

Be Alert but not Alarmed

Q&A Monday 22/09/2014

TONY JONES: Thank you. Good evening and welcome to Q&A. I'm Tony Jones. Joining us tonight: Greens Senator and Spokesperson on Defence, Scott Ludlam; the Minister for Justice with oversight of the Federal Police, Michael Keenan; author and human rights advocate, Randa Abdel-Fattah; academic and expert on counter-terrorism Anne-Azza Aly; and the Shadow Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus. Please welcome our panel.

Q&A is simulcast on ABC News 24 and NewsRadio and you can join the Twitter conversation by using the #qanda hashtag and, remember, if you've got a live question for us add @qanda to help us find it.

Well, we asked our Facebook followers what they'd like to see discussed on Q&A tonight. They nominated the police raids, civil liberties and Australia's military action against ISIS. Our first question comes from Soobhana Biswas.

POLICE RAIDS OVER-REACTION?00:01:14

SOOBHANA BISWAS: 800 police officers, helicopters circling suburbs and only two men charged - was there any real flight risk for each of these alleged terrorist who were all arrested at dawn in their own homes? What was the real need for such a public spectacle in the way in which each of these men were arrested?

TONY JONES: Michael Keenan?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, the need was that the authorities knew that there was a very high likelihood that these men were going to be taking action that would be random acts of violence on the streets of Sydney, including performing a demonstration execution. Now, I think, under those circumstances, the Australian people would fully expect that the authorities would respond in force and that is what happened. Now, on the issue of two people charged, I think if the police had had their - had their - well, if they had druthers, they would have liked that operation to have run on for a longer period than it did but when they knew that they had - that this group had received orders from a senior operative in the Middle East, that violence was imminent, then obviously the AFP and their New South Wales colleagues took action.

TONY JONES: When you say "these men", do you mean there is a group? Because if there is, then only one of them has been charged with the sort of offence that you've described?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, as I said, Tony, it is always a challenge for policing to be able to gather the evidence they need to charge people and then to have it held up in a court of law. Now, this operation had been ongoing since May but when the police understood that violence was imminent, they didn't have the opportunity to wait to a point where they might have liked to, to be able to collect the evidence that they might need to make those prosecutions. They needed to disrupt what was going on and that was the decision that they took. It was an operational decision and the Government thinks it was the right decision.

TONY JONES: Randa?

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Where do I start? Your mention of the word "spectacle", because this is really what it was about. The timing of the raids, you know, the fact that it is happening one week before - it happened one week before, conveniently, the most draconian legislation is about to be announced. We have the fact that we're going sending troops into Iraq. The whole way that the raids were televised, it was almost like an NCIS episode, almost live feeds. The fact that police were providing, you know, footage to the media, the wall-to-wall coverage that we've seen in the media. You know, the Australian Lawyers Alliance have come out and said that the media coverage has seriously compromised the right of these people to a fair trial and if we are serious about civil liberties, then we don't just say that these civil liberties are only applicable to everybody except Muslims. It should not be the case that you are guilty until proven innocent when it comes to Muslims. You cannot help but feel cynical about the timing of these raids, the fact that it is whipping people up into a frenzy of hysteria of war fever and the back-to-back coverage. I mean Richard Ackland said it perfectly. It could have been done differently. It could have been done stealthily, proportionately but that would have robbed the occasion for an opportunity of some serious theatre. But I would go one step further. Not only did it provide theatre, not only did it give a sense for Australians to get behind the raids and the wall-to-wall coverage in the media, but it reinforced this wider narrative of Muslims as criminals, as Muslims as the antagonists of Australian values and I'm very cynical about the Government's use of these raids to politicise the Muslim problem of terrorism (indistinct)...

TONY JONES: Some of those issues we'll come to in more detail. When you talk about whipping people up, at the same time people are being whipped up on the other side of the equation and tonight there's been a statement issued, a fatwa, in fact, by the spokesman of Islamic State, ISIS, calling on their followers to kill Australians, to kill Canadians and Europeans and Americans, to not consult with anyone, not seek anyone's advice, whether they're civilian or military, the same ruling applies. Does that change the equation in your mind at all?

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Look, no-one, and especially as a Muslim, I am horrified about what - about the use of Islam in this way but what I want to say is this: it's been 13 years now since the war on terror and if we are still at a point where, as a Muslim, I must convince you that Islam is unequivocally against terrorism, is unequivocally against these sorts of actions, this barbarity in the name of religion, I'm very sorry to say but that is not my failure it is yours, because countless fatwas have been issued from the most senior clerics in the Muslim world distancing Islam from these horrible, terrible actions and so it's about time that we realise that Muslims and Islam have nothing to do with these barbaric actions and the Muslim community shouldn't be held liable for what is happening overseas and be demonised and targeted in this way. I'm equally horrified by the latest fatwa and no-one is denying the risk. No one is saying that there isn't a credible risk that we face in Australia. What we are saying is the approach, the way that this is being handled is being used to feed a wider narrative that simply serves the purpose of whipping people up into a more of an Islamophobic environment and ...

TONY JONES: Okay.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Okay.

TONY JONES: Sorry, Randa. Anne Aly, do you have the same view of the raids?

ANNE-AZZA ALY: I have some of the same view. I have a lot of confidence in our law enforcement and our police officers and I think that all Australians need to be at least partly confident that if our police officers and our law enforcement are investigating a criminal act that we, as Australians and as taxpayers, need to understand that they have knowledge that perhaps we don't know. I'm not privy to what ASIO knows and I don't want to be privy to what ASIO or the AFP or what the police know, whether that's cause for them to send 800 police officers into the raid or not, I think that's something that should come out and should come out through strategic communications of the AFP and the police force. In terms of whipping up fear, and I've read the comments that came out today from ISIS, this is not new. For many, many generations and for many, many years, terrorists have always been putting out threats verbally. This is as much a war of rhetoric as it is a war of ideas and a war of - for hearts and minds, and I think the words are very important and we do need to pay attention to how we frame what we're doing, as much as we pay attention to how they're framing the threats that they're giving and putting out on social media to Australians.

So, you know, threats to Australians and threats to anybody who challenged the the ISIS state, this is not the first time they've come out. They came out from the very beginning when the US hinted that there might be air strikes. There were calls for people to carry out acts of violence in their homelands, whether that be in Australia or America or any state that challenged ISIS. So these are threats that we have to take seriously. And I...

TONY JONES: Do you, just to go back to the point made by the questioner and by Randa, to some degree, do you think this was a kind of manufactured spectacle or a legitimate series of raids?

ANNE-AZZA ALY: All terrorism is theatre and all counter-terrorism is theatre. So, yes, it was a manufactured spectacle but that's what counter-terrorism is. That's what security is. You know, you go to an airport, and I used to say this to my students, you go to an airport and you go through all of these things. I could go down to Toys-R-Us and construct something like this and get one of those light sabre things that goes "zhoot zhoot" and every time you walk into my classroom I could go, "Wait a minute." Zhoot zhoot and that would have an effect because that's what security is. That's what counter-terrorism is. That's what terrorism is. It's all about theatre. So I think we have to accept there is an element of theatre, because this is essentially about perception and it is about convincing people and changing people's minds to a particular world view, whether that world view is that of ISIS and the Islamic State or whether that world view is that of the Australian Government and democratic values and so on and so forth.

