international partners together with the community, civil society, academia, and the private sector.

28. Our strategy is guided by the following six principles:

- (i) protecting lives is the absolute priority;
- (ii) Australian governments and the community must face the challenge of terrorism together;
- (iii) terrorist acts are crimes that must be prosecuted through the criminal justice system;
- (iv) international partnerships are critical to preventing and responding to terrorism and violent extremism in Australia;
- (v) building community and national resilience is key to countering the threat; and
- (vi) Australia's CT arrangements need to reflect the changing threat environment.

Counter-Terrorism

29. CT incorporates all efforts to counter all forms of violent extremism and terrorism. Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy situates the terrorism threat in the global context and articulates what we're doing to counter it. What we are doing incorporates operational, governance, and jurisdictional arrangements that cover measures to prevent, prepare, respond, and recover from terrorist attacks. Countering terrorism leverages diplomatic, political, soft power, military, and economic elements. It incorporates government agencies ranging from law enforcement and defence to intelligence agencies. Equally important, it utilises the strengths and skills of private sector and community stakeholders. All these partners work together to prevent and mitigate terrorism.

Countering Violent Extremism

30. The Australian Government is committed to *preventing* violent extremism—that is, the use or support of violence to achieve ideological, religious, or political goals. CVE is a shared effort. Australia and our international partners work together to build resistance to all forms of violent extremism, whether religiously or ideologically motivated. Everyday agencies at all levels of government engage with communities, forming vital partnerships. The Australian Government's approach comprises four complementary streams of activity that seek to:

- (i) build strength in diversity and social participation;
- (ii) target work with vulnerable communities and institutions;
- (iii) address terrorist propaganda online; and

(iv) support diversion and de-radicalisation.

The Preparedness, Prevention, Response and Recovery (PPRR) Spectrum

31. Preparedness, prevention, response, recovery, and partnerships reinforce our strategic approach to CT/CVE domestically. They also shape and guide our international engagement. Underpinning these elements are partnerships which also serve to focus actions aimed at countering and reducing the threat. The five elements of the PPRR Spectrum are illustrated below:



Figure 1: PPRR Spectrum

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND AUSTRALIA'S CT EFFORT

Terrorism is a global challenge and we work closely with our international partners in the region and beyond. Australia is committed to strengthening international partnerships by recognising that we have the greatest impact when we work with our partners through coordinated regional and global action against terrorism.

Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy

32. Australia's CT approach recognises that terrorism and violent extremism are global problems with global solutions, and that strong international partners are critical to success. Australia's international engagement is diverse and multi-faceted. It is supported by an extensive and robust network of international partners who are critical to achieving our CT objectives. These international partners include government agencies and stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, and communities. Australia's international engagement is optimised when there is a *unity of effort* that delivers outcomes that complement and reinforce those of our many partners.

International engagement on CT

33. Australia's international CT engagement and objectives are mindful of Australia's foreign policy priorities and interests, and Australia's place on the global stage. In the 20 years since the 9/11 attacks and the Bali Bombings, Australia's CT objectives have evolved. Australia now faces the ongoing challenges of COVID and a world that is potentially poorer, more dangerous, and more disorderly. While Australia has long benefited from a rules-based international system and norms that have delivered stability, this is now increasingly contested by States and non-State actors. This reality reaffirms the need to carefully apply our finite resources and collaborate with partners to support each other in reducing the risks we face while maintaining a focused, high quality and effective CT effort.

34. Australia's foreign policy objectives are designed to advance Australia's prosperity, security, safety, and values. Australia's international engagement is based on commitment to the international rules-based order and a belief that we will be safer in a global order based on rules-based international system and norms that promote collective solutions to problems. This approach must continue to shape and drive our CT and CVE approach and efforts. Efforts that will ultimately secure Australia's prosperity and security.

CT international engagement: the big picture

35. Australia's CT international engagement focuses on achieving direct CT outcomes and delivers benefits and advantages across the PPRR Spectrum at the policy, strategic, operational, and tactical level. Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy influences our approach to international partners. Therefore, it is key that the strategy be widely understood.

