



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee report:
Right Wing Extremist Movements in Australia

MARCH 2026

Introduction

The Government thanks the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee for its review into right wing extremist movements in Australia.

Australia's security environment is degrading. On 5 August 2024, the National Terrorism Threat Level was raised from POSSIBLE to PROBABLE – and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation assesses there is a greater than 50 per cent chance of an onshore attack or attack planning in the next 12 months. More Australians are being radicalised, and radicalised quickly, embracing an increasingly diverse range of extreme ideologies and willing to use violence to advance their cause. This was demonstrated by the horrific antisemitic terrorist attack at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025. The Government's thoughts remain with the families and friends of the 15 people who lost their lives. The alleged attempted bombing of a First Nations rally in Perth on 26 January further highlights the threats facing Australians.

The Australian Government is committed to countering violent extremism in all its forms. We have developed deep relationships with state and territory partners, international partners, academia and industry to prevent and respond to violent extremism and ensure a safer Australia. This commitment and the importance of wide-ranging partnerships is reflected in *A Safer Australia - Australia's Counter-Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy 2025*, which was released on 17 January 2025.

A key focus of the Government's effort is building resilience within our communities to guard against violent extremism and providing early support services to those who are at risk. This requires our law enforcement and security agencies to work hand in hand with health, social and community services.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The committee recommends that the Australian Government undertake periodic evaluation of Australian de-radicalisation and countering violent extremism programs. That evaluation should involve experts engaged in those programs, law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and organisations that research countering violent extremism and de-radicalisation. Any such periodic review should draw upon the experience both in Australia and overseas in other liberal democracies.

Response: The Australian Government **agrees** to this recommendation.

The Australian Government has established a nationally coordinated expert evaluation capability that will measure the effectiveness of countering violent extremism (CVE) intervention programs delivered in all states and territories. This national evaluation is underway and will ensure intervention programs are continually reviewed and refined, in light of the changing environment, developments in research and internationally recognised best practice.

Recommendation 2: The committee recommends that the Australian government develops a national framework for engaging with young people to deter them from radical extremism. That framework should provide best practice guidance to the states and territories and the broader civic community on how to engage with young people to:

- **assist them in identifying harmful ideologies promoting violent extremism;**
- **deter them from adopting harmful ideologies promoting violent extremism; and**
- **provide them with the means to engage with the wider community in a socially positive way**

Response: The Australian Government **agrees** to this recommendation.

A Safer Australia - Australia's Counter-Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy 2025 sets out the Australian Government's plans to engage young people, and youth experts, in its efforts to address youth radicalisation. This takes a whole-of-sector approach, drawing together education, social services, law enforcement and other key bodies across the country.

The Australian Government has established the Youth Advisory Council for A Safer Australia (YACSA) to incorporate youth perspectives into policies and programs which aim to disengage young people from violent extremism. The YACSA was appointed on 16 July 2025 and is made up of 15 young people aged 16-24. The YACSA will provide feedback on materials, initiatives, and resources that support youth prevention efforts, ensuring they reach and resonate with young people.

The YACSA will work closely with the Youth and Mental Health Advisory Group, an existing group of youth experts in CVE, mental health and education, to provide advice to the Government on how to improve policy responses to issues related to violent extremism. This includes providing advice on the whole system, from identifying early signs and risk factors to becoming radicalised to violence to providing support to a community after a violent extremist event. The Youth and Mental Health Advisory Group will also continue to be a community of practice by sharing case studies, assessing capabilities and gaps in programs,

consolidating evidence on best practice, and uplifting capabilities to engage with youth clients and clients with mental health and neurodivergence.

Recommendation 3: The committee recommends that the Australian government conducts research into violent extremism in the online environment, including on:

- social media platforms;
- gaming platforms; and
- gaming-adjacent platforms.

That research should examine how those platforms may be used by extremist actors to spread propaganda and recruit members, particularly in relation to young people.

Response: The Australian Government **agrees** to this recommendation.

The Australian Government will continue reviewing existing research into violent extremism in the online environment to identify any gaps and inform future research priorities.

The Australian Government's commissioned research program includes analysis of violent extremism networks and behaviours in the online environment, the impacts of artificial intelligence amplified misinformation, and policy responses to youth vulnerabilities and interventions.