TONY JONES: Let's ask Mark Dreyfus if he agrees with that idea that what we're seeing is a kind of theatre designed to deter people from becoming radical or being influenced to radicalism?

MARK DREYFUS: With all respect to Anne, I don't think of terrorism as theatre and I don't think of counter-terrorism as theatre either. Terrorism involves the commission of real crimes, real murders, real injury to real people and counter-terrorism is the efforts of our agencies to deal with the threat

of those crimes being committed. Anne's right in one sense: terrorists want to send a message. They want to achieve an effect by the kinds of crimes that they commit and one of the things they want is to spread dissention and division in the Australian community so we have to be on guard against that. They want repression to follow from their acts of terror and, again, we have to be on guard against that, too. But, no, I don't think, as Anne has said, that counter-terrorism is theatre. We have a need to deal with a real risk. It is a risk that I think is a manageable one. That's why we have resourced our agencies over many years to deal with these real risks, and why our agencies have, in fact, been able to interrupt a number of serious terror plots that pose the risk of mass casualty events here in Australia over the last few years.

TONY JONES: Scott Ludlam. Sorry, Scott Ludlam?

SCOTT LUDLAM: I guess, the contrast to me is seeing how, over a period of more than a year, the Government has handled Operation Sovereign Borders with a complete media blackout where the press gallery around the country and the Australian public and Parliamentarians have been locked out of any understanding at all of what is being done effectively, as we're told, in the name of national security and, yet, for these raids the other day, you know, journalists are being invited along and given footage and it is basically designed, I think. To me that feels like the element of theatre, not the raids per se, but the extraordinary media circus that goes on around it. I don't understand what that is for if not to increase tension. Like, I don't know who here felt safer as a result of saturation media coverage of that thing, and that's the part that I guess I don't understand.

TONY JONES: Michael Keenan, do you want to buy into this? I mean...

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, I really do.

TONY JONES: ...is there a kind of logic - yes, of course, but is there a logic to creating a kind of theatre to deter people?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, look, I reject that whole premise of a theatre. I mean, there was raids at over half a - raids at over a dozen locations all around Sydney and there was some subsequent activity in Queensland and, of course, if you are going to send armed police into such an enormous number of locations in a city then, of course, people are going to notice and it's up to the police to inform people about what is going on. So, look, I don't - you know, I don't accept that this is some form of theatre. I mean, this is the police making operational decisions based on the safety of their officers from some very dangerous people and I really want to address a couple of things. Importantly the timing. Now, the idea that this is some conspiracy from the Government because we're putting through some foreign fighter legislation through Parliament this week is just not - just not measurable by the facts. The timing of these things is an operational decision for the police. This is not a political decision that is taken. The police make the decisions about when they are going to do these things and I, as the Police Minister, are usually briefed just prior to the raids occurring. So it would be perfectly normal for me to be briefed the night before these raids were occurring?

TONY JONES: Is that what fact happened in fact, you didn't know about the raids until the night before, do you say?

MICHAEL KEENAN: I mean, I knew about the ongoing operation but, no, I didn't know the operational activity, and that is perfectly in line with standing procedure and I suspect Mark, as a former Attorney-General, will back me up on that. It is very normal that the Police would inform the Government about what it's doing prior to the raids occurring and obviously they do that for operational secrecy. So the idea that the Government directed the timing of these raids is nonsense. The police directed the timing and they did it because they thought, well, they had very credible information that there was a significant threat of violence within the next couple of days from those raids. So, you know...

ANNE-AZZA ALY: But you have to admit that the time uncanny.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Yeah, what a coincidence.

SCOTT LUDLAM: Amazing coincidence.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Going into Iraq and terror laws.

MICHAEL KEENAN: No, you know what - you know what, I - I really don't. The timing...

ANNE-AZZA ALY: You really don't think it's uncanny at all?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Look, the whole point is they acted because there was information that they had that a senior operative in the Middle East had instructed his followers in Australia to go about and commit random and barbaric acts of violence on Australian citizens and it was going to happen within days. What would you expect the police to do in those circumstances? They don't respond to our political agenda.

ANNE-AZZA ALY: There are people in the Middle East instructing them every day on social media. We have no idea what influence means.

MICHAEL KEENAN: I'm sorry, this was a specific instruction for their followers to go and carry this out.

ANNE-AZZA ALY: We have no idea. We are making arrests based on somebody tweeting something, somebody saying something.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Chatter.

ANNE-AZZA ALY: Some chatter.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Chatter.

ANNE-AZZA ALY: We have no understanding yet of what influence means, of just how influential or how attractive these fatwas or these directives coming out of the Middle East are and we're making

arrests based on that.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, look, Anne, you said it yourself, you don't know all that the AFP and ASIO knows. They are our security authorities. They do an exceptionally good job about keeping the Australian people safe. The idea that they respond to the Government's tune on these things is not correct. They take the operational decisions that they take based on public safety...

TONY JONES: Okay.

MICHAEL KEENAN: ...and that is what happened in this instance.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Then why hasn't...

TONY JONES: I don't mean to cut you all off. We've got quite a few questions to get to. They're all on similar subjects. We will get specifically to the anti-terror laws. Our next question is from Sally Lord.

RADICALISATION - WHY?00:15:23

SALLY LORD: Thanks, Tony. It's been stated that poverty and illiteracy are strong factors that influence young Islamic men and boys to become radicalised or make them vulnerable to radicalisation. These conditions don't appear to be the case in Australia. So what do you think are the motivators or the triggers for this in Australia?

TONY JONES: Anne Aly, we'll start with you?

ANNE-AZZA ALY: Sally, you make a really good point there. Absolutely they don't seem to be the triggers. I think the - this kind of myth of marginalisation has been really overemphasised in radicalisation. The fact is that we really don't know a lot about radicalisation and that's because everybody's path or trajectory to violence has been different. We can get some broad demographics out of several case studies, but all we can manage is just that, broad demographics. There is no terrorist profile and this idea of vulnerability that, you know, there are these masses of Muslims lying in wait just waiting, vulnerable Muslims lying in wait, waiting to be radicalised, is a complete myth. It's completely wrong. So, you know, what turns a young person to become radicalised? There are a number of factors. Some of it - for some of them they are - they - they have some life-changing experiences. What we know is that for all of them they all start out by seeking, with a seeking behaviour, a behaviour of curiosity and that might lead them to the Internet, which plays an extremely important role, and they might start looking at the Internet and start looking for answers on the Internet. Now, most of them will walk away from there. Will stop there and walk away.

TONY JONES: Community leaders talk about Sheikh YouTube.

ANNE-AZZA ALY: And Sheikh Google.

TONY JONES: Google Sheikh, yeah.