36. The three observations, discussed above, require us to carefully review our engagement priorities and international partnerships and ensure they meet the needs of international engagement CT strategy, both now and into the future. The increasing IMVE threat, for example, demands that we re-examine our partners to ensure we are optimally networked to achieving our CT objectives.

Non-CT international engagement and actions can and do significantly contribute to Australia's CT and CVE outcomes

37. Not all of Australia's CT/CVE actions and initiatives are specifically focussed on CT or CVE but significantly contribute to CT/CVE outcomes by addressing the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism. Australia supports a multitude of development and governance programs which have a positive impact in countering terrorism and violent extremism and support our CT objectives of prevention and preparedness. It is essential that Australia continue to support these programs, particularly where they can achieve complementary CT/CVE objectives.

Foreign Affairs and Trade: Ministerial and Departmental responsibilities in Counter-Terrorism

38. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) have a range of responsibilities across the national CT framework, and for ensuring alignment between the Australia's foreign policy and broader Australian policy. DFAT is specifically assigned a range of CT-orientated responsibilities through the Australia New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee (ANZCTC) and its *National Counter-Terrorism Plan*. DFAT, led by the Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism and the Office of the Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, has lead responsibility for the Five-year International CT Engagement Plan.

The Role of the Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism and the Office of the Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism

39. The Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism coordinates Australia's international CT efforts by building international linkages and ensuring the valuable efforts of Australian Government agencies are internationally consistent, prioritised, well focused, and effective. The Ambassador leads negotiation of Australia's CT arrangements with partner countries and advises on international developments to ensure that Australia has access to international best practice. In performing these functions, the Ambassador closely collaborates with the Australia's CT Coordinator and the ANZCTC. In this manner, the Ambassador ensures that Australia's international engagement aligns with, and complements, Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Australia's broader foreign policy objectives.

40. The Office of the Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism (OCT) supports the CT Ambassador and all Australian Government agencies in their international engagements in support of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy. OCT performs an interface function across DFAT to ensure decision makers are accurately informed and support unified efforts that align with broader Australian foreign policy. OCT is the lead CT point of contact for international engagement in DFAT for all multilateral, regional, bilateral, and domestic stakeholders.

INTERNATIONAL CT ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND THE FIVE-YEAR INTERNATIONAL CT ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2022-2026

41. DFAT leads the planning and coordination of the Five-year International CT Engagement Plan (the Plan). As with all other CT efforts, this aligns with and supports the achievement of outcomes across the PPRR Spectrum. The Plan promotes Australia's CT interests through effective advocacy, cooperation, and capacity and capability building across each PPRR element.

42. The Plan's five-year timeframe mirrors the five-year horizon adopted in Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The Plan has four primary objectives:

Objective 1: Sustain, strengthen, deepen, and expand Australia's international counter-terrorism partnerships network.

Objective 2: Support and reinforce the achievement of national counter-terrorism objectives across the Preparedness, Prevention, Response and Recovery (PPRR) Spectrum.

Objective 3: Work with international partners and stakeholders to reduce the appeal, influence and effectiveness of terrorism and violent extremism.

Objective 4: Increase sharing and access to counter-terrorism information, best practice, and lessons with international partners.

43. The Plan is supported by more detailed Country Plans that identify key events and objectives by stakeholders out to 5 years. Progress against the Plan, and its Country Plans, will be assessed and reported to the ANZCTC.

