

# TRANSCRIPT

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

### Inquiry into Extremism in Victoria

Melbourne—Tuesday, 14 June 2022

#### SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Ms Nina Taylor—Deputy Chair	Mr Mark Gepp
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Ms Fiona Patten—Chair	Ms Tania Maxwell
Dr Tien Kieu—Deputy Chair	Mr Craig Ondarchie
Ms Cathrine Burnett-Wake	Ms Nina Taylor
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**WITNESSES** (via videoconference)

Professor Mark Nolan, Group Director,

Dr Kristy Campion, Research Lead on Extremism,

Mr Douglas Allan,

Dr Emma Colvin,

Dr Ruth Delaforce, and

Dr Levi West, Threats to Australian Domestic Security Research Group, Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security, Charles Sturt University.

**The CHAIR:** Good afternoon, everyone. I declare open the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee's public hearing for the Inquiry into Extremism in Victoria. All mobile phones should now be turned to silent, please.

I would like to begin by respectfully acknowledging the traditional custodians of the Wurundjeri land which I am joining you from on this online hearing today and the various First Nations lands that we are all joining from online today and pay my respects to their ancestors, elders and families past and present and Aboriginal elders of other communities who may be here today.

By way of introduction, I am Samantha Ratnam, and I will be chairing the session this afternoon. We are joined by other committee members, including our Deputy Chair, Ms Nina Taylor; Dr Matthew Bach; and Ms Cathrine Burnett-Wake. We have another committee member, Ms Tania Maxwell, who has had to come in and out of hearings, so she might join us somewhere part way through this hearing this afternoon.

I will just explain parliamentary privilege and the Hansard transcript before we begin. All evidence taken is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and further subject to the provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information you provide during the hearing is protected by law. You are protected against any action for what you say during this hearing, but if you go elsewhere and repeat the same things those comments may not be protected by this privilege. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament.

All evidence is being recorded. You will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearing. Transcripts will ultimately be made public and published on the committee's website.

For the Hansard record, can you please state your name and any organisation that you are appearing on behalf of. I welcome, at that point, the Threats to Australian Domestic Security Research Group from Charles Sturt University. If I can please ask each of you to state your name and the organisation you are representing before we move to the opening statement. Dr Campion, can I start with you?

**Dr CAMPION:** Thank you. Yes. Dr Kristy Campion, Charles Sturt University.

**The CHAIR:** Feel free to jump in, folks.

**Prof. NOLAN:** Professor Mark Nolan, Charles Sturt University.

**The CHAIR:** Welcome.

**Dr WEST:** Dr Levi West, Charles Sturt University.

**The CHAIR:** Welcome.

**Dr COLVIN:** Dr Emma Colvin, Charles Sturt University.

**Dr DELAFORCE:** Dr Ruth Delaforce, Charles Sturt University.

**Mr ALLAN:** Douglas Allan, Charles Sturt University.

**The CHAIR:** Welcome, everyone. Thank you once again for your time this afternoon and for your submission to the inquiry as well. I now invite you to make an opening statement of up to 10 minutes, and I understand you will share a presentation as well, after which we will open it up to the committee for questions and discussion. So on that note I will hand over to Dr Campion.

### **Visual presentation.**

**Dr CAMPION:** Thank you so much for that introduction. On behalf of the threats to Australian domestic security team at Charles Sturt University I would like to acknowledge the Wiradjuri, Ngannawal, Gundungarra and Birpai people of Australia, who are the traditional owners and custodians of lands on which CSU campuses are located and pay respect to elders past and present.

So in the opening comments to our submission I have a couple of points of note, the first being that we would like to thank the committee for this opportunity to contribute to the inquiry both in writing and in this hearing as well. We would also like to thank the team behind the committee, because they have been a fantastic support over the course of this endeavour. Finally, I would just like to highlight that we are the threats to the domestic security team, and as a consequence of that our submission is looking at the extreme right specifically. We are security scholars. We do not tend to dabble in mainstream right-wing affairs or the far right typically. So just sort of coaching that what I am about to say will be coming from that ambit of expertise and is not necessarily reflective of all contexts inside and outside of that.

The first thing is we are very lucky to have most of our contributors here today, as noted already. A couple of things: first, Dr Jamie Ferrill and Associate Professor Nick O'Brien could not make it, so if it is to the satisfaction of the committee I am happy to be a conduit for any questions that may arise and pass them to those respective experts. But otherwise, everyone else is here and we are really happy to expand or illuminate things we might have written on in our submission.

