Reintegrating children, women and families returning to Australia from foreign conflict zones:

The role of community support

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September 2019

FINAL REPORT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFP	Australian Federal Police
AIVD	Dutch Security and Intelligence Service
ASIS	Australian Secret Intelligence Service
AMF	Australian Multicultural Foundation
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CVE	Countering violent extremism
CVESC	Countering Violent Extremism Sub-Committee
Daesh	*al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham*
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
EU	European Union
FTF	Foreign terrorist fighter
GCTF	Global Counter-Terrorism Forum
ICCT	International Centre for Counter Terrorism—The Hague
IS	Islamic State
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
MCRG	Muslim Community Reference Group
NCTC	National Counter-Terrorism Committee
NCTV	National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism
NGO	Non-governmental organisation

PVE	Preventing violent extremism
RAN	Radicalisation Awareness Network
UN	United Nations
UNCCT	United Nations Centre for Counter-Terrorism
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VE	Violent extremism

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The Australian Government describes violent extremism as follows (emphasis in original):

> **Violent extremism** is the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals. This includes terrorism and other forms of politically motivated and communal violence.
>
> *All forms of violent extremism seek change through fear and intimidation rather than through peaceful means.*
>
> If a person or group decides that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change, and then acts accordingly, this is violent extremism. (COAG, 7)

Radicalisation is defined by the Australian Government in the following way:

> **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. (COAG, 7)

Countering violent extremism (CVE) is described by the Australian Government as:

> The banner used to describe efforts of Australian governments to prevent processes of radicalisation leading to violent extremism, including terrorism, and where possible to help individuals disengage from a preparedness to support or commit acts of violence to achieve political, social or ideological ends. (Commonwealth of Australia 2015, 16)

The International Centre for Counter-terrorism (ICCT) defines **reintegration** as:

> A safe transition to the community, by which the individual proceeds to live a law-abiding life following his or her release and acquires attitudes and behaviours that generally lead to a productive functioning in society (van der Heide and Geenen, 2017, 8).

The ICCT defines **rehabilitation** as:

> A purposeful, planned intervention, which aims to change characteristics of the offender (attitudes, cognitive skills and processes, personality or mental health, and social, educational or vocational skills) that are believed to be the cause of the individual's criminal behaviour, with the intention to reduce the chance that the individual will re-offend' (van der Heide and Geenen, 2017,8).

The Australian Government employs the term *disengagement* rather than *deradicalisation* as a policy preference. It notes the distinctions drawn in the research literature between the terms **deradicalisation** and **disengagement:**

> Deradicalisation reflects 'attitudinal modification involving a change in beliefs', whereas disengagement refers to 'behavioural modification and a renunciation of violence. The distinction between deradicalisation and disengagement is also recognised in the Australian Government resource, *Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation in Australia* [2015]. However, the various terms are sometimes used interchangeably or understood differently' (Parliament of Australia, 2017)

INTRODUCTION

Foreign terrorist fighters – those who travel in order to perpetrate, plan, prepare or participate in terrorist and related violent conflicts in countries where they are neither resident nor nationals (UN Security Council Resolution 2178/2014) – are not a new phenomenon (Malet 2011). However, the contemporary landscape of foreign terrorist fighters and the risks and threats they pose to for the dissemination and export of terrorism around the world has reinvigorated academic and policy attention and analysis over the last few years (Hegghammer 2013; Soufan Group 2015).

This has particularly been the case since 2014, when the Islamic State (IS) terrorist movement declared itself as an aspiring caliphate by seizing territory straddling Syria and Iraq. Since then, many of the 120 countries that have generated over 40,000 foreign fighters making their way to IS territories (Jawaid 2017) have focused on designing measures to meet a range of challenges posed by returning foreign fighters. These include developing or adapting legislative, policy and social measures intended to prevent foreign fighters from returning home; limit their capacity to mount domestic attacks or radicalise others in their home countries, and, where possible, rehabilitate and reintegrate those who have become disenchanted with violent extremist ideology (Holmer and Shtuni 2017).

Australia has contributed somewhere between 100-120 active foreign fighters to IS territories (Zammit 2015). Like many other countries, various security-focused government measures have been designed to address the challenges of foreign fighter returnees. However, the number of active foreign terrorist fighters who are (or were until their deaths) Australian nationals in Syria and Iraq does not reflect the full extent of Australian nationals in IS territories. Specifically, it does not count the women, children and relatives of foreign fighters who travelled with fighters, joined them later, or, in the case of children, were born to Australian nationals in IS-occupied territories, for whom a wholly security-based response to their return by government may be neither feasible nor desirable.

With recent strategic military initiatives and responses in Iraq and Syria now significantly shrinking IS-controlled territories, funds and personnel, Australia is preparing for a potential increase in the return of children, wives/widows and other close relatives of foreign fighters, in many cases independently of fighters themselves. Current estimates of the numbers of potential child, women and/or family returnees to Australia (not including any foreign fighters who may seek to return) stand at approximately 40 nationally and may potentially be higher (Project Sponsor Group, August 2018). However, this number may go up or down depending on a range of intersecting circumstances in the broader external environment, including changes in international political or conflict dynamics and domestic legislative, policy or structural shifts.

The UN has recently emphasised the importance of designing and implementing rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for returning foreign terrorist fighters in UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014). The EU has also recently called for the development of risk assessment tools and rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for these returning foreign fighters. It emphasises that programmes should be developed both inside and outside of correctional settings, particularly as a result of the fact that the complexity of collecting the evidence necessary for prosecutions may mean that returning foreign fighters and their families who participated in organising or executing acts of terrorism and other forms of violence, may be difficult to prosecute (Council of the European Union, 10).

Returnee family members present both more complex and different challenges for reintegration and rehabilitation efforts compared to active foreign fighters. Some may be victims rather than perpetrators of violent extremist action, or may be both victims *and* violent actors or supporters based on when and how they arrived in conflict zones and their experiences and influences once in these territories. Those experiences can include indoctrination, conditioning, and front-line experiences of fighting and

participation in, or observation of, atrocities (RAN, 2016). Children may arrive back from conflict zones unaccompanied or with one or more parents, family members, guardians or as orphans. In some cases, the children may need to be separated from family and/or relocated in order to be reintegrated successfully into the community (RAN, 2016). They may be radicalised, subject to trauma, or both.

Currently, the literature focusing on the reintegration of families who return with or without foreign fighters, both in Australia and internationally, remains extremely limited, even when the 'grey literature' produced by think tanks, NGOs and policy groups is taken into account. This gap is exacerbated by the lack of attention given to the capacity for and impacts of community support in rehabilitation and reintegration efforts occurring within local community settings and contexts. Nor has there been any assessment in Australia of how willing or reluctant local communities may be to support such efforts. Consequently, the importance of developing more nuanced understanding of the different types of challenges and needs both faced and posed by those returning from violent extremist conflict zones has been highlighted in recent work. As Jawaid (2017, 106) points out,

> Differentiating between those who are combatants with IS (and other militant groups), those who have been compelled to travel (children, wives, relatives), those who support groups that are fighting IS, and those who have not engaged in violent activity (such as humanitarian aid workers) is critical but severely lacking.

However, such distinctions, and the policy and programming treatment options designed to address them, are now beginning to emerge in government planning. For example, the Australian government has recently developed processes for guiding frontline service providers and state professionals in understanding and working with children and families who are in many cases both victims and perpetrators of violence. The needs of returning children in particular have emerged as central to the strategies needed to foster successful reintegration and rehabilitation, and significant attention is devoted in policy considerations to addressing and managing issues for these children related to trauma, conditioning, intergenerational impacts of war and risk, protective and other resilience factors (Horgan et al. 2016; Benotman and Malik 2016; Olidort 2016; Devakumar et al. 2014; Violence and Injury Prevention Programme WHO Regional Office for Europe 2007; Masten and Narayan 2012).

Nevertheless, current Australian and international policy does not address the role of community support or the impact of community responses to the presence of returnees as part of its policy settings. Only Denmark has developed a comprehensive approach to both countering violent extremism and deradicalising foreign fighters and their families that engages communities in support measures at the levels of education, employment and community socialisation through the Aarhus Exit Programme (Bertelsen 2015). The Aarhus Programme aims to create trust between authorities and the social circles in which radicalised individuals operate, including, for example, developing close relationships with religious institutions known to support IS, in addition to providing trained mentors to work with individuals identified as being at risk of radicalisation or who have already radicalised. There is also support for families to create networks that support each other, which has a ripple effect in terms of weakening the resolve of potential foreign fighters.

However, government action alone will not guarantee successful reintegration if communities are resistant to or lack capacity to offer support. A significant gap in the field is the limited nature of knowledge and information currently available on *community perspectives on and support capacity for the reintegration of children and families of foreign terrorist fighters in local communities.* Community involvement is hypothesised as essential both to enhance the prospects of successful reintegration for child and family returnees, and to help reduce or mitigate a number of risks for both those returning and for communities

themselves. These risks include rejection of returnees by communities or family members; negative impacts of child and family separation; lack of knowledge concerning willingness, capabilities and gaps in community resources to support child and family reintegration, and failure to develop robust co-designed models for government-community partnerships in this area. Additional risks are those created by community rejection and misunderstanding of child and family returnee vulnerabilities, which can lead to increased vulnerability, social isolation and potential (re)radicalisation for these individuals.

The following are the key research questions the current study seeks to address:

- What role does community support play in addressing the challenges of successfully reintegrating children, women and families returning from violent extremist conflict zones?
- What are the perceived risks, benefits, vulnerabilities and protections, from community perspectives, of supporting child and family returnees to reintegrate in local communities?
- How willing are communities to partner with government agencies in supporting child and family returnees, and what might enhance or inhibit these partnerships?
- What level of tolerance exists, from community standpoints, for the role of law enforcement in monitoring any potential national security risks posed by child and family returnees?
- What would a successful reintegration partnership model look like from community perspectives, and who should develop and implement these models?

METHODOLOGY

The project received Deakin University Human Research Ethics approval (DUHREC ID# 2017-274) on 11 October 2017 and concluded on 30 September 2017.

This qualitative research study involved four methodological components, including independent evaluation throughout each of the project's stages.

- Literature review

- Community and government stakeholder interviews

- Project sponsor consultation in developing a draft community reintegration model

- Community-government tabletop exercise: refining the draft community reintegration model

- Independent evaluation at each of the study's main stages conducted by the Australian Multicultural Foundation

Literature review

The literature review provides theoretical and conceptual grounding for empirical research to develop and evaluate a pilot model to assess community capacity and needs in supporting returning children, women and families.

This literature review attempted to systematically collect and evaluate a wide array of literature that could be utilised to inform the empirical research in order to identify key knowledge gaps in the existing body of research on this topic. As noted above the current literature on individuals who have left various Western and non-Western countries to participate in the conflict in Syria and Iraq, as well as receive training to carry out or participate in terrorist activities, is necessarily limited due to the inevitable difficulties of conducting empirical research in conflict zones and with people who are engaged in illegal activities. Moreover, the

conflict in Syria and Iraq, in research terms, is relatively recent for a developed body of theoretical literature to have emerged. The phenomenon of returning foreign fighters is even more recent and the current research which does exist has often not differentiated between foreign fighters and their families. Currently there is a small body of literature which specifically addresses the unique roles of women and children in the conflict and in IS particularly.

Nevertheless, despite these limitations there is a growing body of literature, including some empirical studies, which have begun to analyse in increasing detail the current trends and actors in contemporary violent extremism. There is also a significant body of literature on terrorism going back decades, which is briefly reviewed here. This review also drew on some valuable literature documenting processes of post-conflict reintegration and rehabilitation in conflict zones around the world. Publically available Australian government documentation was utilised extensively for our review of Australian CVE policy. In addition, we analysed the growing body of material on radicalisation and de-radicalisation, which largely examines individual-level processes but is valuable for informing responses to returnees.

This literature review focused on the knowledge that would support policy actors to evaluate the importance of community engagement and the methodologies which could be applied to the challenge of managing the reintegration of returnees in the Australian context in an inclusive manner. In order to do this, we undertook a systematic search of both peer-reviewed literature in journals, as well as an important body of 'grey' literature produced by various NGOs and think tanks around the world. This 'grey' literature is particularly significant in the context of an emerging phenomenon such as returnees because academic peer review processes mean that this research may only be published a year or more after empirical research has been conducted.