Advocacy, cooperation, and capability and capacity building to 2026

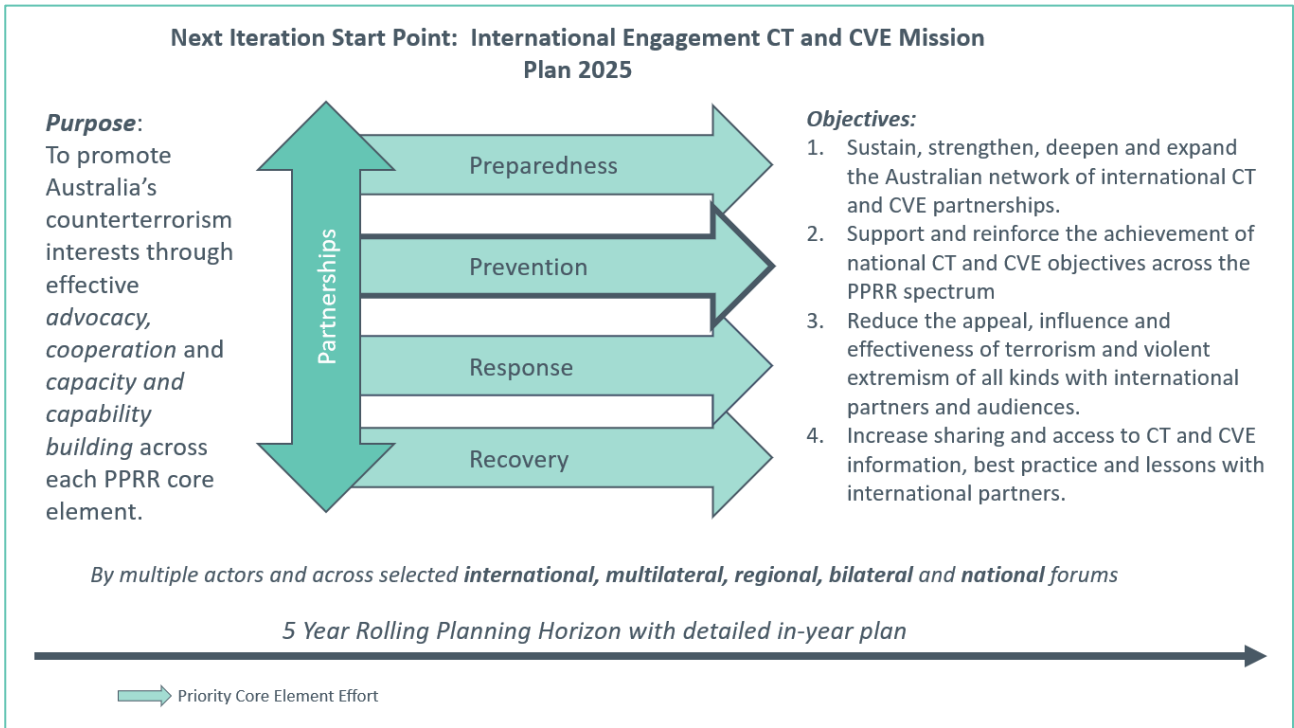


Figure 2: International Engagement CT and CVE Mission Plan 2025

44. Australia’s international engagement seeks to achieve outcomes across the PPRR Spectrum. Different agencies and stakeholders will prioritise different elements of the PPRR Spectrum at different points in time. However, advocacy, cooperation and capability and capacity building occur across all PPRR elements and are fundamental to achieving our desired international engagement objectives.

International Engagement across the PPRR Spectrum – Preparedness

45. **Preparedness** aims to ensure Australia is well prepared to prevent and, if needed, respond to terrorist incidents. Through agencies and stakeholders working in multilateral, regional, bilateral, and domestic forums, Australian efforts seek to raise CT/CVE awareness, and support international partners to strengthen their CT/CVE capacity and capabilities. The depth and robustness of our international network is key to ensuring our CT/CVE efforts, onshore and offshore, remain informed, supported, and agile to the many different possible threats and scenarios.

46. The following judgements will guide and focus our international engagement **preparedness** effort out to 2026:

- (a) To reduce our risk and ensure preparedness, Australia must build and deepen our relationships with international stakeholders. Such relationships are key to providing information and intelligence that increases our mutual awareness and understanding of threats and the factors that support the appeal of violent extremist ideologies which threaten our people and interests.