I briefly want to recap our submission. It was 56 pages. It was pretty long and obviously there are only certain points that we can capture in this 10-minute overview. They can be divided four ways: mostly the domestic threat in Victoria, the overlap of that domestic threat with transnational threats, the risks that might be considered by the committee and also some possible responses. As I go through this, I am going to be trying to point you towards the relevant expert who might be able to field questions on this as we go.

First, I think the consensus of our submission is that the threat of the extreme right specifically in the Victorian context is a real threat and it is an enduring threat. Not only is it a series of subcultures that have and continue to target Victoria's multicultural communities but those targets often transcend multicultural communities as well. I am specifically referring here to the targeting of LGBTIQ persons but also public figures associated with the political left. As we illustrated in our written submission, this is a very common part of the extreme-right modus operandi. This is also a very strong part of their different ideologies and so in essence when it comes to such targeting, particularly the targeting of representatives of the government such as politicians, law enforcement and civil figures, this is well established in the extreme right and many of them perceive this and the use of violence against such representatives as being ideologically valid. This is where you start seeing hit lists, kill lists and assassination plots, but also impersonation plots arise in connection with that.

One of the things that Dr Ferrill and I observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and as published in a paper linked to our submission, is that the COVID-19 context really allowed for the expansion of extreme right wing narratives in Australia specifically and obviously in Victoria as an extension of that. While a lot of attention has focused on the diversification of ideology that appeared during that period, we actually think the more dangerous part is the buttressing of existing narratives, because that is the buttressing of existing narratives that suggest that representatives of the government, elements of civil society and multicultural communities and others are legitimate and valid targets for violence. We have seen the threat manifest in a couple of ways, but primarily what we are concerned with here is the violent threat. Obviously we did attach our dataset to our submission, and I do not have the time to go into that in detail but in essence in the Victorian context there have been a number of severe incidents of violence against multicultural communities but also against LGBTIQ, the political left and others.

Victoria was quite obviously a stand-out for being the first state to successfully prosecute a right-wing extremist for terrorism Act offences and that was in association with a plot targeting public figures associated with the

political left. That was in 2016. But since that time we have seen that trend continue globally, so this is something that is very well established and that we should continue to expect. The other side of it is that there have been a number of arrests in recent years around Australia related to organisations that do have a presence in Victoria and these individuals have been subject to charges that often relate to a preparation to commit terrorist Act offences or weapons cache offences. So these sorts of activities indicate to us not only the capability for violence by the extreme right but also the intent for violence. That intent is both domestic and transnational in that these individuals tend to inhabit these ideological ecosystems. This is something Dr Levi West might talk to later on in this if you have questions, particularly regarding how manifestos have become important currency for the communication of ideology but also as a manifestation of what I refer to as entitative milieus, which is that you can have people that are not necessarily part of an organisation—they might be fringe dwellers, they might be outsiders—but nonetheless feel like they are part of it, that they are part of this global community, a global community that supports, endorses and encourages violence. So this is where glorification comes into it, and attack rationalisation, in connection with that ecosystem, the ideology and those preparatory acts. One of the things we have highlighted, while we are commending the leadership coming out of Victoria at the minute, is also—just flagging—that it is quite obviously a borderless threat and we recognise there is only so much Victoria can do.

Some of our colleagues have highlighted some of the risks that they are concerned with beyond that borderlessness. One of them is highlighted by Dr Emma Colvin with respect to the increasing radicalisation and targeting of youth by extreme right wing groups and movements, and the other was highlighted by Dr Ruth Delaforce with respect to access to firearms, both legally and illegally, which we know has been an integral part of recent attacks by right-wing extremists around the world. So there are some responses that we have suggested with respect to that. One of them is an integrated national database that draws on some of those incredibly important advocacy groups, such as you have had talking here today, federal services agencies and state-based agencies as well. This, we are hoping, will create a more informed picture that can actually inform policy and practice both in Victoria and beyond.

One of the outcomes highlighted by Dr Jamie Ferrill is more public-private cooperation, and this relates to what Dr Levi West was saying as well about stemming the transmission of extreme ideological content online in the wake of an attack.

Dr Emma Colvin of course highlighted that when it comes to youth radicalisation this is something that might be better managed within a child protection response framework. So this is largely to avoid the pathologising or criminalising of the child and to risk further alienation.