ANNE-AZZA ALY: Sheikh Google, yeah.

TONY JONES: Yeah, Sheikh Google.

ANNE-AZZA ALY: And, absolutely. Like, we're assuming here that, you know, these young people are going to mosques and, you know, there's a firebrand cleric at the mosque yelling at them, you know, "You have to go and fight," and all of this. No, they're not listening to their community leaders. They're not listening to the sheiks, who are very, very moderate and trying to guide them along the right path. They're going onto YouTube. They're going to Sheik Google and they're finding radical sheiks all around the world in other countries who are - who are misguiding them, who are giving them a misguided interpretation of text, but a lot of them, it's not about religion and for many of them they actually don't know very much about their religion. So it's other things. It's the social factor. It's the adventure. It's the idea of wanting to be a hero. It's the - very much the idea of victimhood and trying to save an oppressed - what they believed to be oppressed peoples. So for many of them the motivations aren't necessarily evil or bad motivations. Some of them are going there because they think they're doing something good. They think they're saving Muslims.

TONY JONES: You've worked with a number of former jihadis.

ANNE-AZZA ALY: Yep.

TONY JONES: All of which, I think, now live in the UK.

ANNE-AZZA ALY: They all live in the UK.

TONY JONES: And you work with them online to try and work out a de-radicalisation plan. How do you actually do that? How do you deprogram people if they've gone down this path?

ANNE-AZZA ALY: Well, deprogramming is probably a bit of a misleading word because that assumes that it's all about psychology and these people have somehow - it's some kind of psychological aberration. What we do is we look at how can a former - what we call formers, people who have - who have been down the path, who have fought overseas and then returned - we look at how formers might contact these young people who seem to be engaging with violent extremist narratives online, and I have to say that they're not just all Muslim. We also deal with neo-Nazi white supremacists as well, and we look at how they might then talk to these young people and give them a different point of view, get them to shift their world view a bit and look at some of the consequences, perhaps, of going to fight overseas, look at some of the reasons why they shouldn't go and fight overseas. So we're looking at what works with engaging young people who may be going down that path of radicalisation.

TONY JONES: Okay. I tell you what I'm going to do, I'm going to bring in the next question, which is on a related matter, and then bring in the other panellists and that's a question from Prashant Chaturvedi.

ISLAMIC COMMUNITY00:19:55

PRASHANT CHATURVEDI: Thanks, Tony. My question to the panel is: what do you think is the role of the Islamic community and the broader community in Australia to ensure that the boys and girls don't take a wrong direction and do you think the community needs to take more accountability of the actions of these men and women?

TONY JONES: Randa?

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Well, I think this is one of the problems in the way that we frame this whole conversation about radicalisation. We make it a Muslim problem. Look, everything that you said, Anne, I completely agree with, but the one thing that we never raise is that this is a problem of the whole community, of our whole society, and the one thing that we never address is the role of Western foreign policy and the grievances - the legitimate grievances - that causes people. That doesn't mean that everybody who is aggrieved by the way that the West intervenes in the Middle East is going to become radicalised. But why is it that we choose to ignore that elephant in the room? The role of Western foreign policy and its role in creating such an unjust world and particularly its role in creating the mess in the Middle East that we see. You know, the fact that we had the decimation of Gaza by Israel two months ago and the conspiracy of silence - in fact, I'll go even further, the legitimating and justification giving Israel a licence to kill, does that not fuel anger? Does that not plant the seeds? We go around in the West trying to cut down the trees of terrorism even as we plant seeds of terrorism and we do that - we do that when we allow Israel to get away with its war crimes. We do that when we support the US blindly. We say - the US says, jump, we say how high? Even though the US takes the moral high ground, even as it rains down drones and cruise missiles on civilian populations, engages in torture, extraordinary rendition, it takes the moral high ground. We plant the seeds of terrorism when we turn our backs on 200,000 Syrians dead, Iraqis killed and suddenly we are moved to humanitarian action because of some YouTube videos because Westerners are threatened and killed? These are legitimate concerns. These are not excuses for the barbarity that we're seeing but it is completely insane for us to ignore that these are really serious issues and that there are some people who are going to take these legitimate concerns and go down a radical path. But until we address those root causes, and I don't just say that just as a Muslim, there are many non-Muslim analysts who would say the same thing - until we address those root causes and stop thinking this is a Muslim pathology, we are never going to be able to address radicalisation.

TONY JONES: Michael?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, the first point I want to make, which is very important, is that nothing the Government is doing is targeted at any particular community in Australia. We're targeting - well, I can assure you that that is not the case. We are targeting criminals. That's what we are doing. We are targeting criminals and we will always follow criminals if we think that they are doing the wrong thing. We will always track them down and prosecute them to the maximum extent of Australian law.

ANNE-AZZA ALY: So are you going to track down the Australian Defence League soldiers who post up on Facebook, "Go and bomb a mosque"?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Look, I...

ANNE-AZZA ALY: Because if you're going to introduce laws...

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, Anne, well, can I ask you...

ANNE-AZZA ALY: ...about that, I hope they apply across the - across the board?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Look, do you mind if I ask you a question? I can assure you that - if the circumstances were the same that if were any group in society that threatened the safety of the Australian community, of course we would take action, and the idea that we targeting...

ANNE-AZZA ALY: Hasn't happened.

MICHAEL KEENAN: ...elements of the Australian community is wrong and it would be very foolish for the Australian Government to do that.

TONY JONES: Can I just pick up on that point, though? I mean the Australian Defence League has evidently or allegedly threatened to bomb mosques, it has threatened the lives of people, it has threatened women, photographs women, in fact, wearing the burqa or so on and does behave in threatening ways. Is it time the federal police treated them as seriously or in some way as seriously?

MICHAEL KEENAN: You are assuming that they don't police these groups in the same way as they would police any other group in the community.

TONY JONES: But not in a public way.

MICHAEL KEENAN: And I can assure you we don't...

TONY JONES: So, I mean, would you - would you, for example, countenance raids by the federal police on the headquarters of that organisation or on individuals within that organisation?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Tony, can I assure you - can I assure you and every person in Australia, if there was a group that we knew was about to go and randomly kill Australian citizens, no matter who they are, we would take action. We don't apply the law based on people's background. We apply it based on what we would see or what we would understand to be the threat to the Australian community.

TONY JONES: We've got a hand up in the front there. You've just got to wait until we get a microphone to you.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, it is a very important point, the idea the Australian Government does not target sections of the Australian community.

TONY JONES: In the front row there is a hand up, so I'll just go to that questioner. Go ahead.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: ADL make threats to myself and my family, telling them that they want to behead me. So everything you're saying right now is very insulting.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, if that is the case, then you need to alert the authorities.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have reported it to police numerous times, thank you.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, let me assure you, we don't police in a way in this country that targets one group over another.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes, you do.

MICHAEL KEENAN: I can assure you that that is the case.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes, you do.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well...