Recommendation 4: The committee recommends that the Office of the eSafety Commissioner engages with stakeholders in relation to the development of best practice guidelines in relation to transparent and independent assurance measures to verify that social media platforms are enforcing terms of service to exclude harmful extremist content.

Response: The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

Under the *Online Safety Act* and subordinate legislation and codes, there are a number of expectations or obligations on social media services, as well as other services, to enforce their terms of service, including in relation to harmful extremist content.

The Government's Basic Online Safety Expectations establish expectations that providers of certain services – including social media services – take reasonable steps to ensure that end-users are able to use the service in a safe manner, minimise material that depicts abhorrent violent conduct, ensure that penalties for breaches of their terms of use are enforced against all accounts held by those end-users and ensure they have terms of use, policies and procedures in relation to the safety of end-users as well as procedures for reports and complaints. These are supported by mechanisms for the eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) to require information from service providers to promote transparency and accountability, with reports published on the [eSafety website](#). eSafety published a transparency report focusing on terrorism and violent extremism in March 2025.

The *Online Safety Act* also provides for the development of mandatory industry codes and standards for illegal and restricted content. The Unlawful Materials codes and standards have been developed and are in force. The codes and standards establish obligations relating to Class 1A and Class 1B material (which includes pro-terror material and extreme crime and violence material). The relevant codes and standards include requirements to enforce their

terms of service in relation to Class 1A and 1B material. The maximum civil penalty for not complying with the codes and standards is \$49.5 million. Certain social media services are required to provide annual compliance reports to eSafety on their compliance with the code, and eSafety has a range of other information-gathering and investigations powers across the codes and standards to investigate potential non-compliance.

eSafety also routinely engages with stakeholders in relation to the development of good practice guidance, particularly to promote the Safety-by-Design initiative. This initiative was created based on extensive stakeholder consultation and provides industry with a set of principles and guidance to incorporate, assess and enhance user safety. To support implementation of the Safety-by-Design principles, eSafety developed assessment tools for enterprise and start-up tech companies. The tools act as a safety ‘health check’ and learning resources and include good practice examples.

Recommendation 5: The committee recommends the Australian government considers introducing legislation that would enable Australian law enforcement and intelligence agencies to access encrypted communications if there is a well-founded threat to national security and a warrant has been issued by a judicial officer to access those communications.

Response: The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

The *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979* provides agencies with powers to lawfully access communications in limited situations, under warrant and the *Telecommunications Act 1997* provides a framework for agencies to seek assistance from industry.

The Australian Government continues to engage collaboratively with technology companies to safeguard privacy, strengthen cybersecurity and protect users against technology-enabled crime. The Government is committed to ensuring user and public safety while maintaining privacy and cyber security—including through the use of strong encryption and other innovative technology.

The Australian Government will also continue to work in partnership with technology companies to maintain tightly controlled lawful access to communications, under warrant, which is vital to the investigation and prosecution of serious crimes including terrorism, hate crimes and other violent extremist offending, and protecting the safety of our citizens.

Recommendation 6: The committee recommends the Australian government adopts a nationally consistent definition of what constitutes a hate crime and consider establishing a national hate crimes database.

Response: The Australian Government **agrees-in-principle** to this recommendation.

On 23 December 2025, the Australian Government launched the first phase of the National Hate Crimes and Incidents Database, which provides national information on individuals charged with offences under hate crimes legislation in all Australian jurisdictions.

On 18 December 2025, the Australian Government published the ‘*Eliminating Antisemitism*’ response to the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism’s ‘*Plan to Combat Antisemitism*’ and

committed to providing states and territories resources to accelerate the development of the National Hate Crimes and Incidents Database.

The Commonwealth is leading a working group with state and territory representatives to accelerate the database. Through this work the Government will consider a nationally consistent definition of what constitutes a hate crime.

The *Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism (Criminal and Migration Laws) Act 2026* passed the Parliament on 20 January 2026. The Act established a new regime to list groups that advocate for, or engage in, conduct constituting a hate crime, with offences for individuals participating in certain activities with these prohibited hate groups. For the purpose of this framework, 'hate crime' is defined in s 114A.3 of the Criminal Code to include a specific set of Commonwealth, state and territory offences.