Dr Ruth Delaforce has given us incredible work on a national framework for firearms regulation, particularly with respect to harmonisation. One of the other things I would flag that is important from her submission is the regulation of private security licences, which obviously give access to firearms, but also greater recognition of potential insider threats.

Professor Nolan, who is here with us today, can also talk to some of the legislative and proscription mechanisms which currently exist to manage these threats—essentially the outcome there, the consensus, being that they are adequate for purpose but rather that they need to be applied in a specific way.

Finally, Dr Douglas Allan is here as well, and he has recently pioneered a framework for detecting insider threats, called the ALPi model, and this is something that we would suggest might be of quite considerable importance to the committee in conceptualising and thinking about how right-wing extremists might seek to infiltrate organisations in order to use that information for their own strategic ends.

I am at the 10-minute mark, so what I will briefly finish on here is that we are maintaining that right-wing extremism is an enduring threat to Victoria—to its multicultural communities, yes, but also to other cross-sections of society. The risks are numerous. We need to step away from the stereotyping of a right-wing extremist as just a Nazi or being an angry young white man. There are a number of people involved in this milieu, some of them are children, and we need to take that into consideration.

A number of counter responses have been suggested in our written submission, and we are aware that there are obviously limits to how much can be achieved by the Victorian government. But nonetheless we do really commend the fact that this inquiry has gotten to the stage and that there are people working on it. Our final point would be that more support is needed for this from state, from federal, from private and from public in order to assist and safeguard the Australian community.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you so much, Dr Campion. So that is the opening statement on behalf of everyone? Excellent. If I may open the questions, thank you very much for that really good snapshot of a very comprehensive submission. Your submission does go to a number of areas of course that you all have been investigating in more depth. I have a few questions. I will just start off with one. You talked about the enduring threat, and I am interested to know about your views and your research in terms of the heightening threat. Is it being heightened? Should we be concerned about it growing or the fact that it is still enduring? So if it is really enduring and it continues, obviously we have got to mitigate it from that perspective? But I am interested in your assessment of whether there is a threat of it growing and in what way. And what kind of interventions do you think, from your research, will be beneficial given the nature of that threat that you have documented?

**Dr CAMPION:** Thank you. I think I and Dr Levi West can address the first part of that question, and then I think the others will be well positioned to address the second part. From my perspective, I know that obviously we have been experiencing right-wing extremism for over a century. That goes without saying. But I think what we are seeing at the minute with lone attackers motivated by extreme right wing ideology is a level of unpredictability that perhaps did not exist in Australia in the past. If you look at sort of the 1990s and leading up to 2000, you were largely seeing activity by quite cohesive organised groups. Now, what the literature suggests is that groups can actually act as a handbrake for violence, because they want to endure, they want to exist. Right? But one of the findings that came out of the 2011 attack by Anders Behring Breivik in Norway was that if he had been part of a group, his attack might not have gone ahead, because in essence lone attackers are subject to no-one other than themselves. What we have seen in Australia I think in recent years is a series of either lone or small-cell actors who are not at the behest of an organisation and who have an entirely different set of internal constraints. So I obviously cannot say it is quantitatively getting worse, but what I am saying is that it is qualitatively different.

**The CHAIR:** Changing. Yes. That is an important point.

**Dr CAMPION:** Yes. Sorry, Levi, did you want to talk to that?

**Dr WEST:** Yes, thanks. Firstly, thank you to the committee for having us today. I would largely endorse most of what Kristy said. I guess for me there are sort of two big pieces. The first one is the way that the modern articulation of the ideological framework has expanded the remit for who can participate. Rather than it being a nationally orientated sense of identity, and I think I wrote about this in my contribution to the submission, the expanding of that from the idea of being Australian or American or British to being European means that the ease with which one can identify with that broader social movement that sits around the ideology rather than the narrowly constrained national sense of identity or organisational sense of identity increases the scope for it to continue to expand.

The other piece of that I think, and this is captured I think in Kristy's database, is if we use 2019 and the Christchurch attack as a marker point, then the number of people who have been arrested or disrupted publicly in relation to extreme right wing activity shows an incredibly steep acceleration in activity. Now, part of that is because of the focus that comes off the back of Christchurch in terms of counterforces, but if we were witnessing a similar kind of acceleration in, for instance, jihadist-motivated terrorism, then we would be having a vastly, vastly different response to how we are responding to it now. I do not envisage that at the macro level any of the drivers of that are about to slow down. In fact I think we are looking at something quite the opposite of that. There are those big-picture drivers of loss of faith in democratic institutions, of increasing prevalence of authoritarian regimes et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, that all feed this sensibility about fascism or authoritarian ideology and a rising 'moment of' and all mean that we are likely to see an ongoing increase in motivation and activity.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you so much. I might hand over to my fellow committee members, and we can come back to that point if anybody wants to add anything further later on. Ms Taylor.