SCOTT LUDLAM: I'm not sure the message is getting through, whether you sense the reaction of the room when you said that for the first time. I'm not sure, if that is the strategy, that it's getting through to people.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, Scott, I mean, part of what we're doing we're spending \$630 million addressing this problem. Part of that money will be spent on community outreach. We will not win this fight if sections of the Australian community do not believe that the Australian Government is on their side. I am sorry if people in the room feel that that is the case but I can assure you that it is not.

TONY JONES: I'm just going to...

MICHAEL KEENAN: We do not target the Muslim...

TONY JONES: Michael Keenan, can I just interrupt for a second, because that was a pretty extraordinary allegation. I'd just like you to - are you saying that an official of the security forces did this?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I reported it to Bankstown Police Station on numerous occasions. They've called to slit my - the - my - my children's throats and rape my dead 'caucus' on the side of the road.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well...

TONY JONES: So are you're saying - sorry, you're saying this is coming from racist groups?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, I mean, I can assure you that threats of that nature would be followed up.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I am trolled 24 hours a day on Facebook and social media because of these right-wing Nazis, okay. My life is not pleasant right now living in this country and no-one seems to care because I am Muslim and they're not. It's all right for the non-Muslims to give me a hard time.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, it's not.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: But when I complain about it, it's not the same.

MICHAEL KEENAN: It is absolutely not. Look, there's absolutely no excuse for anyone in the community to attack another Australian in an unprovoked way.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, I'd like to see the evidence that you are actually doing something about it.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well...

TONY JONES: Can I just...

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Because right now (indistinct)...

TONY JONES: Sorry, can I just interrupt and I'm sorry to do this to you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That's okay.

TONY JONES: I'm just confirming you're not saying that was security officials. You're saying that was a racist group that's made these threats against you?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, it - look, it's the ADL, yes.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, I can assure you that will be followed up.

TONY JONES: Right, I beg your pardon. You said ADL. I thought you said ASIO. Okay, no, I thank you - thank you so much...

MICHAEL KEENAN: For clarifying.

TONY JONES: Thank you so much for clarifying that. But we've got a question on a similar - we've got - I'm sorry, that was a misunderstanding. We've got a question on a similar subject. It's from Asme Fahmi.

INFLAMING TENSIONS00:26:58

ASME FAHMI: A couple of years ago, as I was on my way to work, I was physically attacked by a man

who called me an f'ing terrorist. Now, with the recent onslaught of negative media attention towards the Muslim community, many visible Muslims, many of whom are Muslim women who wear the hijab have been subject to verbal abuse and, at times, physical attacks. Now, language has been key in inflaming tensions. So what does the panel think of Tony Abbott's use of the divisive term "Team Australia" and just the language used by politicians in order to, you know, keep the Muslim community as the chosen bogeyman?

TONY JONES: I'm just going to start with Mark Dreyfus on this?

MARK DREYFUS: Every Australian has the right to walk everywhere in our community, on the street, dressed however they wish to dress, be it in a hijab, in a burqa, be it a Sikh in a turban or a Jew wearing a yarmulke. Everyone has the right to walk in the street - we've been through this debate over the last year in relation to section 18C, which is not about religious discrimination, it was about racial discrimination. I would like to think that we can get to an Australia - we are not in one now - where people are not threatened on the street, where the kind of complaint that you've just articulated for all of us, which shocks me to think and, if I can go back to the earlier questions, the reason why I think there was a reaction in the audience to the suggestion that there wasn't an unevenness in policing - Michael is right, of course, that we don't set out to have unevenness in policing. The police investigate crimes and threatened crimes wherever they occur but the fact that some people, including many people in this audience, have the impression that there is uneven policing raises, for me, a really big question which is about confidence in our agencies, confidence in the intelligence work, confidence in the police, and part of the job of Government and part of the job of every politician in Australia is to make sure that the community has that confidence and I fear, from what you've said and what you've also said, Asme, is that there's a gap. Clearly, there is a gap. There's a whole lot more work to be done and it fits together, as it happens, with countering violence extremism.

TONY JONES: I'll just go to Randa. You've actually studied Islamophobia or, in fact, you are in the process of studying it.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Yeah.

TONY JONES: So what do you take from the questions we are getting now?

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Well, you know, there's been a huge backlash since the terror raids and we're seeing, you know, the invective and obscenity online on social media. We're seeing Muslim women at the frontline, because they're obviously visibly identifiable in their hijabs as Muslims and people pin their anxieties and fears and hatreds onto those women and they have to suffer the most horrible verbal and physical abuse. We're seeing a huge increase in Islamophobic incidents. But what I want to focus on is the fact that, like you said, it is the perception that the Muslim community is being targeted. The Muslim community is the only community that was consulted about the terror laws because it is - the image that is projected is that terrorism is a Muslim issue, that the Muslim - the Muslim population is a problem population and the language of Team Australia, I mean - Scott Pointing is a sociologist and he cites Canadian criminologist Barbara Perry and says states confer permission to hate on their citizens and the way they do they is that when the encounter a certain

population, a certain community, as the enemy in the war on terror, they somehow give a moral licence or permission to members of the community to encounter that community as an enemy. It's almost as though they are emboldening Islamophobia and we've seen a direct correlation. The terror raids occurred and a huge increase in Islamophobic incidents and the Team Australia example, it's the language of division. It's the language of inclusion and exclusion. First you have the fact that 40% of Australians were born here - Australian Muslims were born here and yet the assumption is that we came here and then, again, it's this idea of a benevolent Anglo majority schooling and managing a deviant Muslim minority. This is - this is the message that is being sent, whether unwittingly or not, by leadership and it emboldens Islamophobia - Islamophobes when that message of division and deviance is coming from the highest leaders of the country and that is why people feel empowered by those sorts of messages to attack Muslim women who wear the hijab as the incarnation of everything that we see as evil in Australia and it's not fair for Muslim women to have to undergo that.

TONY JONES: Michael Keenan?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, I mean, I couldn't agree more. I mean it's absolutely not fair for anyone to be targeted as they go about their business in Australia for being part of a particular - for being of a particular background. We don't accept that. We certainly don't empower it and we do everything we can to discourage it. Now, we would take any complaints of that nature incredibly seriously. We will certainly - I will certainly make sure that the issue that the young lady down there has raised has been thoroughly investigated. I will follow up on that and I will get back to you about it. The Government takes this incredibly seriously. We are at pains to point out that we are not targeting any section of the Australian population. If that thought were to take hold, I think it was going - it would make our job much harder because the Government does not stand against any section of its own population. We want to work with all sections of the Australian community and I can assure you that the Islamic community is a very important part of that.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: I think what people don't realise is you can exclude people in a racist way but you can also include them in a racist way and the way that you do that is through your language and so it's by saying, you know, as long as you follow our Australian way, our Australian values, our core values, that is a way of including people but always qualifying their acceptance and their belonging and managing them and schooling them. The idea that Muslims are a policed community within the larger community.

TONY JONES: Okay. I'm going to go to a video question and, again, it's obviously driven by some of the debates that are going on in the community. This one is a video from Peter Sonners from the Gold Coast in Queensland.