Peer-reviewed literature was sourced through EBSCO Academic Search Premier, a key interdisciplinary database of more than 10 000 journals from the social sciences and humanities, anthropology, engineering, law and the sciences. Grey literature was sourced by finding the first 50 results of google searches on identified key words and by reviewing the literature of key organisations involved in research on violent extremism such as the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), Quilliam, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague (ICCT) and others.

In addition, we searched the bibliographies of relevant articles in the peer reviewed and grey literature in order to identify the key authors and pieces of research cited by leading analysts. While every effort was made to be comprehensive in our literature search, we were inevitably constrained by time and resources and were not able to include the entire universe of material, which is available. However, the searches that were conducted will support evidence-based policy- making based on the literature surveyed and collated for this project.

The key word search conducted in both the academic database and on Google included the following search terms:

- Violent extremis- + children, families, women

- Radicalisation/de-radicalisation

- Terrorism

- Islamic State

- Returnees

- Foreign fighters

- Disengagement

- Resilience/reintegration/rehabilitation + war, conflict

- Resilience/ reintegration/rehabilitation + child/ren, women, families

- CVE + interventions/policy/government-community partnerships

The resulting literature items collected fell into the following broad categories:

- Children/youth + violent extremism/counter-extremism/reintegration/rehabilitation

- Countering violent extremism in Australia

- Countering violent extremism internationally

- CVE online

- General terrorism

- Terrorism and extremism in Australia

- Terrorism and women

- Radicalisation/re-radicalisation

- Reintegration/rehabilitation/demobilisation/disengagement

- Violent extremism and resilience/social cohesion

The nascent nature of this research emerged, in particular, in searches in the academic database; for example a search on foreign fighters and reintegration did not yield any results and a search on de-radicalisation and community produced 15 results with relatively weak relevance.

These results point to the critical importance of methodically gathering and analysing empirical data on returnees in order to formulate effective and nuanced policy and practical responses.

Community and government stakeholder interviews

Participant recruitment and sampling

Participant recruitment for government stakeholders took place primarily through referrals from the government sponsors of the research, the AFP and Victoria Police. Participant recruitment for community participants was conducted through both the project's community partner, the AMF, and the researchers' existing community and government networks as well as snowballing referrals from participants. The sampling approach was purposive, based on knowledge and expertise in relation to the research topic. All except one government interviewee were located in Victoria on the basis of a foreshadowed Victorian trial of the community support reintegration model developed as an outcome of the study.

In addition, although not part of the initial study design, the project also included additional interviews with professional practitioners based on suggestions from other participants who had explicit knowledge and familiarity with the topic under investigation. These professional practitioners comprised a registered psychologist and a legal practitioner.

The project met its stated recruitment thresholds for both community (15-20) and government participants

(5-10) as outlined in the research proposal approved by CVESC. The gender breakdown of community participants (n=16) was eleven males and five females; one male participant replaced an initially scheduled female participant who subsequently was not available for interview during the project time frame. Government interviewees (n=5) consisted of three males and two females. Professional practitioners (n=2) were evenly divided between one male and one female.

Participant interviews

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with all participants in each participant category listed above. Semi-structured interviews are particularly useful for capturing 'elaborated in-depth responses' (Gillham 2000, 19) to a series of topics but are flexible enough to allow for probing and clarification of issues as they emerge (Mann 2016). Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview questionnaire (Appendix 1). All interviews were recorded, if permission was granted by interviewees, and either simultaneously transcribed during the interview by one of the researchers with simultaneous transcription skills, or subsequently transcribed by a professional transcription agency where simultaneous transcription was not feasible. All interviews were de-identified and placed on a secure, double-password-protected Deakin share-drive accessible only by the researchers.

Because this study concerns an emerging social phenomenon, it was anticipated that few interviewees would have had direct experience of working with the families of returnees. As a result the interviews were conducted utilising two hypothetical scenarios (Appendix 2).

Hypothetical Scenario 1 detailed the story of a young woman (Maryam) who travelled to Syria with her husband who subsequently joined IS. **Hypothetical Scenario 2** concerns a child (Waleed) whose father was a foreign fighter and who returned to Australia with his mother. Eight community participants chose the Maryam scenario, while seven chose the Waleed scenario. One community interviewee discussed both scenarios. All government interviewees and professional practitioners chose the Waleed scenario. The choices of interviewees regarding the scenarios did not appear to be linked to their gender as five male community participants chose Maryam, although the majority of women, except one interviewee, chose to discuss the scenario about a women, Maryam. Government interviewees chose Waleed regardless of their gender.

The scenarios were de-identified composites of cases that the AFP had dealt with and which they shared with this project for the purposes of this study. The hypothetical scenarios were rendered as composites by the AFP prior to sharing them with the research team, who then further refined the scenarios. These hypothetical scenarios provided a valuable means to disaggregate interviewee responses to the challenge of reintegrating women and children as separate entities. By contrast, much literature to date analysing returnees has conflated these two categories of individuals, obscuring their different needs and challenges as a result, although there are undoubtedly cross-cutting issues that affect both female and child returnees.

Data analysis

The data collected from interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis has been described as a 'method for identifying, analysing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set' (Braun and Clarke, 2006). A theme captures and unifies fragments of information and ideas into a coherent concept that 'tells a story' about the data, for example what it says about 'gender' or 'violence' or 'community'. These themes can be developed either deductively by formulating a hypothesis and conceptual framework prior to research, which is tested against the empirical data collected, or inductively, where less structure is imposed on the data and the researcher seeks to understand the meaning that can be derived organically from the data. In reality most research involves a combination of

these methodologies, although it may be primarily oriented towards inductive or deductive analysis.

The research for this study combined both deductive and inductive elements. The deductive element rests on the way in which the study was guided by an already formulated research question: *What role does community support play in the successful reintegration of child and family returnees from foreign conflict zones?* This question was developed on the basis of a provisional hypothesis, namely, that community support does play some role in influencing the success and effectiveness of reintegrating non-combatant foreign conflict returnees. A semi-structured interview questionnaire was developed to probe this question in more depth with community and government stakeholders. Conversely, the study was inductive in the sense that it did not try to test an already formulated hypothesis about *what* the role of community support could be, but instead kept this question open-ended to be informed by the data that emerged from community and government interviews.

Trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative data inquiry

Like quantitative researchers, qualitative social science researchers need to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of their research. While quantitative researchers use the concepts of 'validity' and 'reliability' to measure the credibility of their research, evaluating the trustworthiness of qualitative research relies on different criteria and standards. Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed four key criteria that are now widely used to establish the trustworthiness of qualitative research. These include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. There are recognised techniques for ascertaining the extent to which each of these criteria have been applied in a research study.

Credibility

Credibility concerns the researcher's confidence in the 'truth' or validity of their findings. The key techniques that were utilised in this study to establish the credibility of the research include:

- Prolonged engagement with community and government participants, stakeholders and settings

- Peer de-briefing during data analysis and interpretation

- Triangulation of data sources

- Member checks with both government and community participants

Prolonged engagement: interviews and thematic coding

'Prolonged engagement' concerns the researcher or researchers immersing themselves in the field long enough to understand the social context of a particular phenomenon, including speaking with a range of relevant actors. Following the fieldwork, researchers immerse themselves in the data collected, reading and re-reading it during the coding process. In this study interviews with both community and government stakeholders were held over an extended period of several months, which allowed the researchers to develop an in-depth understanding of how both community and government representatives understood the challenge of reintegration and some of the key trends that appeared to be emerging across interviews. Peer de-briefing was also woven into the process of prolonged engagement and facilitated this preliminary analysis. Peer de-briefing refers to a process of systematic engagement between researchers where each researcher exposes their ideas and analysis to a peer or colleague in order bring to light 'aspects of the inquiry' that may have otherwise remained implicit (Lincoln and Guba 1985, 308). This can help to strengthen the quality of research. In this study interviews were conducted by two researchers who both took notes on the interviews. These two sets of interview notes were both placed on a share drive for analysis and were

available for comparison.

The subsequent coding of the interview transcripts into themes formed part of the 'prolonged engagement' with the data. Peer-debriefing between the researchers played a continuing role in establishing and refining the codes used to analyse the transcripts. The phases of thematic coding that were undertaken for this study are detailed below.

Data Analysis Phase One

In the first phase of coding, a preliminary coding framework was developed for both community and government interviewees. This colour-coded coding framework identified the key themes which the interview questionnaire had sought to explore as follows:

1. **Initial participant response to selected hypothetical scenario (full open-ended) (Olive Green)** (Q1)

2. **Reintegration challenges (Yellow)**

-        Personal challenges for those reintegrating (Q2)

-        Community challenges in engaging with/supporting returnees (Q3)

-        Policy challenges for reintegrating returnees in the community (Q4)

3. **Reintegration support needs and structures (Green)**

-        Support needs – returning children (Q 6, 7)

-        Support needs – returning women/families (Q 6, 7)

-        Who should provide which kind of support? (Q 8)

4. **Role of communities in providing/extending support for reintegration (Blue)**

-        Perceived levels of acceptance/comfort for communities engaging with returnees (Q5)

-        Role of communities in providing/extending support (Q10)

-        What resources are needed by communities to provide this support? (Q11)

-        Barriers for communities in providing support (Q12)

5. **Perceptions of risk (Light Grey)**

-        Risks for returning children (Q9)

-        Risks for returning women/families (Q9)

-        Risks for communities in engaging/providing support (Q13)

-        Managing perceived risks (Q14)

6. **Developing partnerships between communities and government to support reintegration (Pink)**

-        Willingness by communities to partner (Q15)

-        What would successful partnerships on reintegration look like? (Q16)

-        Responsibilities of community and government in reintegration partnerships (Q17)

Using this coding framework the two researchers read through and reviewed all the data from community and government interviewees in order to develop a more detailed set of codes under each theme. Thus, for example, the theme 'Reintegration challenges' was disaggregated into 'Reintegration challenges for women' and 'Reintegration challenges for children' with a series of sub-codes below each of these areas. In addition these challenges were disaggregated between community and government stakeholders with one researcher focusing on developing codes for community interviewees and another for government interviews. The codes that each researcher developed for community or government interviewees were reviewed by the second researcher during peer de-briefing and refined as necessary.

The following is an example for an extended set of codes relating to reintegration challenges identified by community and government stakeholders respectively (see Appendix 3 for the full coding document):

Q2: COMMUNITY RESPONDENTS: Reintegration challenges - Yellow

Challenges for those reintegrating – children (Q2) **–Yellow 1**

o   Experience of trauma – **[Yellow 1A]**

o   Emotional challenges – **[Yellow 1B]**

o   Social challenges – **[Yellow 1C]**

o   Lack of family support –[**Yellow 1D]**

o   Lack of male role-model **[Yellow 1E]**

Challenges for those reintegrating – women/families (Q2) – **[Yellow 2]**

o   Lack of social support, social isolation – [**Yellow 2A]**

o   Lack of family support – **[Yellow 2B]**

o   Lack of access to required social and economic resources – [**Yellow 2C]**

o   Experience of trauma in conflict zone – **[Yellow 2D]**

o   Complex/multiple challenges – **[Yellow 2E]**

o   Mental health issues – [**Yellow 2F]**

o   Community stigma/lack of acceptance **– [Yellow 2G]**

o   Negotiating identity/relationships as a returnee **– [Yellow 2H]**

o   Location of reintegration – near or away from familiars – [**Yellow 2J]**

Q2: GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS and Professional Practitioners: Reintegration challenges

Personal challenges for children: [Yellow 1]

o   Social isolation, feeling different, lack of belonging – [**Yellow 1A]**

o   Mental health concerns – [**Yellow 1B]**

o   Age-based/developmental vulnerability – **[Yellow 1C]**

o   Influence on children of still-radicalised parent/s – **[Yellow 1D]**

o   Catching up on educational standards/opportunities – **[Yellow 1E]**

o   Lack of local community acceptance – **[Yellow 1F]**

Personal challenges for women/families - [Yellow 2]

o   Social isolation – **[Yellow 2A]**

o   Lack of family support – **[Yellow 2B]**

o   Lack of knowledge/inability to navigate service and support landscape – **[Yellow 2C]**

o   Lack of community acceptance – **[Yellow 2D]**

Data Analysis Phase Three

In a third phase of coding, the data was disaggregated by question, the central scenario character (Waleed or Maryam) and participant category (government, community, professional practitioner). Thus for each question four documents were produced e.g. Q2 Community Maryam, Q2 Community Waleed, Q2 Government Maryam, Q2 Government Waleed, Q2 Professional Practitioner Maryam, Q2 Professional Practitioner Waleed. These disaggregated documents were then analysed using the detailed coding framework outlined above (see Appendix 4 for an example of a coded document). The disaggregation made it possible to identify whether there were differences between community and government responses to each question as well as the extent to which responses differed depending on whether the interviewee was talking about a child returnee (Waleed) or adult female returnee (Maryam).