Greens additional recommendations

Recommendation 1: That responses to right wing extremism and white supremacy be intersectional, explicitly anti-racist and shaped by targeted communities.

Response: The Australian Government **agrees** to this recommendation.

The Australian Government is committed to addressing ideologically motivated violent extremism in a way that reflects the diversity of Australian communities and builds community cohesion. This means including diverse perspectives in the development and implementation of CVE programs and maintaining a community-centred approach to addressing radicalisation to violent extremism.

Recommendation 2: That the Australian Government publicly commit to implementing the recommendations of the Christchurch Call.

Response: The Australian Government **notes** the recommendation, as this has already occurred.

The Australian Government joined the Christchurch Call to Action on 15 May 2019, the same day it was founded by the Governments of France and New Zealand. Joining the Call included public commitment to the 25 commitments of the Call, of which five pertain to governments and 13 are collective commitments. The seven commitments for online service providers are not for the Australian Government to implement.

Then, as now, the Australian Government remains committed to the Call's aims to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online and establishing a free, open and secure internet. The Australian Government has taken action on all government commitments and collective commitments. The Australian Government's commitment to the Christchurch Call has continued through its restructure to a non-governmental organisation in July 2024.

Recommendation 3: That anti-racism training be mandated for all MPs and their staff.

Response: The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

The *Parliamentary Workplace Support Service Act 2023* gives the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service a function to provide education on, and to inform parliamentarians and their

staff about, matters relating to the employment of staff under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* and maintaining safe and respectful workplaces.

The Parliamentary Workplace Support Service Chief Executive Officer may, by legislative instrument, determine a specified education or training program for parliamentarians and their staff is mandatory where certain conditions set out in the legislation are met.

Recommendation 4: That guidelines are developed for media that are grounded in an anti-racist approach to reporting and to minimise harm from sensationalist reporting.

Response: The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

A balanced, robust and independent news media sector is critical to Australian society and the operation of our democratic systems and institutions. Reflecting the importance of a free media, our regulatory arrangements enable industry to take the lead in developing and overseeing content standards that reflect community standards.

Australia's print and online news media operates under a self-regulatory framework. Industry bodies, such as the Australian Press Council (APC), are responsible for assessing complaints regarding its members. Several media organisations have their own internal complaints handling processes. The APC has developed Advisory Guidelines on particular issues. These Advisory Guidelines provide additional information and resources on best practice reporting, including in relation to the reporting of religion, ethnicity and race.

In addition, news content that is provided via broadcasting services in Australia is regulated under a co-regulatory framework. This framework is premised on industry codes of practice that are developed by relevant industry sectors and registered by the Australian Communications and Media Authority under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*. These codes of practice include procedures for dealing with complaints.

Recommendation 5: That the Australian Government commit to fully funding and implementing the National Anti-Racism Framework.

Response: The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Government believes that there is no place in Australia for racism or discrimination of any kind.

The Government is taking a number of actions as part of its multifaceted approach to addressing complex experiences of racism in the community, with initiatives already underway across a range of portfolios that align with the National Anti-Racism Framework's recommendations. This includes appointing the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism and Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia. The Government has adopted the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism's Plan to Combat Antisemitism and will continue to work through the implementation of the 13 recommendations in consultation with the Australian Jewish community and the Special Envoy. The Government is also carefully considering the Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia's report.

The Government has also passed legislation to strengthen offences for urging force or violence against groups or members of groups and creating new offences for threatening force or violence against groups or members of groups.

In response to the antisemitic terrorist attack at Bondi Beach, the Parliament passed the *Combating Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism (Criminal and Migration Laws) Act 2026* on 20 January 2026. The Act increased penalties for hate crime offences, created aggravated sentencing factors for hate-motivated conduct, and introduced new aggravated offences targeting leaders who promote violence and adults who radicalise children. The Act also established a new regime to list groups that advocate for, or engage in, conduct constituting a hate crime, with offences for individuals participating in certain activities with these prohibited hate groups. In addition, the Act included reforms to Australia's migration laws to improve community safety by enabling the Minister for Home Affairs to refuse to grant, or to cancel a visa, on the basis of hate motivated conduct and offences relating to the spread of hatred and extremism.