RESTRICT MUSLIM MIGRATION00:33:17

PETER SONNERS: Regarding the recent terrorism-related arrests, should we be discussing the issue of possibly restricting the flow of further Muslim migration to this country until we see evidence of better success in integration of the people who are already here?

TONY JONES: Scott Ludlam?

SCOTT LUDLAM: I think that's an excellent case study really of what we are trying to discuss here. What it reminded me of a little bit and what I was thinking of the conversation before is a really important piece of the puzzle is the very tight feedback loop between media and politicians around this stuff and seeing the way that the tabloid papers in this country at the moment are choosing to deal with the issue as well is hurling fear at people every morning and that's what the politicians are getting for breakfast. That's what their media advisers is putting them in front of them and I think it's creating an immensely tight feedback loop. No, I don't think we need to do some sort of national character assessment of Muslims while we restrict immigration. Australia is one of the most successful examples of multiculturalism anywhere in the world and the kind of divisiveness, I guess, and, you know, people in the community will be taking their lead in part by what they hear from political representatives and what they see in the press. I think, in fact, that kind of fear, that is what terrorism is. It's that corrosion and that undermining of the underpinnings of society. We've done bloody well here in Australia, I would say, and we need to protect that and that includes protecting everybody in this country.

TONY JONES: Anne?

ANNE-AZZA ALY: Well, what I find quite distressing about that is back in - this is a legacy of post-9/11 discourse in Australia, where immigration, asylum seekers, Muslim women in particular, Muslims in general and terrorism were all lumped into one and constructed as this big problem that Australia has to deal with. The idea of Muslims not integrating into Australian society - you've got two Muslim women sitting here on this panel, and there are successful Muslims around Australia, numerous successful Muslims all around Australia. 99.99% of Muslims are good, law-abiding citizens and are taxpayers, I might add, so the idea that we must wait and see whether or not Muslims integrate into Australia - Muslims have been here for a very, very long time, and just, you know, 14 years on, and we're still talking the same talk. We need to move on.

TONY JONES: Okay. I'm going to move on as well because we promised we would talk about the anti-terror laws. We've got a question from Mona El Baba.

TERROR LAWS + POLITICAL WEDGE00:36:16

MONA EL BABA: As a Muslim lawyer practising criminal law in Western Sydney, I experience first-hand the distrust between my community and the law enforcement agencies, especially the intimidation and harassment tactics used by these agencies under the existing legislation. Are the new anti-terror laws that are currently being tabled before Parliament really necessary to prevent terrorism or are they a political wedge aimed at drumming up fear and xenophobia towards Islam and Muslims to score cheap political points?

TONY JONES: Okay, I'll start with our politicians and I don't know whether we got the microphone there in time to hear that you are, in fact, a Muslim lawyer practising criminal law in Western Sydney. Scott Ludlam?

SCOTT LUDLAM: I'm really concerned. There's some of the laws that we haven't seen. They're being announced by press conference and so two really significant packages the Parliament hasn't seen

yet. The one that we have seen very serious expansion of ASIO powers that might be debated tomorrow or the next day. I have a fundamental problem with the idea that in order to protect our freedoms we need to them one by one. I think that's really scary. That's part of what makes this country great. So...

TONY JONES: Specifically what aspects of the new laws do you object to?

SCOTT LUDLAM: I think what we're seeing at the moment is an attempt to criminalise public interest whistle-blowing. It doesn't go directly to your question but to prevent a repeat of, I guess, what happened in the United States, where an analyst disclosed extraordinary unlawful behaviour at the heart of the United States security establishment, and the Australian Government doesn't want that to happen here evidently. I guess I've been through a couple of turns of the wheel. I can remember when the sedition laws were passing in 2005 hearing exactly the same thing from communities that were feeling targeted, not necessarily by media messaging, but targeted by knocks on the door and quiet conversations with agents and police. So I can't imagine what it must be like but it feels very familiar. We're back somewhere where we've been before.

TONY JONES: I'm going to go to Mark Dreyfus because the Labor Party has been considering these new laws and whether it will support them. Have you come to a conclusion?

MARK DREYFUS: Well, I'm not going to give you a general answer, Tony, because...

TONY JONES: Maybe give us some specific ones.

MARK DREYFUS: I will but one of the problems of this whole debate we've been having is the government has presented this as one huge, wrapped-up bundle of laws and mixed with the international activity, as well. I'd just unpick it briefly to say that there's a bill in the Senate introduced by the Attorney-General on 16th July, which is a longstanding proposal first proposed by the Labor Government in May 2012. It has nothing to do with Iraq or Syria or with the current terrorist activities that have been uncovered. It's an updating of an act of Parliament, the ASIO Act, which was passed in 1979, and largely there is bipartisan agreement on that package. It has been much consulted on. There was a report by the intelligence committee, which I tabled in June last year, and the Government has brought forward a year later, that updating of the ASIO Act.

TONY JONES: Okay. Let's go through a couple of specifics. Five year...

MARK DREYFUS: But the...

TONY JONES: No, let's - just some specifics. Five year jail sentence aimed at hate preachers who incite or urge others to do acts of terrorism, will you support that (indistinct)?

MARK DREYFUS: Well, I'm not going to - now, the next bill is the one that the Attorney-General has not shown to anyone. It's going to be first introduced in the Parliament this Wednesday. Under no circumstances am I giving you an opinion on anything to do with that bill until we've seen it and until there's been public scrutiny and public consultation over an appropriate period. So, I've asked...

TONY JONES: What's an appropriate period, by the way?

MARK DREYFUS: Well, several weeks but, again, I haven't seen the bill so it might be that it's longer. I've said to the Government already, because the Government has indicated to us in a very short briefing last week, sketched out for us what's going to be in this legislation and I have said it must go to a parliamentary committee, the Joint Intelligence Committee, for public hearing and public submissions to be made on it because I think that every time a government is putting forward proposals to reduce rights and liberties in Australia, to expand the powers of our intelligence agencies or our police, the Government has to make the case and it has to be made publicly.

TONY JONES: Okay. I'm just going to go back to - yes, our lawyer Mona El Baba has her hand up. And I actually am quite interested to go back to you and find out are there specific aspects of the coming new laws, as you've read about them, that you object to?

FOLLOW UP QUESTION00:40:53

MONA EL BABA: Just point to - just continuing on from the Shadow Attorney-General's point, how serious is the Government in taking into consideration the public submissions into these draft amendments, especially taking into consideration the fact that the Muslim leaders were given only half an hour to consider the proposed amendments at the meeting essentially?

TONY JONES: Well, that's probably an issue for Michael Keenan to answer, but you can you briefly respond.

MARK DREYFUS: Well, if I can briefly say to you, Mona, that's a hopelessly inadequate period. I'm concerned if the Muslim leadership is the only consultation the Government has yet done. It should be the entire community and, as I understand it, they were not shown the draft bill. Nobody has been shown the draft bill. There needs to be an appropriate period where everybody can read the proposed legislation, everybody can have a say on it and there can be public hearings and a parliamentary committee reporting to the Parliament.