Data Analysis Phase Four

In the final phase of analysis, the disaggregated data was brought together again to analyse the nuances that emerged in relation to each theme through the detailed engagement with and coding of the empirical data.

Triangulation

This research used triangulation in order to strengthen the credibility of the research. Triangulation involves using multiple data sources in order to ensure that the research is comprehensive and takes account of multiple perspectives on the question investigated. For this reason the research study included a review of both academic and grey literature on a range of issues related to the reintegration of the families for foreign fighters, as well as soliciting the viewpoints of community and government stakeholders and professional practitioners. The research also employed 'analyst triangulation', in which different perspectives on the *findings* of the research are elicited from a panel of engaged stakeholders. This occurred during consultative engagement with various stakeholders from both community and government on a preliminary model for community reintegration, documented in more detail below.

Member checks

Member checks play a very similar role to 'analyst triangulation'. This is when data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions are tested with members of those groups from whom the data were originally obtained (Qualitative Research Guidelines Project, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2006). Lincoln and Guba (1985) have emphasised the importance of this technique for establishing credibility, although it is not necessarily applicable in all qualitative research. In this study, however, member checks were a particularly valuable part of the research methodology as community and government stakeholders who had been interviewed were invited to a subsequent community-government tabletop exercise

approximately 1 month before the final report was drafted. This exercise provided participants with an opportunity to review the draft community reintegration model developed as a result of the information they shared in their interviews with the researchers in an earlier phase of the research. The model was subsequently refined as a result of the inputs offered through this engagement.

Transferability

Transferability relates to the extent to which the research is applicable in contexts other than where it was conducted. This can sometimes be a complex requirement in qualitative research, which generally focuses on in-depth interpretative analysis of a particular case that is not easily generalisable across different contexts. Here, 'the researcher cannot know the sites that may wish to transfer the findings' (Nowell, Norris, White and Moules 2017, 3). Nevertheless, the transferability of qualitative research can be facilitated by what anthropologist Geertz (1973, 5) has called 'thick description'. Thick description refers to a detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context (Holloway 1997). These 'thick descriptions' make it possible for researchers reading the analysis to make an informed assessment as to whether the findings and analysis developed in one context, could be applicable in another context. In this study, 'thick description' of the data is provided in two chapters on community and government interview responses, which provide a detailed and often *verbatim* account of the perspectives of these two sectors on the role of communities in reintegrating the families of foreign fighters.

Dependability

Dependability relates to the replicability of the research process. It asks whether another researcher would be able to replicate the study based on the information provided by a research study. Dependability is primarily established through making the research processes transparent in a 'dense description' of research methods (Krefting 1991). This makes the research 'auditable' in the sense that researchers reading the analysis are able to understand how research conclusions were arrived at. The most formal type of dependability testing is an external audit of the research process. In this study, the extended methodology section, which has been provided, is an attempt to ensure that the research methods and process of this study are explicit and transparent. The external audit of the research process is further supported by the independent evaluation conducted by the Australian Multicultural Foundation.

Confirmability

Confirmability relates to demonstrating that the researcher's findings and interpretations are clearly derived from the data and are not distorted by bias. This requires the researcher to 'demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been reached' (Nowell 2017, 3). This study has sought to demonstrate confirmability by providing a detailed description of the way in which the data was coded so that it is possible for readers to follow the interpretative process that led to the findings and conclusions derived from the data.

Project sponsor and community-government stakeholder consultations

A key principle guiding this research was to engage in a consultative process with stakeholders around the research findings in order to refine a model that was attuned to the needs of both community and government.

Project sponsor consultation

The first step in the consultation process was a meeting with the project sponsors in August 2018. The purpose of this meeting was to convene an 'in-house' discussion between the researchers and project sponsors (AFP, Victoria Police and the AMF) about the draft model in preparation for a more inclusive

tabletop engagement with a wider range of external stakeholders. The meeting therefore included a purposive rather than representative sample of sponsor-stakeholder organisations. Notes were taken on the discussion by the research team and informed the amendments that were subsequently made to the model.

The key changes made to the draft model as a result of the project sponsor consultation were to identify the intervention level (primary, secondary or tertiary) within the process flow diagram; to delineate the two chief functions of the Community Support Group model with respect to 1. needs analysis and 2. case management services; and finally, to broaden the risk assessment and monitoring section of the model to include coordination between government and community on establishing and managing risk analyses and responses, rather than leaving this wholly to government and law enforcement.

In the meeting the project sponsors were updated on the headline findings that had emerged from the research, as well as points of alignment between the perspectives of community and government stakeholders. Documents detailing these preliminary findings and the points of alignment between community and government stakeholders' perspectives were distributed. These are attached as Appendices 5 and 6. A draft community reintegration model (see Figure 1 below) was also distributed for discussion. The meeting was briefed about how the model had been developed on the basis of the analysis of the empirical data from community and government interviews, as well as best practice models appropriate to Australian community services and risk management contexts. In particular, the initial draft reintegration model drew on the Victorian Community Support Group (CSGs) and the Risk Assessment and Management Panel (RAMP) frameworks. Both these models were mentioned during interviews by community and government stakeholders as best practice examples.

The draft reintegration model presented at the project sponsor consultation drew on principles of inclusive co-design of programmes by government and community to foster social cohesion and resilience among young people, which is currently being piloted through the CSG model in Victoria. This is reflected in Figure 1 below with the proposal for a 'CSG style' community-government panel to manage the reintegration of families of returnees.

On the other hand, the RAMP model brings together local agencies in a formal meeting to assess risk relating to violence against women and children. This approach to risk assessment and management is reflected in the figure below, which includes a proposal for a 'LE RAMP-style panel' for risk assessment and monitoring, which would be police and government led with multi-agency input for risk analysis and response. These two methodologies together seek to address the dual need of reintegration processes to address both community inclusion as well as ongoing strategic risk assessment. Building on existing organisational infrastructure also aligns with the recommendations of international organisations such as European Commission's Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), who argue that in contexts where only a small numbers of foreign fighters or their families are expected to return, a careful assessment needs to be made as to whether the resources needed to set up completely new initiatives need to be expended.

The key point of contention to emerge in the study data between community and government stakeholders is reflected at the 'pointy end' of the triangle in the figure below relating to *who* should be the community based point of contact. There is consensus between community and government interviewees that community members should be the primary public interface in the reintegration process and that there should be a single, community based point of contact for returnees, which employs a case-based approach to manage the families of returnees. However, who this community interface should be was contested by government interviewees, who believed that government-run social services or community-focused law enforcement were the best option. Another point of contention between government and community respondents concerns risk management, which government interviewees saw at the state's primary

responsibility. The headline findings presented at the meeting noted the inherent challenges in managing a genuinely collaborative approach across agencies and partners in community and government when differing thresholds of intervention, support and monitoring may apply and there may be different community and government expectations.

A crucial point of discussion in the meeting therefore concerned the nature of this community interface, i.e. which organisations or personnel could be considered to represent 'the community' for the purpose of supporting reintegration of the families of foreign fighters. Project sponsor participants noted that it would be important to define and understand the different levels of community within which those returning to the country would need to be integrated. This may include, for example, the local religious community as well as the wider geographical community in which they are located.

Another critical issue relating to the RAMP model concerned the challenges of cross-agency collaboration and potential obstacles to information sharing. These challenges were seen to apply both internally between government agencies, and more broadly between government agencies and NGOs, an issue also raised by a number of government stakeholders during interviews.

Figure 1: Draft community reintegration model, Version 1
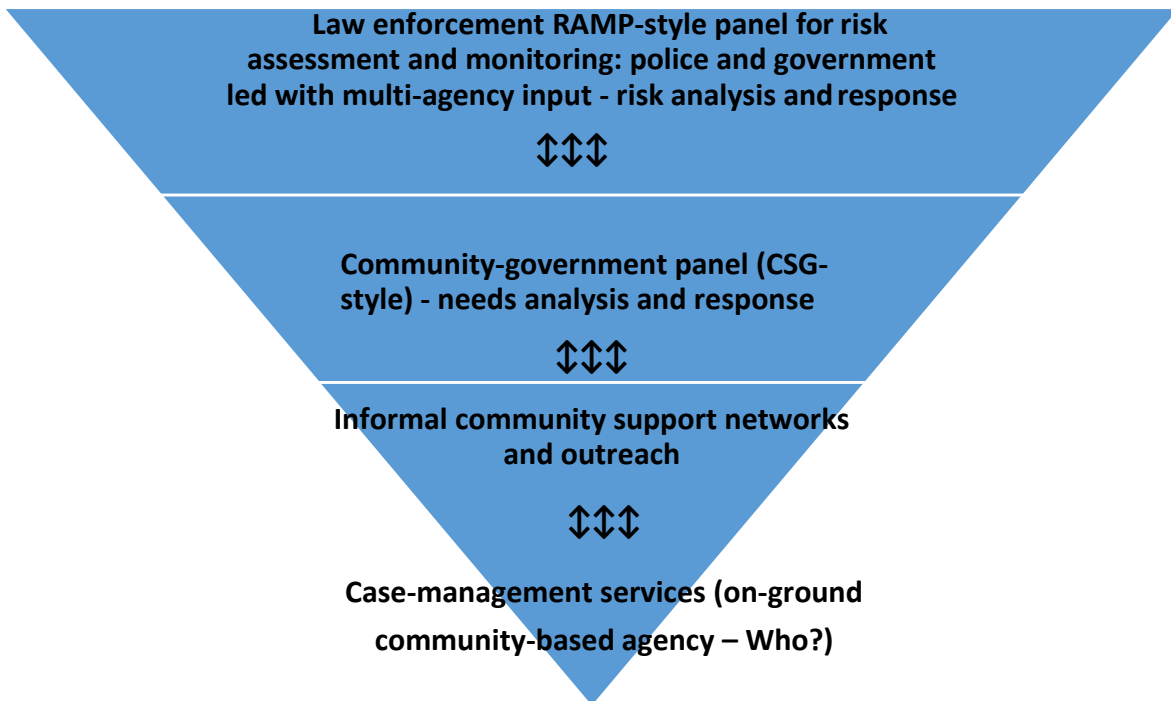
As a result of the discussions at the project sponsor meeting, a revised model was developed in September 2018, which is reflected in Figure 2 below.

This revised (and final) model is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. The process model outlined in Figure 2 remained unchanged following consultations during the broader tabletop exercise (see Figure 4, Chapter 5), as both community and government stakeholders felt it was a sound reflection of the desired process they wanted to see adopted as a pilot.

However, Figure 3 in Chapter 5 reflects further development and elaboration of the final Community Reintegration Support (CRS) model following input from the expanded suite of community and government stakeholders contributing to refinement of the model through the tabletop session.