- (b) By maintaining a robust network of relationships with international partners, Australia will be prepared to respond to violent extremism incidents, wherever they occur and whenever they impact Australians and Australian interests.
- (c) Active, unified, all-informed engagement that supports and assists all stakeholders is fundamental to achieving our objectives under Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy.
- (d) Effective legal and policy tools including international instruments, sanctions, and other agreements, significantly contribute to our preparedness and enables us to mitigate the risk that violent extremists pose to our people and interests.
- (e) Continuously analysing and evaluating the threat posed by new and emerging extremist methods, including their misuse of technology and systems, is essential to adapting and shaping our proactive preparedness posture.

International Engagement across the PPRR Spectrum – Prevention

47. **Prevention** aims to divert people from radicalising to violent extremism. Given the international dimension of many threats and the reach of violent extremism ideologies, international partners are essential in reducing the appeal and influence of these ideologies. Key to prevention efforts is Objective 3 of the Mission Plan: work with international partners and stakeholders to reduce the appeal, influence and effectiveness of terrorism and violent extremism.

48. The following judgements guide and focus our international engagement prevention efforts out to 2026:

- (a) We will continue to target our efforts, and support our partners, to address the root causes and influences of violent extremism. Australia's foreign policy objectives and international engagement should seek complementary benefits that help reduce violent extremism.
- (b) We will prioritise research and knowledge on effective CVE to support evidence-based decision making and policy development. By strengthening knowledge and optimising available data, Australia can support the development of a shared understanding of what constitutes effective CVE, and how it can be measured and assessed.
- (c) We will sustain, deepen, and share a compelling CVE narrative in Australia and among the international community that reinforces tolerance, understanding, adherence to the rule of law and respect for human rights.
- (d) We actively support collaboration with international and domestic partners and stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, academia, and the community to learn from and share lessons on radicalisation and effective de-radicalisation across the full range of ideological and religious violent extremism. We must work to prioritise building capacity in this critical effort.
- (e) We encourage and support a focus on international collaboration efforts to combat the misuse of information technologies, and the rise of online radicalisation and violent extremism, by synchronising our efforts in partnership with efforts to protect critical infrastructure and maintain cyberspace freedoms.

- (f) Women and children play a critical role in prevention and preparedness efforts. It is imperative that Australia continues to expand its focus on the communities targeted by radicalisation, especially women and children. Australia's Women Peace and Security agenda therefore acts as an integral pillar to support and complement efforts to achieve our CT objectives with these critical audiences.
- (g) We will continue to work to actively build and adapt our multi-agency partners at all levels, internationally and domestically, to strengthen our understanding of the threats challenging Australia and our interests. By enhancing our understanding of the nexus between individual extremists and transnational organisations that threaten Australia and our region, we will be positioned to prevent and mitigate any threat they may pose.
- (h) We will pursue every opportunity to maintain and improve our collective efforts to limit the resources available to, and capacity of, violent extremists to expand their influence and conduct operations. Central to this are our counter threat financing efforts and work with international partners to deny essential resources to these groups and individuals.
- (i) It is timely to review the relationship between, and the advantages of, an appropriately synchronised approach to development and security policy. Related to this, we will consider how to optimally integrate and verify CVE outcomes into our development and program design.

49. For DFAT, **Prevention** is a key priority of the Mission Plan out to 2026. Prevention is also integral to addressing Observation 3: The recurring root causes of terrorism and violent extremism can be better understood, identified, mitigated, and reduced by effective, complementary, and collaborative efforts. Australia's network of international partnerships is critical to tackling the longer-term causes of radicalisation and to reducing the impact of the factors that inspire and foster violent extremism.

International Engagement across the PPRR Spectrum – Response

50. Efforts in the **response** element aim to ensure Australia is well-positioned to respond immediately to an incident or threat. Whether an incident occurs in Australia or offshore, there is often an international dimension. Vital leverage and support can be sourced directly from our international partners, as we are similarly positioned to provide them with support. This close collaboration ranging from practical, day-to-day work through to longer-term policy development helps us understand and counter potential threats well beyond Australia. Through these supportive partnerships, we ensure that we remain 'remain vigilant and continually adapt'.

