



Frequently asked Questions

VIOLENT EXTREMISM IS A COMPLEX ISSUE BUT HERE ARE SOME ANSWERS TO COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is violent extremism?

Violent extremism is any form of violent action by a group or individual that is carried out for a cause or ideological goal. These may include religious, racial, social, environmental and political. Examples of violent extremism range from acts of terrorism to violent protests and incitement to violence in the name of a cause.

Violent extremism is not about a single group, religion or cause. Those who use violence may feel as though it is the only way they can bring about the change they seek – whether that is less immigration, a religiously pure country or political change. However, we now know that violent extremism causes much more harm than good. Violent extremism causes conflict within societies and sows the seeds of disharmony that lead to further conflict. Violent extremism is actually a spiral of violence and hatred.

Isn't violent extremism mostly a Muslim problem?

No. Extremism comes in many forms. All forms of extremism can lead to violence. Violent extremists can be anybody and violence has been used for a range of causes including religious or ideological, political and social. Muslims are just as likely to be victims of violent extremism as perpetrators. Violent extremism has been enacted by Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims as well as by members of new religious movements. It is also enacted by right wing and left wing political groups, nationalist groups and environmental groups.

But what does that have to do with me?

Violent extremism is a community problem, which needs a community solution. Around the world thousands of people are affected by violent extremism everyday. Violent attacks leave hundreds of victims who lose family members, friends and loved ones or who are injured or harmed. We're pretty lucky in Australia but violent extremism elsewhere also affects us by creating conditions for conflict between communities in Australia.

We know that violent extremism is more likely to occur when perpetrators think they have support in the community so by staying silent on violent extremism, we help to create the conditions for violent extremism to grow and a false belief that the community supports the violent extremists cause.



One of the most effective things we can do is to expose violent extremism and challenge those who claim that violence is the only way to bring about change.

Is that dangerous?

There will always be people who don't like what we do. These are people who want to breed hatred in our society so that they can justify their violence and create conditions of support for their actions. The more silent we are, the more violent extremism will grow. Standing up and rejecting hatred and the use of violence is the first step to making sure violent extremism doesn't take hold.

Isn't it up to governments and police to counter violent extremism?

We all have a role to play in proactively stopping violent extremism from spreading. Sure, government and policing have a role to play in countering violent extremism but they are limited in what they can do to address the *causes* of violent extremism. Communities are better placed to lead the social change that steers people away from the path to violence. Communities have the best insights into what their needs are and how to meet them.

So what does PaVE do?

Ultimately, our mission is to counter violence that is driven by extremism. We approach this problem in many ways and our work falls into three kinds of activities:

1. Community awareness and education
2. Research into violent extremism
3. Influencing policy

What can I do?

The first thing you can do is support us by liking us on Facebook or following us on Twitter. These are easy ways to stay updated on the work we are doing.

If you want to do more, fill out one of our 'Volunteer Nomination Forms' and send us your details and skills. We rely entirely on the generosity of our volunteers so we welcome anyone who wants to help in any way.