**Ms TAYLOR:** I note the university program on right-wing extremism and terrorism. I think it would be interesting to understand the rationale behind it and what outcomes you expect students to come away with. And I say that as a positive. You know, I think it is good to share that, is what I am saying.

**Dr CAMPION:** What I will say to give some background to the subject is that the subject was actually pitched to the university in 2018, and this was as a consequence of Dr Levi West and Associate Professor Nick

O'Brien observing the rise of right-wing extremist attacks around the world. So they went, 'Okay, we need to have a subject in this because our demographic is a postgraduate, largely professional body of students that works in some way in relation to counterterrorism in Australia'. So we pitched the subject, it was approved in 2019 and it has been active ever since, I think, session 1, 2020. We have had, as of a week ago, I think, 210 students pass through the subject. The subject is designed to apprise students of what I would suggest to be really core ideas within the extreme right. So they start off with the frameworks of fascism, authoritarianism and that sort of thing. They then transition to extreme ideologies. So this is not just Neo-Nazism, this is all of them. So this is anti-government extremism, the freemen of the land type versus the sovereign citizen type and your religious type—so your Neo-Nazi Satanists versus your white supremacist Christians. So it has a really broad scope. Then they are positioned to look at the strategies—and that is particularly the violent strategies, because we are a terrorism program. So we do look at that really kinetic effect. This then pushes them to essentially country-based examinations of right-wing extremism in the US versus UK versus Australia versus New Zealand. And then the subject finishes off with them looking at possible counteraction responses. I think one of the biggest outcomes of the program, when they get to that final week of responses, is that they realise there is no easy answer to this and that quite a comprehensive change needs to occur in order to effectively confront this threat.

**Ms TAYLOR:** Thank you. That was very comprehensive.

**The CHAIR:** Dr Bach.

**Dr BACH:** Thanks, Chair. And thank you, all, for being with us. We have had some interesting submissions and some interesting testimony regarding the challenges that law enforcement bodies have in dealing with folks, predominantly young men, who are seemingly on the pathway to radicalisation. And it seems to me that thus far at least there is much unanimity in the messages that we are getting as a committee: that we have agencies working to the best of their ability, but given the scale of the challenges that they are facing it is very difficult to know when to intervene and when not to. So I might press you perhaps initially, Dr Campion, and then I will be very, very interested in the views of others as well, about how to seek to deal with that real conundrum that we are always going to have agencies with finite resources—we could resource them better, I am sure, at a state and federal level; however, we will always have finite resources—and making decisions about where to intervene in an effort to seek to stop some of the shocking actions that we have seen occur obviously in other parts of the world and even on our shores as well. What do you think about that, Dr Campion?

**Dr CAMPION:** Each of the various apparatuses involved in counterterrorism in Australia obviously have their own frameworks for making those decisions, so I would caveat my reply by saying this is an academic reply, not a practitioner reply. I think one of the biggest ways that we can support them in making that decision as to whether or not to intervene is actually through greater research looking at extreme ideological systems. The reason for that is that we cannot expect them, with their finite resources, to actually be across the distinctions in extreme right wing ideology. For example, you might have a right-wing extremist who is anti-government but might favour a form of government that looks seemingly left wing—a right libertarian, for example. So I think we need to do more as an institution but also as a sector to support the decision-making of counterterrorism operators through the increased research presence on ideological systems, mostly because that allows us and them to highlight those positive evaluations of violence, which obviously has quite a close relationship between whether or not violence is seen as permissible, whether it is seen as valid and whether or not someone is likely to act on that. Realistically this is not that different to the research that has been undertaken on jihadist terrorism over the past 20 years.