Figure 2: Draft community reintegration model, Version 2 (following project sponsor consultations)

E. RAMP (Risk Assessment and Management Panel): government-and-community coordinated risk analysis and response guiding D below (tertiary)

⇕⇕⇕

D. Community Support Group Model - community-government coordinated needs analysis guiding A, B and C below (secondary)

C. Case-management services (on-ground community-based agency) (primary and secondary)

⇕⇕⇕

B. community support networks and outreach (primary)

⇕⇕⇕

A. Single locally-based point of contact for returnees (primary)

Community-government tabletop exercise: Refining the draft model

Tabletop objectives

Subsequent to the consultation meeting with the sponsors of the project, a tabletop exercise was conducted with both community and government stakeholders. The purpose of this meeting was to test the revised model with a wider group of organisational representatives. The tabletop exercise was held at the headquarters of a peak community organisation in Victoria and ran for three hours. The tabletop session drew substantially on the general objectives of tabletop simulation exercises. These objectives focus on *clarifying roles and responsibilities; identifying potential challenges, and developing action plans for the future* (WHO 2017). The tabletop exercise focused in particular on defining the respective roles of community and government in reintegration processes, how they would carry out those roles, and the key challenges and opportunities with regard to successful reintegration of child and women/family returnees from foreign conflict zones.

Tabletop participants

The participants in the meeting (n=12) included several individuals from community and government who had been interviewed as part of the study, in line with the principles of 'member checking', i.e. that data and interpretations are tested with members of those groups from whom the data were originally obtained. In addition, the project's government sponsors and community partner on the project, the AMF, recommended a small number of individuals from key organisations whom they felt could contribute their expertise and experience to assessing and refining the model for community reintegration. While member checking can relate to the individuals who directly took part in the study, it is also valuable to engage in member checks with members of the constituencies from which interviewees are drawn to gauge broader reactions to the findings.

Community organisations participating in the tabletop exercise were the Islamic Council of Victoria, the Board of Imams, the Dandenong Community Support Group and the Australian Multicultural Foundation. Government agencies were Victoria Police, the AFP and Department of Health and Human Services.

Apologies due to insurmountable scheduling conflicts were received from Department of Premier and Cabinet and Benevolence Australia. The Australian Multicultural Foundation also attended in their role as the project's formal evaluators.

Tabletop materials

In the tabletop session, participants were provided with a document (Appendix 7) that included the hypothetical scenario of 'Waleed,' the child returnee referred to above, and a table listing three key questions for discussion in relation to this scenario – *What needs to be done? Who needs to do it? How will it be done?* The 'Waleed' scenario was selected on the basis that more than two-thirds of all respondents had selected the Waleed scenario to work with during interviews.

In addition, the document included a second draft version of the community reintegration model (Figure 2 above), developed after the consultation meeting with the project's sponsors. The second main point of discussion concerned whether this draft model adequately met the identified needs for reintegration and the role of community organisations and individuals in providing such support.

Tabletop process

The process that followed sought to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different actors in the reintegration process and identify potential roadblocks by asking participants to engage with three basic questions in relation to reintegration: *What needs to be done? Who needs to do it? How will it be done?*

To facilitate this discussion, in addition to the revised Version 2 of the draft community reintegration model diagram, participants were provided with a document (Appendix 7) that included the hypothetical scenario of 'Waleed,' the child returnee referred to above, and a table listing the three key questions for discussion in relation to this scenario. The 'Waleed' scenario was selected on the basis that a majority of participants – including community (7/16), government (5/5) and professional practitioner (2/2) respondents – had selected the Waleed scenario to work with during interviews.

Following the lead researcher's general introduction and review of the draft model and the project's summarised interview data findings (including points of commonality and difference between community and government stakeholders), tabletop participants were divided into two smaller groups, with gender-balanced representation in each group across both community and government sectors, to work through the scenario and the three key discussion questions covering 'what needs to be done, who needs to do it, and how it should be done'. At the conclusion of the small group work, the larger group reconvened as a whole to discuss and synthesise the results of each group's work with the scenario and the three main questions covered in the exercise. The outcomes of the tabletop exercise were used to inform the design of the final recommended pilot model for integrated community support of reintegration detailed in Chapter 5 below, for which Figure 3 in that Chapter serves as a visual representation.

To ensure that the discussion dealt comprehensively with the entire continuum of reintegration, the Waleed scenario was broken down into three sub-scenarios relating to different stages of the reintegration process as reflected in the overall scenario: 1. immediately after Waleed and Sandra's arrival, 2. when Waleed and Sandra's reintegration needs and risks change, and 3. when the activities of Waleed's mother Sandra had potentially reached a criminal threshold. Participants were asked to engage with the three questions of *what needs to be done? Who needs to do it?* and *How will it be done?* at each stage of the risk continuum and reintegration process. A list of proposed actions under each of these three *what/who/how* categories was provided to workshop participants in a tabular format. They were asked to consider how best to allocate responsibility for these actions and to suggest ways in which these actions could best be achieved.

In addition, participants were encouraged by the research team to suggest new actions under any or all of the *what/who/how* categories. Key recommendations for action emerged from this process, which are detailed in Chapter 5.

The methodology for the tabletop session drew substantially on the general objectives of tabletop simulation exercises. These objectives focus on *clarifying roles and responsibilities; identifying potential challenges, and developing action plans for the future* (WHO, 2017). The tabletop exercise focused in particular on defining the respective roles of community and government in reintegration processes, how they would carry out those roles, and the key challenges and opportunities with regard to successful reintegration of child and women/family returnees from foreign conflict zones.

Tabletop outcomes

The outcomes of the tabletop exercise have led to the development of a Community Reintegration Support (CRS) model consisting of a number of elements and actions. The vision, outcomes, impacts and strategies for the CRS Model, as well as the process and relationship flows, are detailed in Chapter 5 below (Figures 3 and 4), where a comprehensive action plan allocating roles and responsibilities is outlined in Table 1 within the same chapter.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communities and CVE

As noted above, there are significant gaps in our knowledge about community capacity and willingness to reintegrate the children and families of foreign fighters. These gaps in knowledge are part of wider limitations in the literature about the role of communities in relation to violent extremism in general: in particular, the specific mechanisms through which communities can be empowered to play a leading part in countering violent extremism and the '*positive* dimensions of community resilience' that 'can be harnessed to counter socially harmful manifestations of exclusivism' (Grossman et al. 2016, 12). What attention has been given to the role of communities has largely focused on their part in *preventing* violent extremism rather than engaging with desistence and disengagement efforts in relation to those who have previously been radicalised to violence or otherwise exposed to violent radicalised beliefs, influences and settings.

However, the potential return of an increasing number of foreign fighters and their families to their previous countries of residence necessitates urgent engagement with the role of communities in *responding* to violent extremism to ensure that cycles of violence, fuelled by current generations of foreign fighters, are not perpetuated. As Harris-Hogan, Barrelle, and Zammit (2016) have noted in a review of seventy-four government funded projects in Australia, these are predominantly 'primary' rather than 'tertiary initiatives aimed towards those who have already radicalised to the point of violence' (Harris-Hogan et al. 2016, 16).

Nevertheless, there has been increasing recognition in principle, both internationally and locally of the important role of communities in both preventing radicalisation and responding to it (Ellis and Abdi 2017; Briggs 2010; Grossman, Tahiri and Stephenson 2014; Tahiri and Grossman 2013; Aly, Balbi and Jacques 2015; Grossman, Ungar, Brisson, Gerrand, Hadfield and Jefferies 2017). The importance of communities to counter-terrorism has been articulated in relation to a number of areas. Most obviously it is community members, family and friends who will be more likely to notice changes in the beliefs and behaviour of people close to them.

Community focused interventions need to be undertaken with particular care in order to prevent stigmatising whole communities when only a very small proportion of these communities are likely to engage in or support violent extremism. Several community-focused interventions, particularly in Britain, have been criticised because they were perceived by communities to be engaged in intelligence gathering for law enforcement officials and stigmatising Muslim communities as inherently 'suspect' (Spalek and Imtoual 2007; Choudhury and Fenwick 2011; Hickman et al. 2012; Heath-Kelly, 2012; Thomas 2012; Vermeulen 2014; Cherney and Murphy 2016; Awan and Guru 2017).

Nevertheless, intimate local-level knowledge can provide an important source of preventative information and resourcing for CVE. Creating pathways for community members to seek help in such instances (Grossman 2015; Thomas et al. 2017) without fear of a law enforcement intervention has been found to be crucial to drawing on community and family knowledge in ways that support community resilience and pre-empt violence (Gerrand and Grossman 2017). It has also been noted that credible, locally based organisations and local leadership can play an important role as trusted brokers with communities in order to counter violent-extremist narratives and terrorist recruitment strategies. Waldek and Droogan, argue for example, that 'research strongly indicates that community leaders are by far the most influential source of information for those at risk of radicalisation. Community leaders are vital in the Government's efforts to counter violent extremism and mitigate the threat posed by foreign fighters' (2014, 41).

The 2016 *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism* in the United States argues in this vein that 'strong and resilient local communities are the most effective means of safeguarding individuals in the United States against violent extremist recruitment and radicalization' (Executive Office of the President of the United States 2016, 1) and that 'local stakeholders are most likely to be able to address the drivers of violent extremism or interact with someone who needs support to avoid becoming radicalized to violence' (Executive Office of the President of the United States 2016, 1).

It is increasingly recognised globally that community-driven, locally conceptualised and designed interventions are the most likely to be able to foster the genuine grassroots ownership that is essential for effective responses to violent extremism (Rosand, Winterbotham, Jones and Praxi-Tabuchi 2018). The Global Counterterrorism Forum emphasises the importance of local interventions even in the context of the growth of online radicalisation, as much radicalisation still occurs at the face to face level, arguing:

> Community engagement and community-oriented policing are related tools that focus on building trust with local communities and engaging with them as partners to develop information-driven community-based solutions to local issues. Such engagement is meant to raise community awareness about the threat of violent extremism, to provide them with the necessary tools, and to empower them to intervene and prevent radicalization and violence (Global Counterterrorism Forum 2016, 1).

In Australia, Aly and colleagues emphasise the importance of recognising and harnessing local agency (Aly et al 2015). Such initiatives are more likely to be able to generate trust in a context where communities may be wary of interventions which they perceive to have the potential to add to the stigmatisation of their community, or where organisations involved in CVE work could themselves be stigmatised by other community members for establishing partnerships with the state.

A number of authors have noted the importance of differentiating between programmes to address violent extremism and broader policy objectives relating to the general improvement of the social conditions of communities, such as fostering social cohesion and community resilience (Grossman, Peucker, Smith and Dellal 2016), in order to prevent the 'securitisation' of social policy in general. In this light, several authors have asserted the importance of long-term community outreach and engagement to address the full range of social issues faced by communities in order to build trust that government is responsive to the overall welfare of communities, rather than simply the possibility of their threat to national security (Tahiri and Grossman 2013; Ellis and Abdi 2017).

For example, Briggs argues that 'if communities are to realize their full potential role they need to do so as trusted, equal and respected partners of local authorities, the police and other agencies' (2010, 976). Previous community initiatives have been criticised for being primarily dictated by government imperatives (Spalek and Imtoual 2007) and also creating false dichotomies between 'good' and 'bad' Muslims (Mamdani 2002) who are excluded from community partnerships, failing as a consequence to recognise the complex diversity of Muslim identities on the ground. Spalek and Imtoual observe that 'British and Australian governments operate according to a binary opposition of Legitimate and Illegitimate Muslim, where those individuals considered to be radical are automatically linked with extremism and thereby consigned to the category of the Illegitimate, thus preventing their participation as active citizens' (2007, 185). A report by the New South Wales Parliament accordingly recommended that engagement programs need to acknowledge that 'there is no single Muslim community in Australia, and recognise the variety of diverse communities based on different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and on different interpretations of Islam' (Angus 2016, 18).

Communities need to be fully empowered in their role as partners and afforded the opportunity to both

access and share information with other stakeholders in order to play a substantive role in decision-making at the local level based on a collectively developed understanding of the key problems in a local community and the type of response that is required. Ellis and Abdi note three factors found to be important in building community partnerships in the realm of health, which they suggest are transferable to the CVE context: '1) stronger community representation and involvement in concrete activities, 2) real sharing of power with community members and 3) policy building around issues identified as important and relevant by community members' (2017, 295).