51. The following judgements guide and focus our international engagement response efforts out to 2026:

- (a) The strength of Australia's relationships with partner countries underpins our capacity to achieve our CT objectives and to help Australians in crisis. Our CT efforts should work to complement and align with our wider comprehensive interactions with our allies, partners, and friends.
- (b) Maintaining close and trusted relationships with international CT stakeholders will support rapid and effective Australian responses across the globe. We assign a leading priority to our Southeast Asian regional partners that focuses on building and sustaining diverse multi-agency relationships in policy development, operational planning, and crisis response. The partners are diverse and include stakeholders from local, national, and multilateral institutions as well as the private sector, academia, and civil society.

- (c) The threat can strike in remote locations and in unexpected ways. Our global network and the depth and breadth of our partnerships are often key to enabling effective responses.

52. Under the National Counter-Terrorism Plan, DFAT's specific response-related responsibilities include crisis management, oversight and coordination of international response arrangements and leading/coordinating interactions with international partner countries. By the end of 2023 DFAT will review, test and update arrangements detailed in this Plan, including reviewing, and updating the *International Counter Terrorism Handbook 2014*.

International Engagement across the PPRR Spectrum – Recovery

53. **Recovery** focusses on building a strong and resilient community and economy. International engagement links Australia to communities abroad and offers opportunities to build, support and share resilience experiences and strategies with key partners. Aligned with Objective 4 (increase sharing and access to CT information, best practice, and lessons with international partners), recovery efforts aim to support social cohesion, build awareness, consolidate, and share lessons learned across our international network. Recovery efforts also seek to identify gaps and vulnerabilities that are targeted towards improving and strengthening our work.

54. Australia can make direct contributions by:

- (a) sharing and building lessons and best practice globally;
- (b) supporting and enabling collective efforts to analyse and prepare for new and emerging threats; and
- (c) directly and indirectly supporting the development of partners' understanding, resilience and recovery capacity.

55. The following judgement guides and focuses our international engagement **recovery** effort out to 2026:

- (a) Sharing lessons across the widest set of international stakeholders assists all to learn from others' experiences.
- (b) Focussing on collective and collaborative learning and analysis is key to increasing our understanding and awareness of threats.
- (c) Disseminating best practice builds on this collective understanding and works towards identifying tools to prevent and counter the rise and appeal of violent extremism.

MULTILATERAL, REGIONAL, BILATERAL AND DOMESTIC FORUMS: EVOLUTION OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

56. Australia has a strong and diverse network of partners engaged through a variety of multilateral, regional, bilateral, and domestic forums. The development of this network has been central to improving Australia's CT/CVE understanding and mitigation strategies. Over time, the partnerships have evolved and deepened, and a broad range of issues addressed using a multi-faceted approach across domestic, bilateral, regional, and multilateral forums. This should continue. Our relationships with our key regional and likeminded partners have advanced and strengthened significantly to a point where we operate hand in glove with our partners.

57. While Australia's involvement in these forums must continue, it is critical to ensure that they are purposefully used to address emerging issues and threats. The evolution of these forums should be consistent with our national principles-based approach to foreign policy. Where new groupings are needed, or emerging issues addressed, we will advocate with our partners for these changes. We will continue to actively support and protect these forums that enable us to advocate, cooperate and build capacity and capability consistent with our objectives, while always respecting the sovereignty and interests of our partners.