**Prof. NOLAN:** I will quickly add to that, if it is appropriate, that from talking to Associate Professor O'Brien and my own focus on the level of listing of extreme right wing organisations, I see this to be a crucial part of the interventions. You mentioned there, Dr Bach, policing resources. There are other resources in the DPP at the commonwealth or the Victorian level. The Victorian court system runs quite complex terrorism trials. 2021 saw the first listing of three far-right groups against all of the listing that we have seen of Salafist-type organisations since 9/11 and before that. That seems to me to be part of this important legal response to the globalised motivations that we have talked about before in this testimony, and we saw on the weekend 31 people going armed into a U-Haul vehicle to disrupt a pride event in Idaho and the Patriots Front affiliation of those 31 members. It is an organisation that is based in America. It has ties into Australia, and we have yet to list that organisation in Australia. So just an example of what we have been talking about, about global motivation: even though you are sitting as a hardworking committee in Victoria, listing needs to be global as well as focused on what is happening in Victoria to get ahead of the curve here and to provide, as I argue in my

submission, resources and facilitate easier investigative choices than we currently have against far-right groups, and that makes prosecutions in the Supreme Court of Victoria a little bit more straightforward as well.

**Dr BACH:** That is very useful—oh, my apologies, Dr West.

**Dr WEST:** No, sorry. The one other thing I think I would add is that much of what we have learned from the 20 years of intervention of varying forms against jihadist terrorism, for lack of a more specific term, is very much at the micro, grassroots level, and it has evolved out into something that is very much a targeted enterprise against individuals. The thing that I think is missing from the discussion about right-wing extremism is the macrolevel countermessaging—that part of what has to be done is, for lack of a better term, a sales pitch about liberal democracy, tolerance, plurality and all of those kinds of ideas which are the things that we are trying to defend against in terms of the extreme right, not so much because that is going to prevent a kid who has already drifted well and truly in but because it might do a bit of preventative work around the edges about positive messaging, about the importance and centrality of protecting minorities and all of those foundational institutional pieces of liberal democracy. The full-court press from the political class all the way down is a necessary component in restating some of those values and some of those ideas, and I think that is the bit that is probably missing, more than any.

**Dr BACH:** All right. Thank you very much.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much. Ms Burnett-Wake.

**Ms BURNETT-WAKE:** Thank you, Chair. Dr Delaforce, in your submission you addressed the acquisition of firearms, so I would like to know a little bit more about that from your perspective. Are our laws adequate to prevent violent extremists from accessing weapons? The committee heard some evidence earlier that it can be difficult to have licences revoked or suspended for those who are actually identified as a threat, so I would just like to hear some more from you about that.

**Dr DELAFORCE:** Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee. Dr Bach was talking previously about the issues facing law-enforcement agencies and in particular intervention points in terms of when it may be appropriate to intervene. I think one of the issues around firearms and acquisition is that there needs to be a whole-of-government response here. It is not necessarily just one state or territory, it has got to be a national response. In Victoria I know that there have been changes to the legislation, particularly around the storage and transport and use of firearms, and there is a concern around firearms in use in rural Victoria and the theft of firearms from there. That has been going on for a number of years. I noticed that in 2015 there was a government report into that. I think perhaps some of the issues around that might relate to the fit and proper person requirement for access to a licence and also acquiring a firearm, and perhaps that needs a little bit more attention. And the other issue is also around people who may have legal access to firearms through their occupation but also the possibility that they may acquire illegal weapons, and again that is a whole-of-government-across-Australia response, which is not happening at the moment, and that really needs to be addressed.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much. Committee members, I welcome you, if you have further questions, to please let me know—raise your hand. I might kick off with another question. I was interested to know—I think, Dr Campion, you cited this in part of your submission—about the Norwegian example. One of the things that the committee is thinking about is what we can do in terms of early intervention and prevention, but there are also responses to violent extremism. So I was wondering if you could expand on that. And my other broader question for anyone who wishes to respond is: what do you think are some of the legitimising and mainstreaming forces that kind of turn some fringe ideas into a threat—particularly because we are interested to know what we can do to stop it at that stage if it is emerging? So two questions: (1) the Norwegian example, if you could expand; and (2) more broadly, what are the mainstreaming and legitimising forces that we should be mindful of in terms of intervention?