TONY JONES: Okay. Let's go to Michael Keenan. I'll bring you back to the first question asked by Mona and that is: is this a political wedge aimed at drumming up xenophobia? They were her words?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, I hope I've answered that from some of my earlier contributions, Mona. I mean, this is not. This is a sensible response from the Government to change the security circumstances in Australia. And the reason that the bill hasn't been put out for public consultation yet is because it's only just been completed. When we've - you know, the situation - the security situation in Australia changed quite rapidly in response to events in the Middle East in particular and we needed to respond to that and we've been working diligently with our security agencies to get up a package that we believe will be the appropriate balance between protecting our liberties and making sure the Australian community is safe.

TONY JONES: So, Michael, what's already been floated in the public, five year jail sentences aimed at

hate preachers who incite others to acts of terrorism, tougher arrests and questioning of suspects on reasonable grounds, a new way of choosing who the suspects who can be questioned are, secret searches of homes, easier issuing of control orders and a ten year extension of the sunset clauses around the existing preventative detention rules. Can you confirm all of those?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, that is a reasonable summary about some of the things we will be doing. I wouldn't quite characterise it in exactly the same way as you have done but what we want to do is we want to have a modern and flexible legislative arrangement that allows the Australian Federal Police and ASIO to deal with the changed circumstances on the ground. Now, we've had anti-terror laws in this country for over 10 years. We've learnt something about the utility of some provisions within that regime, and we want to make sure that we've got a regime that now deals with these changed circumstances and we do live in a heightened threatened environment. There is no question of that. We live in a heightened threat environment and, look, and the best way I can illustrate that is the first tranche of anti-terror laws, in - well, going back ten years ago under the Howard Government, was largely in response to the fact that we had 30 Australian citizens go and fight in Afghanistan. Twenty-five of those citizens returned to Australia and, subsequently, 19 of them were involved in terrorism-related activity. Now, we have up to 160 Australian citizens either fighting with or supporting ISIL and other related terrorist organisations.

MARK DREYFUS: Don't overstate, it Michael.

MICHAEL KEENAN: I'm not overstating it. That is actually the facts. Where have I overstated it, Mark?

MARK DREYFUS: Well, it's this compilation. We've seen this a lot from the Government. The fear that the Government has given is that about 60 Australians have gone to fight in Syria or Iraq and about...

MICHAEL KEENAN: And 100 are supporting.

MARK DREYFUS: ...100 are here in Australia supporting in various ways.

MICHAEL KEENAN: That's exactly right.

MARK DREYFUS: So don't lump it together as 160.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, I'm sorry, Mark, that's exactly what I said. I said there was 160...

MARK DREYFUS: Well...

MICHAEL KEENAN: ...people who were involved, either directly fighting with or supporting ISIL. That's what I said.

TONY JONES: Okay. Scott Ludlam wanted to get in there.

SCOTT LUDLAM: Yeah.

TONY JONES: And then we'll go to Anne and then Randa.

SCOTT LUDLAM: Because you said that we learned some things about the installation of those terror laws under the Howard Government and indeed we did. The terror reviewer, which the Labor Government legislated, said a lot of this body of law is obsolete or dangerous and should be repealed and yet if that's what you consider the learnings, you defunded the office and tried to abolish the guy so we don't even have a terror laws reviewer at the moment and you are actually doubling down and extending a lot of the things like preventative detention that were proposed to be abandoned. So when you say we learned from these terror laws, I'm not sure maybe that you've been reading the stuff that's been produced by the Government's own officers.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, we have by ASIO and the AFP and we've been getting the feedback from our security agencies about what has worked and what hasn't and we have crafted this suite of laws with their advice in mind and they are the ones who are actually best placed to tell the Government what is required.

SCOTT LUDLAM: Well, stop the presses, intelligence agencies want more power.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, look...

SCOTT LUDLAM: This is a democracy.

MICHAEL KEENAN: I'm sorry, Scott, this isn't Hollywood. I mean our intelligence agencies are just diligent public servants.

SCOTT LUDLAM: Stop making it look like Hollywood then.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, I'm sorry, our intelligence agencies are diligent public servants, whose job it is to protect Australia.

TONY JONES: Okay.

MICHAEL KEENAN: And they take it very seriously and you know, there is not anything nefarious or worrying about that.

TONY JONES: I just want to bring in Anne Aly and let me ask you this, because we were talking about the numbers of people overseas. Now, I know that you actually do regard the numbers of foreign fighters in Syria in particular from Australia as being comparatively high?

ANNE-AZZA ALY: It is. It is comparatively high compared to the US, which has an estimated 100 foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq. So Australia to have an estimated 60 is comparatively high. But I'd like to take some time to qualify the threat and the risk and let's really look at whether or not these laws are going to be effective, because I don't think anybody here would deny any kinds of laws that are there for everybody's public safety, as long as they are effective and as long as they are needed, which are two questions that are consistently being asked about the current proposals. So the first

thing I want to say is in terms of risk and threat, what have we got? We've got an estimated 60 foreign fighters. We're assuming that they're going to come here and want to carry out a terrorist attack here so we've said that that's a threat. We've got a further estimated 100 here who might support the Islamic State or show some kind of support for the Islamic State, although we don't exactly know what that support means and we are assuming that they're going to carry out - perhaps carry out a terrorist attack here in Australia and we've qualified that as a threat. The other threat that we've got is the numerous numbers of people who may also become radicalised and largely because of hard counterterrorism measures that then feed into a division in the community and we've got nothing to address that threat. So I've got nothing against legal options but let's be smart about what we're doing here. All very well and good to have the legal options there, as long as they're needed and as long as they don't impinge on civil liberties and as long as they are even-handed so they are not just targeting Muslims but also that ADL who puts up on their Facebook page this is how you make a homemade weapon. Everybody go and make one and kill yourself a Muslim. As long as they - that is even-handed there, I have no problem with that. But where's all the other stuff to address radicalisation at its roots? Where's all the social programs? Where's all the family counselling programs? Where are all the programs to address, at its very core, why young people are becoming radicalised in the first place.

TONY JONES: So these are programs, just to make this clear, because you've worked with the UK, you are talking about programs that exist in other countries but don't exist here. Is that right?

ANNE-AZZA ALY: We don't have anything here. But, you know, Germany, for example, has a program called Exit Germany and they have in there within that a family counselling program for families of young people who are becoming radicalised or who are thinking - showing signs that they may want to go and join the Islamic State to fight. The UK has adopted that program. The Netherlands have adopted that program and Canada has adopted that program. We here, we've had - in all due - with giving credit where credit is due, we have had a countering violent extremism programs for some years. A lot of that focus has been on community level engagement and community level engagement has its limits. We haven't engaged with families. We haven't engaged with mothers. Mothers play a hugely significant role, especially with their young sons. We haven't engaged with the individuals themselves. It is not communities that become radicalised, it is individuals that become radicalised.

TONY JONES: Okay. I'm sure you want to answer that and I'm going to ask you to do that in concert with other questions coming up because we've got to get to a few things.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Okay.

