JOINT PRESS RELEASE

THE HON. TONY ABBOTT MP, PRIME MINISTER
SENATOR THE HON. GEORGE BRANDIS QC, ATTORNEY-GENERAL

COUNTER-TERRORISM MEASURES FOR A SAFER AUSTRALIA

To lessen the terrorist threat at home and abroad, the Government will invest more than $64 million in measures to counter violent extremism and radicalisation.

Recent images of brutal killings in Syria and the brazen presence of Australian citizens amongst the foreign-fighters highlights the need for action to counter radicalisation.

The ISIL movement threatens all who don’t share its evil brand of violent extremism.

There are hundreds of Westerners fighting with extremist groups such as ISIL – including at least 60 Australians in Syria and Iraq, and about 100 facilitators in Australia. That means we could be confronting more potential home-grown terrorists than ever before.

As Team Australia, we need to support community efforts to prevent young Australians being radicalised and leaving Australia to join extremists overseas, and to ensure those who return do not become involved in terrorist activity here.

The best defence against radicalisation is through well-informed and well equipped families, communities and institutions. As such, local engagement is at the heart of many of these measures.

As part of its $630 million Counter-Terrorism package the Government will invest:

- $13.4 million to strengthen community engagement programmes in Australia with an emphasis on preventing young Australians from becoming involved with extremist groups;
- $6.2 million to establish a new Australian Federal Police Community Diversion and Monitoring Team for returning foreign fighters and those who support them;
- $32.7 million for a multi-agency national disruption group to investigate, prosecute and disrupt foreign fighters and their supporters; and
- $11.8 million for the Australian Federal Police to bolster its ability to respond to the threat of foreign fighters at home and abroad including local and regional Liaison Officers and two new investigative teams to help reduce the threat of extremists leaving Australia.

This investment will help combat home-grown terrorism and deter Australians from joining overseas terrorist activities.
We will develop activities to better understand and address radicalisation and increase awareness of the dangers of involvement with extremists in foreign conflicts.

In consultation with the community, packages will be developed to address the particular requirements of young Australians at risk and may include youth diversion activities, healthcare, mentoring, employment and educational pathway support and counselling.

There will be referral and support processes for individuals at risk to help them disengage from their activities and we will combat online radicalisation with education programmes and by working with communities, industry and overseas partners.

The Government has been heartened by the strong support shown by local Islamic leaders for action against radicalisation and extremism.

As Prime Minister, I emphasised to them that the Government’s measures are not directed against any particular community or religion; they’re directed against terrorists and potential terrorists.

We will continue to consult with communities throughout this process.

More information about work to counter violent extremism is available at www.livingsafetogther.gov.au

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