While this is the ideal, the reality on the ground is often more complex and challenging. Research in Britain, where the Prevent CVE strategy has been in place for a number of years, has found that 'many Muslims feel alienated and disinclined to engage because they do not feel their views are valued or that their involvement will make any practical difference' (Briggs 2010, 977; Thomas 2012). Research in Australia appears to mirror these sentiments. One study (Murphy et al. 2015) using focus groups and a survey of 800 Muslim Australians found that while Muslim Australians generally had a relatively high level of trust in the police in Australia, 'their trust of police regarding counter-terrorism was much lower than their general trust in police' (41). The respondents shared a common normative paradigm with other Australians in the sense of rejecting terrorism and were 'generally agreed that counter-terrorism laws aligned with what they felt was right' (Murphy et al., 43). They also indicated that they would work with the police to counter terrorism. On the other hand, the majority of respondents felt police rarely considered their views on terrorism and there was an overwhelming agreement (74.1%) that the country's counter-terrorism laws unfairly targeted Muslims. Moreover, this study found that lack of identification with Australia rather than a strong identification with Islam was a predictor of unwillingness to cooperate with the police. This is consistent with other research which indicates that strong faith is actually a protective factor against violent extremism and can exist alongside a strong association with a national identity (See Ellis and Abdi 2017; Grossman, Tahiri and Stephenson 2014).

Community resilience and CVE

The concept of community resilience has taken an increasingly central position in Australia's strategic response to violent extremism, reflected in the country's most recent counterterrorism strategy (2015) sub-titled 'Strengthening our Resilience'. The Australian White Paper adopts the term 'resilience' to describe the ability of communities to resist extremist messages. Resilience in this context is described as 'building a strong and resilient Australian community to resist the development of any form of violent extremism and terrorism on the home front' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010, iii).

Forerunners of the study of resilience in relation to violent extremism include Weine and Ahmed's 2012 research on resilience and protective factors to violent extremism amongst Somali-Americans living in Minnesota-St Paul, Ungar and colleagues' 2014-16 Barriers to Violent Radicalization project in Canada, and Grossman, Tahiri and Stephenson's 2014 study on harnessing ethno-cultural resilience capital to violent extremism in Australia. These studies take a socio-cultural assets-based approach in asking why most people in so-called 'communities at risk' do not ever radicalise to violent extremism, what existing resilience resources make this possible, and how these resources can be leveraged further in structural and policy terms. Such approaches have been instrumental in re-focusing discussion of 'risk' away from socio-cultural identities (such as those related to faith or ethnicity) and towards a more nuanced understanding of the complex online and offline social contexts in which resilience-based risk and vulnerability factors may feature when exploring susceptibility or resistance to violent extremist influence, including the role of social trust, fear, and uncertainty (Oksanen et al. 2018).

However, in practical terms, the social-ecological approach to building resilience to violent extremism has been undercut at times by more security-oriented logics of resilience (Bean et al. 2011). These logics can

make 'resilience' discourse toxic for communities by designating specific ethno-religious communities as 'risky' and by conflating resilience to violent extremism with national values, cultural assimilation and exclusionary models of citizenship and belonging (Bean et al. 2011). While resilience to violent extremism remains a fluid concept with no definitive consensus on either its meanings or its applications, a central tenet to emerge across a number of studies is that resilience to violent extremism can be characterised as the capacity to reject the 'social legitimacy of violent extremism' (Weine 2012; 2013) based on strong family, peer, cultural, religious and community networks and resources (Grossman et al. 2014; Grossman et al. 2017) that can serve as protections against violent extremist narratives of humiliation, disenfranchisement, nihilistic rebellion, and social purpose and belonging (Khosrokhavar 2013, 2017; Roy 2017).

While there debate continues about the exact definition of the term 'resilience', most definitions refer broadly to the adaptability of societies in times of adversity or crisis, particularly in terms of community-level responses. Chenoweth and Stehlik, for example, define community resilience as 'the ability to respond to crises in ways that strengthen community bonds, resources, and the community's capacity to cope' (2001, 47). Violence is experienced at the community level and it is in this context that critical resources to mobilise and adapt to these problems are most likely to yield sustainable long-term results. Aldrich (2012) found that the differential ability of communities to respond effectively to catastrophe in various countries at diverse historical periods from the 1923 earthquake in Tokyo to New Orleans post-Katrina was not the extent of the disaster or the amount of aid that was received but instead concerned the depth of a community's social capital.

Ellis and Abdi (2017) also identify social capital and community competence as critical for CVE as they both provide a means to mobilise social connections for positive outcomes. Social capital is another contested and complex term but broadly refers to the way in which individuals are able to utilise social networks to access resources. Portes defines social capital as 'the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures' (Portes 1998, 6). Three elements of social capital are posited as being important for CVE, namely 'sense of community (trust and belonging within one's own community), sense of attachment to place (connection to one's neighbourhood or city) and civic participation (engagement with institutions or formal organisations)' (Ellis and Abdi 2017, 292). Community competence concerns positive collective action, i.e. 'communities [that] demonstrate the ability to collaborate effectively in the service of identifying and achieving goals' (Ellis and Abdi 2017, 292) as well as empowerment of individuals, which allows them to engage across power differentials and gives voice and agency to those who are usually excluded.

The concept of resilience is important because it not only focuses on the vulnerabilities or risks associated with certain individuals and communities, but it also helps identify 'protective factors' which include the resources (social, economic, cultural, psychological) which can be drawn on to cope with and recover from adversity (Grossman 2013).The 2016 Strategic Implementation Plan for empowering local communities in the US to participate in CVE describes resilient communities as those where 'violent extremists routinely meet disinterest and opposition and where recruitment attempts regularly fail. Such communities know what tools and support are available to assist individuals that may be on a path towards violence' (Executive Office of the President of the United States 2016, 1-2). Resilience also concerns effective collective action, so that resilience in relation to violent extremism may be demonstrated 'if the community came together in such a way that its members are no longer vulnerable to the threat of violent extremism' (Ellis and Abdi 2017, 291).

A recent comprehensive literature and programme review on social cohesion, community resilience and violent extremism conducted in Australia (Grossman, Peucker, Smith and Dellal 2016) identifies some key knowledge gaps that would need to be addressed to improve the resilience of Australian communities to

violent extremism. The report notes that there is currently no 'validated measure that explicitly addresses resilience to violent extremism' (Grossman et al. 2016, 12), although this has now changed with the development of the BRAVE-14 cross-culturally validated measure for youth resilience to violent extremism developed by an Australian-Canadian research partnership (Grossman, Ungar, Brisson, Gerrand, Hadfield and Jefferies 2017) and currently being trialled in Australia, Mozambique, Bangladesh and Greece. The report argues that 'the ability to assess both resistance to violent extremism and key resilience features that may protect against this is critical in providing an evidence base to inform government policy and programs' (Grossman et al. 2016, 12).

The BRAVE-14 measure, developed using data from 475 young people in 7 field sites across Australia and Canada and benchmarking against a number of previously validated scales, identifies 5 factors for assessing resilience to violent extremism for young people from culturally diverse backgrounds: cultural identity and connectedness; bridging capital; linking capital; violence-related behaviours, and violence-related beliefs. The role of social connection and the ability to have recognised and supported distinctive elements of cultural heritage and identity emerge as critical in fostering resilience to violent extremism. Similarly, Ellis and Abdi (2017, 289) argue that social connection is a crucial protective factor against violent extremism and is 'at the heart' of community resilience to extremism. They note that this is not a new approach, as interventions to address and prevent other types of violence have long incorporated a focus on community engagement and ownership.

As do Grossman et al. (2017, under review) and Grossman et al. (2014), Ellis and Abdi (2017) emphasise the importance of interventions that build on *existing* competencies and capabilities in communities and which harness and engage these social connections in ways that do not undermine already established networks. Social connections are important because they are the means through which values are circulated and behaviour is regulated. They are also critical in creating a sense of inclusion and belonging.

This is particularly important in the context of violent extremism, which is, at least partially, linked to feelings and experiences of alienation, discrimination and marginalisation among young Muslims. For example, an Australian study of 542 respondents from government and Muslim and non-Muslim communities found that at an individual level for 'a very large number of participants, issues around identity and sense of belonging were seen as important underlying factors in helping drive people toward radicalisation and extremism. These included the implications of lack of belonging and the tensions of multiple cultural allegiances and loyalties' (Tahiri and Grossman 2013, 9). At a socio-cultural level, 'the dominant perceived driver...was the broad domain of marginalisation, racism and social exclusion' (Tahiri and Grossman 2013, 9). Thus, 'promoting tolerance and acceptance of diversity, and enhancing opportunities for minority youth to experience themselves as integral members of the larger community and nation are...key components of community resilience' (Ellis and Abdi 2017, 294).

A recent report on Islamophobia in Australia found a 'disturbing amount of Islamophobia' (Iner 2016, 3) in Australia, reflected in individual and institutional discrimination as well as media bias that stigmatised Muslims and conflated Islam with terrorism (Hassan and Martin, 2015). The danger is that this negative environment can lead people identifying with the Muslim faith to increasingly disengage from conventional society, institutions and norms that usually create social control. This type of disengagement is likely to be significantly amplified among returning foreign fighters as well as women and children who left the country to participate in terrorist activities and on the ground conflict. However, Dunn and colleagues have found that Australian Muslims are significantly more resilient in relation to Islamophobia than may be assumed, with strong correlation between religiosity, sense of national belonging and sense of integration and no evidence that Islamophobia causes religiously attributed radicalisation to violence (Dunn et al. 2015). Dunn et al.'s findings suggest that we may be under-estimating existing resilience assets and features within

communities, and therefore failing to adequately capitalise on these in how we respond to external threats and disruptions.

Various researchers (Grossman 2013; Ellis and Abdi 2017) have argued that models of resilience developed in response to natural disasters could also help positively mobilise community resources to address violent extremism. These approaches emphasise the importance of both bonding forms of connection with 'others who are similar' as well as bridging connections with 'people who are dissimilar'. In addition, vertical connections with institutional power holders in order to create equal partnerships are also important to address issues of social injustice, which can contribute to violent extremism as a result of legitimate social grievances and experiences of social and economic marginalisation. These connections are also important for putting in place structural responses to social injustice. Conversely, however, when government strategies deploy resilience as a 'Trojan horse' for securitised policy responses to the threat of violent extremism, the capacity for genuine community resilience to be developed and strengthened is eroded, creating suspicion and mistrust of government agendas and authenticity in relation to community partnerships (Hardy 2015).

Social networks and community relations

While social networks can play an important role in preventing and responding to violent extremism, they can also be a conduit for radicalisation (Sageman 2008). With regard to foreign fighters and their families returning to their countries of origin, there has been concern within countries internationally that people who have travelled to combat zones and received training as well as more extreme indoctrination may on return 'develop intense social associations, generating friendship networks and perceived mutual loyalties that could be the basis of autonomous, transnational terrorist cells in the future' (el-Said and Barrett 2017, 7).

Holmer and Shtuni have noted that in this regard, 'the most promising feature of first-generation deradicalisation programs implemented in Middle East and Southeast Asia' is their emphasis on 'the role of social and community relations in the reintegration process' as part of a 'three-pronged intervention effort that addresses affective, pragmatic, and ideological bonds concurrently' (2017, 1). However, the community social support aspect of disengagement and desistence policy and programming has been relatively slow to gain traction. In the United Kingdom, for example, Marsden contends that the importance of communities and the wider social and cultural context to reintegration and a move away from terrorism has been largely overlooked, particularly in the West in favour of more individualised responses. Although there are some programmes which provide familial and some limited social support, 'the extent to which society, more widely conceptualised, is "ready" to receive rehabilitated ex-militants is largely unrecognised' (Marsden 2014, 145). She notes the importance of the wider social environment for long-term integration, because 'even where individuals may have committed to cognitive and behavioural change, if significant barriers to re-entering the workplace, education, or even everyday social interaction exist, the chances of long-term well-being – and potentially long-term desistance – may well be diminished' (Marsden 2014, 145).

On the other hand, a 2017 report by the UN asserts that while social and personal networks are key in the development of foreign fighters and become stronger, if also more exclusivist, when foreign fighters leave a country, the primary influence on foreign fighters *returning* to their countries is the family network and in particular mothers, who can exert significant pressure on foreign fighters to return (el Said and Barrett, 4). The relative influence and impacts of these networks still need to be assessed based on available empirical evidence in Australia. While family networks may be very important in bringing foreign fighters home, once they have returned, returnees are vulnerable to being reincorporated into the community networks that initially drew them into violent extremism and the 'same structural conditions, the same influences, and the same grievances that drive engagement are often still present, as well as active recruitment dynamics, all of

which make efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate particularly challenging' (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 9).