TONY JONES: You're watching Q&A. It's live, it's interactive and tonight we're asking you to help choose a question for our panel because we're running out of time. If you're on Twitter, check the last two @qanda tweets. Each one is a potential question. Re-tweet the one you'd prefer. We'll put the most popular question to our panel. First, let's take a question from Marty Duck.

IRAQ: WAR CAUSED ISIS00:50:19

MARTY DUCK: Thanks, Tony. Is the rise of ISIS at least, in part, a result of the power vacuum created

by the removal of Saddam Hussein and the subsequent attempt to impose Western democracy on the region and might our resources be better channelled into more humanitarian and diplomatic efforts, rather than further military action?

TONY JONES: Scott Ludlam?

SCOTT LUDLAM: Yeah. I think it goes back to the strategic amnesia that you mentioned before and we're seeing this played out at very senior levels in the Australian Government and I fear in the United States Government as well that, seeing Prime Minister Howard on TV saying he was embarrassed. 600,000 people died as a result of that occupation and the sectarian carnage that we helped unleash, you know, embarrassed just doesn't cut it for me. So I think then for the Prime Minister to engage in this split-second deployment, practically before President Obama had closed his mouth, and certainly before the rest of the world is there, we've deployed with initially humanitarian, then just no boots on the ground and suddenly we're running weapons into one particular side of a really gruesome civil war and there are 600 pairs of boots on the ground or certainly on their way in there at the moment, I think we are at grave risk of simply repeating and pouring fuel on a fire that we helped start. So what we would like to see - I mean, you're probably aware we would like to have seen that deployment decision put to Parliament so that the scope of the mission and what exactly it is that we're asking the ADF to do can be made very clear because it's certainly not clear to me.

TONY JONES: Michael Keenan?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, I mean, thank God that we have countries in the world that are actually prepared to take some responsibility for things that happen around the globe. I mean we saw a situation where...

SCOTT LUDLAM: Do you mean the invasion in 2003?

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Like Gaza?

ANNE-AZZA ALY: Oh, maybe he means Rwanda.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Yeah.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, I'm sorry, but, well, if anyone in this - well, I mean, if anyone believes that it's a bad thing that the Australian Government has joined with our allies to protect the Yazidi people, who were going to be massacred by this barbaric organisation, literally tens of thousands of people, I mean, if anyone believes that that's a bad thing, that Australia shouldn't be taking those sorts of humanitarian actions or that our allies shouldn't be, then I would be very surprised.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: I shouldn't have to support a war...

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, it's...

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: ...in order to say that I'm against ISIS. There should be other solutions. Surely by now...

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, we're not - well, we're not...

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: ...we realise that...

MICHAEL KEENAN: ...we'll we're not talking about a war. I'm talking about the humanitarian intervention that we took to make sure that these people weren't going to be massacred. Now, I mean thank God we do have countries in the world...

TONY JONES: Okay, now...

MICHAEL KEENAN: ...that are prepared to do this.

TONY JONES: Okay, that's a point taken. What about the actual military involvement, bombing, use of the SAS, et cetera?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, at the moment, we are taking part in a humanitarian mission and there's been no further decision taken about the way Australia...

TONY JONES: But you're sending fighter planes and the SAS...

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS TALK AT ONCE

TONY JONES: ...so it's unlikely they'll be involved in a humanitarian...

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, everybody knows there's been a...

TONY JONES: ...mission unless it's to save an individual group of people.

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, the situation at the moment is that we've made a deployment to the Middle East, one that has attracted the support of almost everyone in the Parliament, to take part in a humanitarian mission. Now, the Prime Minister is going to New York tomorrow and he will talk to other like-minded and Western leaders and others in the Arab - in the Arab world about how we're going to tackle what is a very significant threat, which is the takeover of parts of Syria and northern Iraq by a terrorist organisation. Now, I think it is absolutely right and proper that Australia, as a responsible world citizen, doesn't just think it's somebody else's responsibility, that we do take some ownership over the fact that, you know, we need to make sure that this - that we - that...

TONY JONES: Do you mean take ownership over the mess that was created by the previous intervention?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, look, I reject that, Tony, and I don't think that is a fair analysis at all.

SCOTT LUDLAM: Do you think it was a good idea...

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: That's the problem.

MICHAEL KEENAN: The politics - the politics of the Middle East...

SCOTT LUDLAM: Go back to the question that was put. Do you think it was a good idea to invade Iraq in 2003?

MICHAEL KEENAN: I think it is a very misplaced think for us to be going back and revisiting that history in the context of this (indistinct)

SCOTT LUDLAM: Let's just...

ANNE-AZZA ALY: Oh, no.

SCOTT LUDLAM: Strategic amnesia again.

MICHAEL KEENAN: No, it's not...

SCOTT LUDLAM: It is.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: That's the problem...

MICHAEL KEENAN: I'm sorry, no...

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: That's the problem of the West's failure to acknowledge the connection between their imperial interests in the Middle East and the threat that comes to our soil. There is a connection there and it's about time the West acknowledges the mess that it creates and the fact is that we are - we are at risk now on our soil because of our involvement and we're not going to be seduced by this circular logic that we have to go back into Iraq because the threat has increased when renewing our involvement increases the threat. We're not fools. We know what's been happening in the last 13 years.

MICHAEL KEENAN: But do you seriously believe that the emergence of a terrorist state over part of the Middle East is not a threat to the security of the world?

TONY JONES: And, Randa...

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: But it's...

TONY JONES: ...can I just - can I just add to that another thought and that is that the Iraqi Government is, in this instance, calling for assistance because they face an existential threat?

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: One of the things that I find really problematic about this whole discussion,

particularly in Australia, is that we don't even get a sense or an understanding of the intricacies of these conflicts. I'm not an expert on this issue because I'm too busy battling Islamophobia to actually - and we're too busy talking about the narrative of Muslims as potential threats in Australia to actually get to the intricacies. As if any of us here actually understand what is going on over there. As if we really understand the mess that we have created over there and what needs to be done. It's high time that we move to actual proper debates about this and not just jump and say how high when the US goes in there. As if the US is going in there because of humanitarian reasons.

TONY JONES: Okay. I need to briefly, very briefly, hear from...

ANNE-AZZA ALY: Very briefly. Going back to the question by Marty, yes, our invasion of Iraq has played a huge role in what's - what's happening at the moment. The fact is that ISIS is barbaric and I think that a large part of it is the Western intervention and what's happened. But I think that we also need to understand that there is a vacuum of power there and that ISIS has grown incrementally in Iraq and Syria because of that vacuum of power, because of the lack of governance of the Iraqi Government and I think Australia, in terms of whether or not we go in or not, you're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't. If we stand by and do nothing, this could turn - this has already turned into a huge genocide. Make no mistake: ISIS is killing Muslims. Left, right and centre, ISIS is killing Muslims.

TONY JONES: Okay. I'm sorry to say that we did give a vote to our audience and we have to interrupt this to go to that question because we have got very little time left. This is one that comes - has been voted for from our Twitter audience. It comes from Caitlin Westropp.