**Dr CAMPION:** I think the stand-out element of the Norwegian example of best practice is that what they recognised after the 2011 attack was that this is an enduring threat and as a consequence requires enduring countermeasures. So it was not just treated as an aberration; it was not treated as a one-off abnormality. It was, ‘Okay, this is here and this is going to continue to be here’. And so honestly, they put a lot of money behind it and they established a centre for researching extremism, which is primarily concerned with right-wing

extremist threats in Western Europe, but they have been recently expanding to Eastern Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. What that means is that they are taking the initiative to establish a dataset of right-wing extremist violence around the world, but that is subject to their measures and to their controls and, as a consequence, also subject to EU regulations. I think that that was a fantastic act by them but also one that ultimately could be replicated here, because we do have—and you are speaking to them in this inquiry—a number of different institutions inside and outside of academia focused on this work, but there is no-one to draw them all together. And that is the incredible importance of C-REX in drawing together and channelling that research in a relatively coherent manner towards those priority areas. But I think the other thing just to mention is that their commitment to this is ongoing. As of yesterday they have announced another inquiry into extremism. Maybe it was inspired by you, maybe it was not, but nonetheless it really testifies that they are thinking long term, and I think we should be too.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. That is really helpful. Ms Burnett-Wake.

**Ms BURNETT-WAKE:** Thank you. My question is to Dr West. Just in regard to your subject matter and expertise in terrorism and counterterrorism, we have talked and we have heard a lot of evidence about violent extremism perpetuated in the streets and so forth, but I am interested to know about extremism being perpetuated in a different way, like online cybersecurity attacks. We know that the extremists want to disrupt, want to cause anarchy, so I am interested to know from you in regard to what you think about high-level cyber attacks on key government institutions to bring them down and to hear just some commentary from you about that and those risks and what we need to be aware of.

**Dr WEST:** Thank you. So I did a bit of work on this a long time ago now with the ANU, and the conclusion that that project came to was that for the most part the online environment and its use by terrorists, regardless of their ideological persuasion, is essentially about propaganda distribution, recruitment and radicalisation and at times sort of inspiring and facilitating operations—like a decentralised command and control structure, like *Inspire* magazine. If you think of ISIS: ‘Here’s all the propaganda; some people will take that, and they’ll do stuff’. The hacking universe, if I can describe it in that broadest of senses, has never really been a huge component of the expertise that they have had and has never really been prioritised in the sense that they have gotten pretty good bang for their buck out of the things that they do do with the online environment. And then the second piece of that which we worked on was that terrorism by its fundamental nature requires the bodies and blood and explosions to cause the immediate sort of disproportionate response that it seeks to achieve from its adversary—from government. Cyber attacks in varying forms—efforts to bring down the electricity grid or whatever it might be—tend to produce consequences that are second- and third-order effects rather than direct and immediate consequences. So people are going to die because the power stays down; the hospital system struggles—ICU—and results in deaths, second and third order away.

First and foremost, they tend to lack the capability as a general statement. You know, those sophisticated high-end operations that can get inside of, these days, very hardened and protected systems tend to be the preserve of nation-states rather than non-state actors. I would say that I guess the extreme right probably lends itself a little more to that space than the jihadist universe does. But overwhelmingly we have not seen high-level sophisticated offensive cyber capabilities in the hands of terrorist organisations in any substantial or meaningful way. It is not terrorism, I guess is the simple way to put it, right? You cannot kill people with code. You can cause a bunch of things to happen and then eventually someone dies, but for the most part you are lacking that key piece, which is the explosion or the incident—that visceral piece. So for the most part it is not a huge component of what we have seen.

**Prof. NOLAN:** Even if that might be the perception, I will just chime in and say legally hacking could be terrorism under section 100.1 of the commonwealth Criminal Code. Part of these legitimising factors that I think the Chair was talking about before is the legal belief or the popular belief that politically motivated violence by extreme right wing groups, whether they be hacking or whether they be doing something else, cannot be defined as terrorism legally under the commonwealth Criminal Code, and I reject that for the same reason I suggest in my submission that it is not beyond the ability of our legal tests to proscribe extreme right wing groups; it is also not beyond our legal tests to actually prosecute people hacking in the interests of advancing a right-wing extremist politically motivated violent attack. ‘Infrastructure interference’ falls under the definition of terrorism as well. I will just leave it at that, just chiming in on what Levi had raised there.

**The CHAIR:** Excellent. Thank you very much. Are there any further questions from committee members? I do not think so, so on that note we will draw this session to a close. I would like Hansard and broadcasting to end broadcasting, please.



Thank you very much, everyone. That has been a really excellent and insightful session, and your submission is so comprehensive. I know it is going to become really powerful in the work that we do, deliberating and putting our report together, so I want to thank you on behalf of the committee for all the work you do and for being with us this afternoon.

**Committee adjourned.**