Geographic Priorities in the context of a global threat

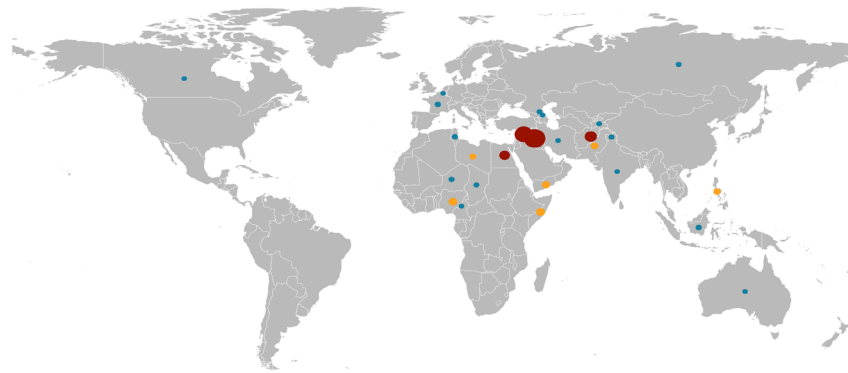
58. Our priority is firmly centred on threats to Australia and Australians, and in countering terrorism and violent extremism. While we are primarily focused on the Indo-Pacific region, we recognise the enduring character of terrorist and violent extremism threats, and their capacity to traverse borders. We acknowledge the expansion of extremist groups and their influence globally, for example, the increasing appeal of ISIS and its affiliates in Africa. Consequently, we will prioritise understanding the nexus between geographical areas, violent extremist groups and across borders.

59. While our focus and priorities remain firmly in the Indo-Pacific (especially Southeast Asia), in collaboration with our partners we will actively seek to understand, influence, and reduce violent extremism globally. Collaboration with our partners, remains critical to extending the range and options we can employ to conduct effective CT/CVE efforts and other outcomes that have an indirect benefit to CT/CVE. This reinforces our fundamental belief that *collective responses* are primary to solving problems that cannot be solved by countries acting alone. We will continue to build and grow our networks to mitigate and protect ourselves from extremist threats and networks.

IS attacks worldwide

Attacks reported by IS since January 2018, per country

● 0-10 ● 10-100 ● 100-2000



Source: BBC Monitoring

BBC

The CT International Engagement Narrative

60. The CT International Engagement Narrative set out in the Executive Summary succinctly outlines to our international partners Australia's approach to countering terrorism and the appeal of violent extremists.

Evaluation and Assessment

61. Measuring the effectiveness and performance of Australia's international engagement is a priority. The four international engagement objectives set the target for our efforts and are the markers against which our collective efforts will be judged. OCT will assess and evaluate the extent our objectives have been achieved by stakeholder and PPRR element. Our assessment will be based on information obtained from multiple sources including Posts, intelligence, policy, operational and international agencies, organisations and individuals.

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CONCLUSION

First of all, it is much easier after the event to sort the relevant from the irrelevant signals. After the event, of course, a signal is always crystal clear; we can now see what disaster it was signalling since the disaster has occurred. But before the event it is obscure and pregnant with conflicting meanings.

Pearl Harbour: Warning and Decision, Roberta Wohlstetter

62. Wohlstetter's comment derives from her analysis of the 1941 Pearl Harbour attack. The inclusion of this quote in the 9/11 Commission Report reflects the ongoing relevance of her comments today. It is an enduring warning against complacency and the importance of being focused. It is a reminder of the complexity of the real world and the need to remain vigilant, open minded and forward looking when dealing with the threat posed by violent extremism. Twenty years on from September 11 and the Bali Bombings, it is timely to recommit ourselves to countering the threat and appeal of violent extremism. Our first duty – to do everything possible to keep Australians safe and protect our freedoms, our way of life and our values – demands nothing less.

63. Based on our hard-won enduring lessons and our observations on future challenges, DFAT will adopt an approach to CT that:

- (a) is aligned with achieving our broader foreign policy objectives;
- (b) is integrated with Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy;
- (c) is cognisant of the many challenges we face;
- (d) prioritises our relationships with our international partners and friends;
- (e) seeks a consistent unity of effort in our approach with our partners in pursuit of our common objectives and specific goals; and
- (f) is mindful of all elements of our national power and influence.

64. In pursuit of our four international engagement objectives, DFAT will:

- (a) prioritise the Prevention element of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy out to 2026;
- (b) actively support Australian agencies to achieve their objectives across the CT/CVE elements; and
- (c) review, test and update arrangements under the Response element of the National Counter-Terrorism Plan by the end of 2023.