BURKAS AND FEMINISM00:56:50

CAITLIN WESTROPP: Thanks, Tony. My question is can Australian society's apparent struggle to accept the burqa be interpreted more as difficulty accepting how a woman could be better off covering herself completely every time she goes out in public than anything to do with terrorism and is there a place for feminism in this debate?

TONY JONES: Randa, we'll bring you in there.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: I don't live in a country which feels that governments are entitled to tell women how to dress and, you know, to Jacqui Lambie and Cory Bernardi, if that's the kind of government that they want to live under, they should go to Saudi Arabia or Iran, because it's in those countries that women's dress is regulated by the state. I completely support the right of a woman to choose to dress as she likes and with my interviews during my PhD research with people, it seems that the burqa, which, by the way, no one wears in Australia. The burqa is what you see in Afghanistan. The niqab is what you - the face veil. It seems that is the limit of multiculturalism. In fact, the niqab has made the hijab acceptable. Once upon a time the hijab was sort of the edge of multiculturalism and now it's the niqab, which seems to be the tipping point for a lot of people when it comes to accepting difference in society and I would just say, as a feminist, that women should be able to dress as they choose and it's not our business to interrogate that decision.

TONY JONES: Okay, we've got very little time left. Short answers from everyone. Michael Keenan?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Yes, I mean, it's not up to the Government to tell people how to dress and I wouldn't want to live in a country that does that.

TONY JONES: So do you ever tell that to your colleagues who claim otherwise?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, look, I haven't - look, I haven't had a conversation with Corey, who is a friend of mine but...

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: Why is he so obsessed with the burqa?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, look, I haven't had a conversation with him about this...

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: It's just...

MICHAEL KEENAN: He is entitled to his view.

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH: ...a fetish.

MARK DREYFUS: You should. You should.

MICHAEL KEENAN: But that is not the view of the Government.

TONY JONES: Could it be time that you had a conversation with him about this?

MICHAEL KEENAN: Well, he is entitled to his view but that is not the view of the Government and he is just one voice.

TONY JONES: Scott Ludlam?

SCOTT LUDLAM: Don't ask me. I'm a white guy. Ask the Islamic women how they want to dress.

TONY JONES: Okay, and I will ask you. I was going anyway.

ANNE-AZZA ALY: Well, I think that, you know, every time politicians don't have anything intelligent to say they tend to fall back on the default of the burqa and, you know, I think we pay our politicians a substantial amount of money and they have an obligation to be informed instead of bumbling through media interviews and equating terrorism with the burqa. So I'm saying to Jacqui Lambie, you can give me a call any time. I will give you a half an hour tutorial, terrorism 101.

TONY JONES: Mark Dreyfus, we've run out of time, sorry.

MARK DREYFUS: I want to live - I want to live in an Australia of respect and acceptance and I've got no time for the comments of Cory Bernardi and no time for the comments of Jacqui Lambie on this. Those are inflammatory comments. This, of all times, is not a time when they should be saying all of

those things and I'm very heartened to hear the views that have been expressed here.

TONY JONES: And that is all we have time for, I'm sorry to say. Please thank our panel: Scott Ludlam, Michael Keenan, Randa Abdel-Fattah, Anne Azza Aly and Mark Dreyfus. Thank you. Thank you very much. Next Monday on Q&A: the Minister for Education, Leader of the House Christopher Pyne; former Treasurer Wayne Swan; celebrated actor and activist Tony Barry; the head of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kate Carnell; and the political editor of the Australian Financial Review, Laura Tingle. Until then, goodnight

## **Anne-Azza Aly**

Dr Anne Aly is a research fellow at Curtin University, Perth, with a focus on radicalisation, counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism.

Anne leads the Countering Online Violent Extremism Research (COVER) Program at the university's Centre for Culture and Technology. Her research focuses on the use of social media by violent extremists and strategies to interrupt online activities, including understanding of the audience and the role of victims and formers in counter narratives to extremism. She has written over 50 publications on topics ranging from Islamic identity to counter narratives and the policy response to violent extremism. Anne is the author of four books including *Terrorism and Global Security: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*-Australia's first text book on terrorism and security.

She was appointed to the board of the Council for Australian-Arab Relations in 2009 and is currently serving a second term on the board. Also in 2009, she received the Australian Institute of Professional Intelligence Officers publications award for her theoretical model of internet radicalisation.

In 2011 Anne was inducted into the inaugural WA Women's Hall of Fame, and in 2013 she was named one of Australia's most influential women in the Financial Review/ Westpac 100 Women of Influence Awards. Anne is also the Founding Chair of People Against Violent Extremism (PAVE), a not-for-profit organisation focused on challenging violent extremism and radicalization through intervention programs.

Anne was born in Egypt, grew up in Sydney and now lives in Perth with her husband and two adult sons.

## **Randa Abdel-Fattah**

Randa Abdel-Fattah was born in Sydney in 1979. She is a Muslim of Palestinian and Egyptian heritage. She grew up in Melbourne and attended a Catholic primary school and Islamic secondary college where she obtained an International Baccalaureate. She studied Art and Law at Melbourne University during which time she was the Media Liaison Officer at the Islamic Council of Victoria, a role which afforded her the opportunity to write for newspapers and engage with media institutions about their representation of Muslims and Islam.

During university and her role at the ICV, Randa was a passionate human rights advocate and stood in the 1996 federal election as a member of the Unity Party - Say No To Hanson. Randa has also been deeply interested in inter-faith dialogue and has been a member of various inter-faith networks. She also volunteered with different human rights and migrant resource organisations including the Australian Arabic Council, the Victorian Migrant Resource Centre, the Islamic Women's Welfare Council, the Palestine human rights campaign and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

Randa has used her writing as a medium for expressing her views about the occupation of Palestine. Her articles about Palestine, Australian Muslims and the misunderstood status of

women in Islam have been published in *The Australian*, *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Canberra Times*, *New Matilda* and *Le Monde*.

A seasoned writer, Randa has written several books for young adults, including *Does my head look big in this?*, *Ten Things I Hate About Me* and *Where The Streets Had A Name* which won Australia's Golden Inky Award in 2009, an international award for teenage literature. In 2008 she was also awarded the Kathleen Mitchell Award, a biennial literary award that acknowledges excellence in writers under 30. Her books are published in over fifteen countries.

She has recently released her latest young adult novel, *Noah's Law*, a legal thriller, and plans to try her luck at children's books. Randa is also venturing into adult literature, currently working on a novel entitled *No Sex in The City*.

Randa is a regular guest at schools around Australia addressing students about her books and the social justice issues they raise. She has been a guest at Sweden's Gothenburg and Litterlund book festivals (2007 and 2008) and Kuala Lumpur's Book festival (2008). She has also toured in Brunei and the UK.

Randa lives in Sydney with her husband and their two children. She worked as a litigation lawyer for almost ten years but recently stopped. She is now undertaking a PhD exploring everyday multiculturalism and racism in Australia.