In this regard, programmes designed to address the reintegration of returnees can draw important lessons from 'demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration' (DDR) programming, which has 'highlighted the importance of community participation in reintegration and the need for specialized programs for women and children' (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 1). Unlike traditional de-radicalisation programmes which may focus primarily on individuals, DDR programming tends to focus on preparing communities to receive individuals returning from conflict zones in order to facilitate their reintegration and build social cohesion. Empirical research on the social reintegration of ex-FARC members who were involved in guerrilla warfare in Colombia for decades showed that community participation was critical to reducing recidivism rates, not least because ex-combatants were more likely to participate when more community members were involved (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 40). Implementers on the ground have also emphasised the importance of social networks and rebuilding family and community ties (RAN 2017a, 3), as has literature on post-conflict reintegration, with the UN noting that 'social support networks are key to ex- combatants' adjustment to a normal civilian life…socially-constructive support networks, such as peer groups… and groups formed during vocational and life skills training, should therefore be encouraged and supported with information, training and guidance' (United Nations 2014, 43).

As Holmer and Shtuni note, it may be difficult to draw on the lessons of DDR as implemented in post-conflict societies when dealing with returning combatants, because foreign terrorist fighters who return from conflict in the Middle East are generally viewed as criminals by governments and the general public. As a result, stigma can be attached to the role of foreign fighters, although this is qualitatively different from that associated with former combatants in civil conflicts or insurgencies. This 'greatly complicates efforts by governments and civil society to rehabilitate them' (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 4). A recent UN report on the phenomenon of foreign fighters therefore suggests that it 'may be important to consider if the criminalization of every returning FTF is necessary' (el-Said and Barrett, 2017, 5) and also argues that returning fighters should be differentiated (although difficult to do in practice), 'based on what they actually did in Syria, their initial intention before going and their reasons for return' (el- Said and Barrett, 2017, 5).

However, non-combatant returnees are positioned differently, so that DDR approaches may be more relevant for these cohorts. In particular, evaluations of DDR processes have highlighted the need for specialised and tailored support for women and children, who—whether as former combatants, victims, or both—face unique barriers and challenges to reintegration (Holmer and Shtuni 2017). It is also important to view reintegration as a long term *process*, rather than as a one-off programme exercise. (el Said and Barrett 2017). A number of scholars in this area emphasise that 'disengagement and deradicalisation require sustained and concerted effort. In the absence of such programs, recidivism is significantly likely' (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 5; Marsden 2014). The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) has therefore recommended that local responders should assess whether the families of foreign fighters could be partners in the reintegration of relatives, ideally before they return. On the other hand, family networks can also be conduits for radicalisation (Copeland 2018; Harris-Hogan 2014), may be the context in which a returning individual was radicalised and could hinder their deradicalisation and reintegration on their return. Alternative strategies for reintegration and social connection will have to be considered in this context.

The role of families within social networks

RAN notes that the families and direct social networks of returnees will also be deeply affected by an individual's participation in or exposure to foreign conflicts or terrorist activities. Recent Australian research has documented the trauma experienced by families and communities when someone leaves to participate in conflicts overseas:

He was buried there and that was the biggest trauma as they couldn't say goodbye to the body. The whole neighbourhood was affected emotionally and the [local] boys were traumatised as they could not say goodbye. The mother wanted to bury the body – that she could not do so is going to be a sore point in her life forever… All the boys who played sporting activities with the boy who died were very depressed. They were all crying at his funeral [an unusual display of emotion for young men in this community, according to the participant]. I feel my son learned a lesson from that experience – the shock may have deterred other kids from being recruited. The boys, including my son, had exposure to the incident and were able to reflect on the situation and learn that that is not the way to do jihad. An awakening situation. (Female participant) (Gerrand and Grossman 2017, 23)

Thus, 'the path to rehabilitation… is about not only a change in individual mindset, but also a shift in social relationships and personal circumstances' (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 5). RAN also emphasises that it is not enough to focus on individuals in a family; in addition, 'the social environment or community of the family also affect attitudes and behaviour. Even though the aim of counselling is to support an individual at risk, understanding the wider family and community context is crucial to do so' (RAN 2017b, 4).

RAN (2017a) recommends that efforts are made to develop the resilience of families of returnees to prevent any further radicalisation through integrating them in supportive structures such as peer groups, providing psychological counselling and ideological or theological support if necessary. The objective is to develop a resilient family environment to prevent future involvement with extremism and terrorist groups (RAN 2017a, 2017b). Holmes and Shtuni (2017, 11) make similar points, arguing that the 'active participation of family members and communities is key to effective reintegration for returnees' and that this reintegration process is not something that only affects the returnee but their families and broader social networks. They therefore support the principle that 'rebuilding family and community ties helps bolster post-custodial reintegration' (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 11).

Reintegration is not always a straightforward process, as returnees may face stigmatisation from the communities that they return to as well as the possibility of retribution from former radicalised associates. As noted in a report on interviews with the families of individuals who had left Australia to participate in conflict, 'several female participants were blamed by family and community members for their young family member's involvement in violent extremism' (Gerrand and Grossman 2017, 23). In this context, 'access to a social support group and a receptive environment that allows for true disengagement and the creation of a new identity is vital' (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 5).

Credible local community leaders are important facilitators of reintegration. However, Gerrand and Grossman's 2017 Australian study, on the experience of families with young people who had joined domestic or overseas conflict, found that the families of foreign fighters felt that there was a 'lack of support from community leaders' and that they had been re-traumatised because instead of giving support these leaders would ignore the difficulties faced by the families of foreign fighters, including community stigmatisation even though they "knew everyone was talking". This approach was seen to 'fail to validate their experience and also to inhibit their ability to deal openly with the challenges and grief experienced by families' who had lost, either temporarily or permanently, a family member (Gerrand and Grossman 2017, 30).

This study recommended community engagement measures that might be specifically designed to support families in similar situations, including:

- The provision of counselling services tailored to family members who have lost a young person to violent conflict;

- Culturally sensitive responses from government authorities towards families dealing with a young

person's radicalisation to violence;

- Community support services such as a non-securitised helpline for families with concerns;

- Support workers with appropriate training and experience assigned to families who are grieving the loss of a young person to violent conflict, and

- Public acknowledgement and validation of the impacts for families of losing a young person in such circumstances in order to break down stigma and promote more open dialogue. (Gerrand and Grossman, 2017, 31)

Similarly, tailored and culturally sensitive support will be equally important in the reintegration process of child and women/family returnees. This could include counselling services for family members and foreign fighters alike as well as carefully designed responses from government. In addition, strategies to prevent the stigmatisation of child and women/family member returnees and their families will need to be implemented using, for example, credible community leaders to engage returnees and their families, and to facilitate their reintegration into local communities.

Importantly, the strategies devised must take account of specific cultural and contextual factors in different environments, including local cultural norms and capacities that can facilitate and support returnees in adopting a new, non-violent social role. While lessons can be learnt from best practices developed in interventions globally, Holmer and Shtuni note that 'no single model of rehabilitation and reintegration can be simply applied across all cultural contexts', since 'ideas of social and familial obligations, honour, shame, forgiveness, and reconciliation are all culturally defined' (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 11). In addition, they go on to observe (2017, 11) that 'the ways in which communities interact and are structured vary… as do the roles and influence of families, community leaders, and institutions'. Thus, the way in which programs are 'designed and implemented must reflect the social dynamics and cultural norms of the community in which they are embedded' (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 5). This is most likely to be achieved when reintegration programmes are community driven and 'informed by a local understanding of social norms, community relationships, and cultural traditions' (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 11) as is the case in deradicalisation programmes in Saudia Arabia and Singapore, which use cultural practices and indigenous traditions to 'influence cognitive and behavioural shifts away from violence' as well as bolstering 'affective family relations and ties in order to facilitate reintegration into communities' (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 8).

CVE policy in Australia

While Australia has fortunately suffered no large-scale terrorist attacks, there have been 150 acts of violent extremism in Australia since World War II (Harris-Hogan, 2017), including 8 attempted or successful small-cell and lone-actor attacks in Australian capital cities since 2014 and approximately 15 disrupted medium- to large-scale attack plans, including the ANZAC Day, Christmas Day, Mother's Day and New Year's Eve plots. Between 2001 and 2010, more than 100 Australians have been killed in terrorist attacks overseas (Commonwealth of Australia 2010). As of 2015, there have been 35 prosecutions and 26 convictions as a result of investigations relating to planned attacks since 2001 (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2015, iv), with more recent additional cases including a number currently before the courts. Australia's 2010 Terrorism White Paper argued that, due to a variety of local, global and regional factors, terrorism had become 'a persistent and permanent feature' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010, ii) of the nation's security environment.

In the wake of the 9/11 bombings in the US and the Bali bombing in 2002, Australia revised its counter-terrorism policy and legislation. In April 2002, the Prime Minister, State Premiers and Chief Ministers met at a National Summit on Terrorism and Multi-Jurisdictional Crime, where a stronger framework to meet the

emerging challenge of combating terrorism was discussed (Department of Justice Victoria 2014, 5). This led to a National Counter-Terrorism Committee (NCTC) (now expanded as the ANZCTC to include New Zealand) being established within the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) (Harris-Hogan et al. 2016). A National Counter-Terrorism Plan was released by the NCTC in 2005 and has been updated periodically since then.

Initially the primary focus of the Australian government was on new legislation, increased funding to intelligence agencies and military support to operations in Afghanistan. From 2001-02 to 2013-14, the overall budget of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) was increased more than fivefold, along with significantly increased funding to the Office of National Assessments (ONA) as well as for the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) and for the Australian Federal Police (AFP) (Commonwealth of Australia 2015, 3).

Revisions to existing legislation such as amendments to Chapter 5.3 of the Criminal Code and new legislation such as the Anti-Terrorism Act (2003) was introduced to strengthen existing legislation that criminalised terrorist acts and support for terrorism. Other new legislation provided additional powers to national security and established, for example, procedures for preventative detention and control orders to restrict the movement of those allegedly associated with terrorism as well as enabling the proscription of terrorist organisations (Commonwealth of Australia 2015).

More recently, a number of changes to Australia's counter-terrorism legislation were introduced in 2014 following the emergence and rise of the so-called Islamic State (IS) terrorist movement (also known as ISIL/ISIS/Daesh), which saw unprecedented numbers of Australian nationals, many of them young men and women, travel or attempt to travel to join the self-declared Islamic State caliphate in Syria and Iraq. The most significant change, for the purposes of this report, was the passing in November 2014 of the *Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Foreign Fighters) Act 2014*, which amended 22 Acts to respond to the threat posed by Australians engaging in, and returning from, conflicts in foreign states (Commonwealth of Australia 2015, 8). The criminalisation of foreign fighters serving as combatants in foreign territories is straightforward; less clear are the challenges posed by those who may be subject to criminal sanctions for travelling to prohibited declared territories, including children who are unable exercise control of their movements and women who may have been coerced into such travel by spouses, parents, siblings or other family members.

As the Australian legislative and institutional environment has continued to evolve since the 9/11 attacks in 2001, there has been parallel development of measures to support a non-coercive approach to terrorism through countering violent extremism (CVE) programmes and initiatives, in line with international developments elsewhere. This occurred particularly following several high-profile instances of 'home-grown' terrorism in Western countries in the mid-2000s (Harris-Hogan et al. 2016), which led to a number of initiatives in Europe such as the Prevent element of Britain's overarching counter-terrorism strategy, *Contest,* which sought to prevent people becoming involved in terrorism through challenging and changing extremist beliefs and behaviour. From 2005 onwards, the Australian Government adopted measures that were 'effectively the precursors to Australia's current CVE approach' (Harris-Hogan et al. 2016, 13; see also Cartwright 2016) including the release of a *National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony, and Security* in 2006 as part of the country's national strategic response to address terrorism. The NAP's stated objectives were to 'address the underlying causes of terrorism, including the social and economic factors that encourage radicalisation and motivate extremist behaviour, as a contribution to a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism' (Commonwealth of Australia 2006, 7). Some states, such as Victoria, undertook early initiatives to incorporate CVE into their state programmes around terrorism in the light of developments at the federal level.