Recommendation 6: That the Australian Government establish a standalone anti-racism portfolio.

Response: The Australian Government **does not agree** to this recommendation.

The Government believes that racism and discrimination are unacceptable. All parts of Government have an important role in tackling racism to ensure that everyone can participate in Australia's democratic, social and economic life. The Government considers it important that all public servants foster an understanding and appreciation of the human rights implications of policy and service delivery across government.

Current approaches, where portfolios collaborate across government while developing their own specific expertise, are intended to embed practices that ensure the equity and dignity of all Australians are considered at all stages of decision-making.

Recommendation 7: That Parliament conduct a public inquiry to review standing orders and any changes to their language and interpretation in order to eliminate racist, exclusionary and discriminatory behaviour.

Response: The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation as it is a matter for the Parliament.

Recommendation 8: That technology companies be held accountable for the proliferation of hate on their platforms through:

- **a ban on the targeting, harvesting and selling of young people's data**
- **a Digital Duty of Care on tech platforms**
- **limiting the toxicity of algorithms and extreme content**
- **stopping the monetisation and profit from hate**

Response: The Australian Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Government has committed to amend the *Online Safety Act 2021* to introduce a statutory duty of care on digital platforms, placing the onus on them to better prevent online harms. Moving towards broader systems-based regulation that ensures digital platforms take responsibility for minimising harm on their services is a key recommendation of the independent statutory review of the *Online Safety Act* undertaken in 2024 by Ms Delia Rickard PSM.

The review of the *Online Safety Act* recommended that, under a duty of care, digital platforms be required to take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harms on their platforms and services, including the proliferation of hate. These requirements to prevent foreseeable harms would extend to digital platforms' systems and processes, including the algorithms for social media services that determine which content is displayed and how it is displayed. It is also recommended that such requirements be underpinned by risk assessment and risk mitigation, and informed by safety-by-design principles.

In addition, the Government has committed to updating the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) for the digital age. The *Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024* included a requirement for the Information Commissioner to develop a Children's Online Privacy Code, and work is underway towards a second tranche of reform. While the second tranche of reform is yet to be finalised, relevant measures may include a proposal from the Privacy Act Review to prohibit entities from targeting and direct marketing to children (unless it is in the best interests of the child) and prohibit entities from trading in the personal information of children.

Recommendation 9: That developing strategies to make social media safer for young people must genuinely engage and involve young people themselves.

Response: The Australian Government **agrees** to this recommendation.

Engagement with young people who use social media is essential to developing strategies which are practical and effective, and the Government is committed to providing young people with the opportunity to inform regulations and policies that affect them.

Notably, the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* passed Parliament on 29 November 2024. It introduces a minimum age of 16 years to have an account on age-restricted social media platforms, protecting young Australians at a critical stage of their development. The Government consulted widely with young people, parents and carers, experts and community groups and used these insights to inform the legislation. Consultation included three roundtables dedicated to directly engaging young people and seeking their input and feedback on the issue of a social media minimum age.

In addition, the eSafety Commissioner administers the eSafety Youth Council (the Council). The Council gives young people, aged 13 to 24 years, an avenue to influence issues that matter most to them, by engaging in meaningful discussion and sharing their knowledge and experiences of online safety with eSafety. The Council was established in 2022 and offers an opportunity to share insights for policy and program design on online safety issues now and into the future. The Council is made up of young people who have a range of lived experiences, come from various places across Australia and represent different gender identities and cultures. eSafety seeks new members for the Council every two years.

As mentioned above, the *Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024* legislates a requirement for the Information Commissioner to develop and register a Children's Online Privacy Code that would apply to social media and other internet services likely to be accessed by children. The Information Commissioner is developing the Code and has already undertaken extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders, including children, young people, parents, child development experts, child welfare advocates, industry and the eSafety Commissioner.

These measures align with key national strategies such as Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2023, which emphasises embedding the voices and lived experience of children in program and policy design.

In addition, the *Combating Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism (Criminal and Migration Laws) Act 2026* created a new aggravated offence for adults who radicalise children. Imposing higher penalties on those who target children reflects the gravity of this conduct and sends a clear message that targeting children for violent extremism attracts serious criminal penalties.