

# Media Release

**Jaclyn Symes MLC**

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

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## COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM TO KEEP VICTORIA SAFE

A new world-leading scheme designed to tackle the early warning signs of radicalisation and violent and extremist behaviour is being set up to help people most at-risk to turn their lives around – keeping them and the community safe.

The *Terrorism (Community Protection) Amendment Bill 2021* will mean new laws are introduced that tackle the root causes of violent extremism, providing pathways to support vulnerable people to move away from radicalisation.

The Bill will establish a voluntary case management scheme for people who are at risk or radicalising towards violent extremism – connecting them with the services they need and providing them with pathways to reconnect with community support.

This approach is backed by research which suggests addressing the broader needs of an individual, such as their health, their housing or employment situation, before addressing their extreme views or ideologies can better prevent a potential escalation to terrorist activity.

For individuals who cannot be engaged voluntarily and require intervention, the Bill also sets out a Support and Engagement Order (SEO) scheme. This allows the courts to impose conditions on a person identified to be radicalising towards violent extremism where they must comply with a tailored support and engagement plan.

The schemes will be supported by a panel of key departments including Education and Training, Justice and Community Safety, Health, and Families, Fairness and Housing and agencies such as Victoria Police. The panel may also include experts in countering violent extremism or practitioners in mental health.

The Bill will also mean information is more easily shared between agencies for case management – supporting community safety through greater oversight and better connected and consistent support.

The reforms deliver on key recommendations of the Expert Panel on Terrorism and Violent Extremism Prevention and Response Powers, which looked at the effectiveness of Victoria's legislation and Victorian and Commonwealth agencies to prevent and respond to terrorism in the wake of the 2017 Brighton siege incident.

The Bill will also extend the operation of the *Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003* for a further ten years, keeping in place vital counter-terrorism preventative and investigative powers that are currently due to expire on 1 December 2021.

This is in line with a review of the Act's effectiveness, fairness and proportionality, which found broad agreement on the ongoing need for these powers to keep the Victorian community safe.

### Quote attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes

*“When it comes to violent extremism, early intervention is key – that’s why we’re introducing reforms that tackle the root causes of radicalisation and help those at-risk people get their lives back on track.”*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Police Lisa Neville

*“The threat of terrorism requires ongoing caution. We’re making sure that we continue to have strong, effective and balanced measures in place to keep the community safe.”*

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