In 2011 the United States followed suit and launched its own CVE strategy. It continued to adopt a progressively more active leadership role on CVE and in February 2015, the White House hosted a Summit on Countering Violent Extremism 'to highlight domestic and international efforts to prevent violent extremists and their supporters from radicalizing, recruiting, or inspiring individuals or groups … to commit acts of violence' (cited in Barker 2015, 1).

CVE policy in Australia and elsewhere has been routinely criticised over time (Aly et al. 2015; Cherney and Murphy 2016) for conflating the issue of social cohesion and terrorism, thus stigmatising Muslim communities and threatening their sense of belonging and cultural security within the national fabric. This has also been a key criticism of interventions such as Prevent in Britain, which was widely perceived as having led to the stigmatisation of Muslim communities through social cohesion interventions targeting Muslims as 'suspect communities' in ways that tacitly encouraged Islamophobia (Spalek and Imtoual 2007; Heath-Kelly 2012; Kudnani 2014; Thomas 2012). Globally, CVE continues to be a highly contested area of policy and programming, particularly where it is seen to stigmatise entire communities, engage in distinguishing between 'good' and 'bad' modes of Islamic belief and practice, limit counter-terrorism and violent extremism efforts to Muslims alone, impose CVE assumptions and practices on communities without adequate consultation or engagement, or implement securitised measures such as community surveillance and intelligence-gathering under the guise of social cohesion or community resilience-building initiatives. In addition, a key issue emerging more recently has been the absence of robust or consistent evaluation frameworks that can satisfactorily assess the effectiveness of particular types and logics of CVE interventions and outcomes.

Nevertheless, CVE continues to be recognised as a critical means of avoiding the overall securitisation of how nations engage with the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism, particularly in relation to young people. In Australia, there has been consistent policy focus on targeting violent extremist *behaviours,* as opposed to prevention models in the UK, for example, that target extremist *beliefs* even in the absence of support for violent action. In addition, Australia has focused strongly on promoting resilience to violent extremism as part of a broader effort to create more generally resilient communities that can successfully manage a range of 21st century social-ecological dynamics, challenges and transformations (Grossman, Peucker, Smith and Dellal 2016). For example, the 2010 Counter-Terrorism White Paper (Commonwealth of Australia 2010) outlined 'resilience' as one of the key pillars of the country's counter-terrorism strategy and gave an overview of the radicalisation process undergone by individuals before taking part in terrorist acts, as well as discussing the importance of family and community in countering violent extremism. Reflecting a growing international concern in Western states with attacks by 'home-grown' terrorists, the strategy sought to reduce this phenomenon by 'strengthening Australia's resilience to radicalisation and assisting individuals to disengage from violent extremist influences and beliefs' (livingsafetogether.gov.au).

The White Paper stated that it would counter violent extremism by:

- building on Australia's history of inclusion, multiculturalism and respect for cultural diversity to maintain a society that is resilient to the hate-based and divisive narratives that fuel terrorism;

- working with the Australian community through a cooperative national approach to lessen the appeal of violent extremism and support alternative pathways for those at risk, and working internationally to support this. (Commonwealth of Australia 2010, 65)

The Countering Violent Extremism Sub-Committee (CVESC) was established under the NTCTC (now the ANZCTC) to co-ordinate CVE efforts across the country after the release of the 2010 Counter-Terrorism White Paper. As Harris-Hogan et al. observe, 'The sub-committee is responsible for designing and administering specialised CVE programs around the country and its membership is comprised of representatives from all

State and Federal policing and First Ministers' offices, multicultural affairs agencies, as well as other relevant national security agencies under the direction of two co-chairs' (Harris-Hogan et al. 2016, 15). The CVE Sub-Committee was provided with $9.7 million over four years in the 2010–11 budget for 'targeted programs to reduce violent extremism in Australia' (Barker 2015, 1).

Australia's first national CVE framework was published in 2011 (Australian Government 2015, 30; Cartwright 2016), and aimed to create a national approach to CVE 'that minimises duplication and appropriately focuses resources on areas of greatest need' to be 'facilitated through the CVE Sub-Committee' in order to address 'factors that make people vulnerable to extremist influences and recruitment by terrorists' and emphasised the importance of intervening early, 'before a law enforcement response might be needed' (Australian Government 2015, 30). The national CVE framework sought to build resilience to extremism by taking proactive measures to promote inclusion and by mobilising communities against extremism. This focus on resilience superseded older terrorism plans such the 2005 National Action Plan, which did not include the concept of resilience in its conception of counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism.

In 2014, the Government launched an updated CVE policy framework which included 'a more direct approach to identifying and providing support to individuals at risk of radicalisation' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015, 9). A government review of Australia's counter-terrorism 'machinery' in 2015 highlighted the importance of community involvement for future initiatives and paid specific attention to the developing challenge of returnees from conflict zones:

- Community members and families will be most likely to notice indications that someone may be radicalising to violent extremism and to reach out to them.

- Community-based, non-government and local government organisations will be important service providers, delivering intervention services to individuals (Commonwealth of Australia 2015, 32)

The review envisaged more systematic support for the families of individuals who had already radicalised or were in the process of radicalisation, in line with an approach that attempted, wherever possible, to prevent individuals joining foreign conflicts and, where they did go and then return, to reintegrate them in order to undermine the possibility that marginalisation would lead them to plan terrorist attacks in Australia. These arrangements included consideration of expanding 'its existing community awareness training initiatives to deliver more specific capacity-building programs to family and friends of at risk individuals as well as to community leaders so that they are able to challenge and counsel at risk individuals' (Commonwealth of Australia 2015, 32) and noted the significance of community organisations in efforts to counter violent extremism:

> Organisations that interact directly with radicalised individuals or those at risk of radicalisation are important in the fight against violent extremism. This includes schools, religious institutions, the mental health sector and jails. … Engagement with education and youth sectors, such as through sporting clubs and schools, is critical. These organisations are best placed to identify and divert young people from radicalisation. … Faith leaders and peak groups can credibly engage their communities on ideological and religious issues. Many have expressed a desire to be at the forefront of work to tackle radicalisation (Commonwealth of Australia 2015, 32).

The review underlined the importance of including communities as equal partners in future CVE initiatives, concluding that 'a new CVE strategy must do more to build and use the capacity of these partners to enable them to share the responsibility of diverting individuals from radicalisation' (2015, 33).

Foreign fighters

International concern about returning foreign fighters has been growing since 2014. During the fourth biennial review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in September 2014, a number of states expressed concern about the growing phenomenon of what were called 'foreign terrorist fighters' (FTFs) in Syria. As a result, the Secretary-General announced that the United Nations Centre for Counter-Terrorism (UNCCT) would, gather information on the motivation of these foreign fighters through direct interviews of returnees in order to develop a stronger knowledge base from which to understand the phenomenon of foreign fighters, assess the risks they posed, and develop effective responses (el-Said and Barrett 2017, 1).

Nevertheless, as a recent UN report acknowledges, 'despite the attention it generates and the concerns it raises, the phenomenon of FTFs remains empirically and theoretically under-researched' (el-Said and Barrett 2017, 13). Research on foreign fighters and their families poses obvious methodological and ethical challenges. Accessing foreign fighters or those associated with them is extremely complex and may compromise the safety of both researchers and the subjects being researched. Difficulties around assessing the truth value of testimony is a challenge in a context where many countries are increasingly introducing legislation to criminalise foreign fighter activities. Foreign fighters may be vulnerable to stigmatisation within their own communities as well as by the broader public. Research with foreign fighters and their families can also often involve the need to coordinate or even seek the approval of government and security officials as well as lawyers and families. As a result, 'There are good reasons for the dearth of research' (el-Said and Barrett 2017, 13).

Despite these difficulties there has been a growing body of work engaging with the question of foreign fighters and, more recently, the challenges posed by their return to their countries of origin (Hegghammer 2013; Zammit 2015; Borum and Fein 2017; Awan and Guru 2017). While this body of work provides an important grounding in the critical issues related to foreign fighters, very little research has differentiated between the types of policy and practical responses required to address, respectively, the reintegration of foreign fighters themselves versus their families or, in particular, the role that communities can play in reintegrating women and children who are either linked to foreign fighters or who may be independent actors in conflicts themselves.

Defining foreign fighters

'Foreign fighters' or 'foreign terrorist fighters' have been defined in a number of ways. The UN Security Council has defined Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) as:

> Individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict (Security Council Resolution 2178 [2014]).

This is a broad definition, which includes those who travel to other countries to participate in armed conflict as well as acts of terrorism. It encompasses not only individuals who are actively involved in acts of terrorism themselves but also those who provide ancillary support, as well as those who have received training, whether or not this has been utilised in an actual attack. It is likely that a number of women and children may fall into this broader categorisation.

Hegghammer defines a foreign fighter as 'an agent who (1) has joined, and operates within the confines of an insurgency, (2) lacks citizenship of the conflict state or kinship links to its warring factions, (3) lacks affiliation to an official military organisation; and (4) is unpaid' (Hegghammer 2010, 56-57). He cautions that the term foreign fighter may be 'overaggregated' and underlines the importance of disaggregating the

motivations and behaviour of 'Islamic militants'. He makes a distinction between terrorism and foreign fighters, noting that, 'there is the difference between leaving to train with international terrorists and leaving to fight with local insurgents' (2013, 13).

Zammit, on the other hand, in a recent Lowy institute report, describes foreign fighters as 'people who join insurgencies outside of their countries of residence' (2017, 1) and argues that the term 'covers not only those who engage in combat, but also those who travel to a conflict zone to train with an insurgent group or provide some form of assistance' (2017, 3).

The Australian Government, in a memorandum introducing a proposed Bill on foreign fighters, argued in a similar vein that 'encouraging' terrorism should be criminalised, and not just the commission of terrorist acts themselves:

> The criminalisation of behaviour which encourages terrorist acts or the commission of terrorism offences is a necessary preventative mechanism to limit the influence of those advocating violent extremism and radical ideologies (Commonwealth of Australia 2013, 30).

Holmer and Schtuni move away from behavioural indicators to provide a more motive-focused definition of foreign fighters as 'individuals driven mainly by ideology, religion, and/or kinship who leave their country of origin, or their country of habitual residence, to join a party engaged in an armed conflict' (2017, 11). The reference to 'kinship' here would include women and children who have accompanied foreign fighter family members to areas of violent conflict outside Australia.

Reintegrating foreign fighters

Australians have participated as foreign fighters in previous global conflicts such as those in Afghanistan, Bosnia and in Lebanon. However, as elsewhere internationally, there has been an unprecedented mobilisation of recruits who travelled to Syria in the past five years to either join insurgents opposing the Assad regime and/or to join IS. The motivation of those who return to their country of origin is complex and often dictated by highly individual circumstances or motives. A recent UN report referenced a study by the Dutch Security and Intelligence Service (AIVD) which offered various reasons for individuals returning from Islamic State conflict zones. These included being disillusioned with the movement and/or its cause; being traumatised; feelings of betrayal; realisation of the atrocities committed by IS; regret, and intra-Muslim fighting and conflict, as well as having plans to recruit others or commit attacks in their countries of departure. (el-Said and Barrett 2017, 15).

In the Netherlands, AIVD distinguishes between various types of returnees based on the threat they are perceived to pose to national security (AIVD 2017, 3). The agency states that it has identified a 'small number' of returning Dutch nationals it believes could plan or carry out an attack in the Netherlands, either independently or under the auspices of 'a jihadist group in the conflict zone' (AIVD 2017, 3). On the other hand, they note there are 'returnees who do not pose a direct threat of violence, but do represent a risk'. They are involved in 'non-violent activities such as recruitment and facilitating violent conflict, plan to travel back to the conflict zone, or they express their sympathy towards the jihadist cause' (AIVD 2017, 3). These individuals can play an important role in radicalising other citizens and therefore still constitute a risk.

