

What is radicalisation?

In Australia only a very small number of people have used or will ever use violence to promote their cause. Those who do have most likely undergone a process called 'radicalisation'.

Freedom of expression

Everyone in Australia has the right to express their beliefs and group interests openly. As a democratic society, Australia protects the rights of all law-abiding people, including those who belong to minority political, religious and ethnic groups.

However, it becomes a concern to everybody, including families, communities and law enforcement, if a person begins to advocate or use violence to achieve a political, religious or ideological goal.

What is radicalisation?

Radicalisation happens when a person's thinking and behaviour become significantly different from how most of the members of their society and community view social issues and participate politically. Only small numbers of people radicalise and they can be from a diverse range of ethnic, national, political and religious groups.

As a person radicalises they may begin to seek to change significantly the nature of society and government. However, if someone decides that using fear, terror or violence is justified to achieve ideological, political or social change – this is violent extremism.

Exactly what influences individuals to go down a path of using or supporting violence to seek change can be difficult to determine, but there can be a number of factors. The radicalisation process is unique to each person who undergoes it, and in most cases will not cause serious harm. In exceptional circumstances, however, the decisions made by a person radicalising can result in a serious and lethal act of violent extremism.

Those who radicalise and display threatening behaviour, incite hatred or promote the use of violence for their cause require some form of intervention. This may come from family, religious or community leaders or law enforcement.

Communities play a vital role in assisting people to move away from violent extremism and intervening to stop acts of violence before they are committed.

More information

You can learn more about radicalisation in the information sheet: *Understanding the radicalisation process*

If you are concerned somebody you know may be radicalising, you can find more in the following information sheet: *I am worried somebody I know is radicalising ... What can I do?*