There are also 'a small group of Dutch returnees who appear to have renounced jihadism' (AIVD 2017, 3). However, AIVD cautions that the ideological orientation of returnees is fluid and there are individuals 'who currently do not present a threat but may do so in the future' (AIVD 2017, 3). The converse, however, may also be true: those who presently pose a threat may not do so in the future, and this latter development hinges to a significant (though not total) extent on the reintegration and support approach that is taken towards returnees from conflict zones (Harris-Hogan et al. 2016).

Such fluidity in relation to motivation, risk and threat makes responding to returnees a complex undertaking that requires interventions which are flexible, responsive and inclusive within the parameters of good practice. However, RAN has noted that 'in many countries the policy for dealing with returnees is not always clear to the different stakeholders' (RAN 2017a). This is perhaps inevitable in an environment where legislation and policy are struggling to keep pace with developments on the ground. However, it is essential that the need for policy clarity for all relevant stakeholders be addressed by any initiatives in the Australian context.

While many governments, including Australia, are attempting to prevent (non- or dual-citizen) foreign fighters from returning to their countries, and prosecuting or otherwise managing those who do return, it may not be possible to prevent the return of all foreign fighters. Moreover, even those who are jailed will likely eventually be released from prison. Accordingly, there have been a number of key debates among analysts and policy makers about the severity of the threat posed by returnees and the treatment and response options that should be taken as consequence.

Tellingly, Holmer and Shtuni, for instance, have argued that assessments of risk do not adequately distinguish between different types of returnees, asserting that 'research on foreign fighters is often challenged by a lack of differentiation among those who travel to support conflicts other than as combatants and those who arguably may not support it at all, such as the wives, children, and other family members who may have been compelled to travel' (2017, 4). Hegghammer, who conducted empirical research on foreign fighters from the West using open-source data found that 'most foreign fighters do not return for domestic operations, but those who do return are more effective operatives than non-veterans' (2013, 1). He concludes that 'no more than one in nine foreign fighters returned to perpetrate attacks in the West (107 returnees against 945 foreign fighters)' (2013, 10). On the other hand, Hegghammer also found that prior experience of foreign fighting was an extremely strong predictor of being involved in a terrorist attack. Moreover, the number of casualties caused by attacks was higher where a foreign fighter had been involved. Therefore, it is reasonable to surmise that training in other countries increased the lethality of attacks as a result of the superior combat and technical skills gained by foreign fighters in overseas conflict settings.

This appears to be borne out by the Australian experience; for example, several of those arrested through Operation Pendennis in 2005 were found to have received combat training in Pakistan or Afghanistan, as had a range of earlier al-Qaeda-linked and other overseas-affiliated Australian terrorist plotters (Mullins 2011). However, foreign fighters are not a homogeneous group. It has been argued that there is some evidence that it is those with training but not combat experience who are the most likely to be involved in terrorist acts at 'home' as these individuals have not been disillusioned by the experience of battle and still have 'something to prove'. The way in which a returnee views the conflict in the Middle East has also been posited as having an effect on the degree of involvement of a returnee in terrorism. Those who view the conflict as a global confrontation between Islam and the West are arguably more likely to carry out terrorist acts once they have returned as opposed to those returnees who saw their involvement as concerning a localised conflict with a Syrian tyrant (Zammit 2015).

Harris-Hogan et al. (2016) suggest that in Australia, the extent to which returnees constitute a threat to national security will be determined by the nature of the Australian Government's response and their ability to contain this risk effectively through CVE approaches as well as legislative or punitive measures. In this context, Holmer and Shtuni emphasise, 'effective programs to rehabilitate and reintegrate returning foreign fighters are crucial' (2017, 1). They see reintegration efforts as closely linked to communities, and in particular:

> The re-establishment of social, familial, and community ties and positive participation in society.

Developing successful reintegration programs is crucial not only to preventing recidivism among returnees but also to mitigating further radicalization among the youth population and building overall community-level resilience to violent extremism (Holmer and Shtuni 2017, 2).

However, the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) notes that globally there are not many programmes designed specifically for returned foreign fighters and their families. There is also considerable variation between programmes that do exist. The majority of current initiatives tend to expand existing de-radicalisation and disengagement programmes. This is perhaps unsurprising as it is only very recently that IS has suffered the territorial defeats that has escalated the return of foreign fighters.

For example, the well-known German al-Hayat programme utilises approaches and methodologies originally developed to respond to neo-Nazism to de-radicalise individuals involved in radical Salafist groups or on the path of a violent Jihadist radicalization, as well as their families and associates. Al-Hayat has increasingly expanded its activities to focus on recently returned foreign fighters through counselling, ideological and pragmatic elements (such as finding employment), re- establishment of family relations and finding an alternative social network for returnees. However, this model's emphasis on de-radicalisation as the post-crime transformative rejection of extremist ideology and action (Horgan 2009) – and not merely disengagement from violent behaviours – is at odds with other elements of Australia's CVE focus on behaviours rather than beliefs, and scholars have commented on the broader conceptual and policy confusion inherent in a number of settings between 'de-radicalisation' versus 'disengagement' (Pettinger 2017, 5, 7).

Nevertheless, the repurposing of various reintegration programmes that are not specifically designed to address the challenges or needs of returning foreign fighters dominates the current landscape; for example, a Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) study analysing rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives worldwide concluded that 18 of the 30 GCTF Member States implemented rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for foreign fighters – most of which were not specifically designed for foreign fighters but built on existing programmes (van Ginkel and Entenmann 2016, 10). Countries such as Australia, where a relatively small number of foreign fighters and their families are likely to return, may similarly not require new tailor-made programmes, but could potentially respond through existing initiatives if appropriate interventions can be identified.

Clearly programmes of this sort will be subject to considerable political and public pressure that may be at odds with best practice in reintegration for foreign fighters and their families. The variation between programmes in various countries in not a problem in itself, as reviews of international CVE programs show that interventions need to be appropriate for differing local contexts and environments (Rosand et al. 2018; Grossman et al. 2016). However, more systematic information-sharing between different countries could help develop common best practices that could be utilised to inform interventions around foreign fighters. Efforts have already been made in this regard; for example, the Radical Awareness Network (RAN) has published a manual on responding to foreign fighters and their families for practitioners. However, as with many aspects of CVE, this new and emerging challenge means there is a lack of comprehensive evaluation or evidence of what works best or otherwise.

Children as foreign fighters

The Council of the European Union acknowledged in 2016 that:

It will be a great challenge to deal with the hundreds of children born or raised in the Caliphate upon their return or move to the European Union. These young people are likely to be highly traumatised as well as potentially constituting a threat to security. The Council notes that member states are at an early stage in developing sophisticated responses that both address young people's trauma and

mitigate the potential security risk they may pose (15).

The ICCT has noted a 'lack of rigorous research and reliable statistics on juvenile violent extremist offenders or young people who engage in terrorism' (van Ginkel and Entenmann 2016, 5). This is not unexpected given the difficulties of collecting reliable data on violent extremism in general and the newness of the challenge of child returnees from conflict in Syria and Iraq. Currently there are no conclusive statistics about the number of children who are involved in armed combat or who have been recruited by IS. There are also different categories of children who may be returning. Some may return with one or both parents, others have been born in IS territory after one or both parents joined this or other related violent extremist groupings in the Middle East. Children born in the Caliphate may face particular challenges as they will have no recognised birth registration. The EU distinguishes four types of children:

- minor refugees

- young FTFs

- children born and raised by European FTFs in Syria/Iraq

- children remaining in the EU, whilst parents/siblings have travelled to Syria and/or Iraq (van Ginkel and   Entenmann 2016, 4)

In 2015 the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights documented 1,100 Syrian children under 16 who joined IS, 52 of whom were killed in fighting, including eight suicide bombers (Horgan et al. 2017, 351). As of September 2015, 436 children, all boys, were being held in detention facilities in Iraq (Benotman and Malik 2016, 63).

In 2016 the Dutch intelligence and security agency AIVD reported that at least 80 Dutch children were in the conflict zone in Syria and Iraq. AIVD's data suggested approximately half of these children were born there, while the rest were taken there by one or both parent(s). Less than 20 per cent of these children were nine years of age or older (AIVD 2017, 2). A report by the Quilliam Foundation in March 2016 recorded that approximately 50 British children were growing up under IS and also that French authorities had claimed that approximately 50 children born of French parents had been taken to IS territory (Benotman and Malik 2016). In Germany, it has been estimated that between 24 and 36 German youths are currently in IS territory (RAN 2016).

In 2017, the then-Australian Justice Minister, Mr Michael Keenan, stated in an Australian media article that the Australian government was aware of about 70 children who had either travelled with their Australian parents or had been born to Australian parents active in the conflict in Syria or Iraq. If children have at least one parent with Australian citizenship, they are entitled to Australian citizenship. Mr Keenan stated that each child would be individually assessed to identify any risks to security, in addition to considering the welfare and support needs of each child – from counselling support through to their education needs, with federal and state government agencies working in close partnership concerning case-management arrangements for each child returnee (Wroe 2017).

Defining child combatants

The use of children in armed combat and terrorism is not unique to the conflict in Syria and Iraq. There are a number of examples of conflicts where children have been either directly subject or exposed to significant brutality, as well as perpetrating atrocities themselves – for example, the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, among many others. Quilliam argues, however, that 'the role of children in the [self-declared Islamic State] caliphate represents a culmination and acceleration of broader trends in the child soldier phenomenon' (Benotman and Malik, 23).

There have been a number of international agreements over time which have attempted to criminalise the use and exploitation of children in conflict zones. In 1997 a symposium convened by the NGO Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF issued the 'Cape Town Principles and Best Practices', which provided guidelines intended to help prevent the recruitment of children below age 18 into armed conflict. These guidelines included a focus on demobilisation and reintegration of child soldiers (UNICEF 1997).

In 2007, as child recruitment in war zones continued to multiply in various regions, the UN developed the 'Paris Principles' on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which stated that that 'recruiting and using children under the age of 15 as soldiers' is considered a war crime by the International Criminal Court' (UNICEF 2007, 17). The Paris Principles defined child soldiers broadly:

> A child associated with an armed force or armed group refers to any person below 18 years of age who is, or who has been, recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, spies or for sexual purposes (UNICEF 2007, 7).

Children as victims and perpetrators

Much research notes that children in armed conflict have a complex identity as both victims and often as perpetrators of violence (van der Heide and Geenan 2017; AIVD 2017; Benotman and Malik 2016). AIVD states that because children in IS-held territory may receive weapons and combat training from the age of nine, it categorises children from this age as 'jihadist travellers'. Minors who have travelled to the conflict zone independently are also viewed as 'jihadist travellers' (AIVD 2017, 2). In the Australian context, the government has recently proposed legislation that would allow children as young as ten to be held under preventative detention orders (PDOs) for up to 14 days without trial (Murphy 2017; Parliament of Australia, 2018).

Child combatants raise complex moral and ethical questions around agency and choice. To what extent are children able to make choices to participate or not participate in conflict? Should they be expected to take responsibility for their actions? Horgan and colleagues argue that 'even in cases whereby children state that they want to join a violent extremist movement, their capacity to make this choice is specious' (2017, 650). This view seems to be widely shared. The UN specifies that 'regardless of how children are recruited and of their roles, child soldiers are victims' (Horgan et al. 2017, 650). A 2016 report by Child Soldiers International argued that some cases of youth recruitment 'may be unforced' yet 'often do not meet the criteria of being genuinely voluntary' (cited in Horgan et al. 2017, 650).

Spaendonck argues that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) dictates that 'irrespective of whether a minor has left voluntarily or has been taken by family members, the home state has a special responsibility to guarantee his or her safety and well-being' (2016, 42). Quilliam, however, argues conversely that there should be caution in applying a Western and 'idealistic view of childhood' (Benotman and Malik 2016, 54) and that in a number of contexts both children and adults in a community will expect children to take some degree of responsibility. They argue that this is required in certain environments in order to facilitate reconciliation and the acceptance of children back into a community. Quilliam therefore asserts that 'context-specific approaches will have to be adopted to acknowledge this' (Benotman and Malik, 51).

In assessing children's agency and responsibility Quilliam, RAN and ICCT argue that the age of children is important to assess this and their potential risk to society. It is clear that there is a large gap between the cognitive and emotional development of a teenager of 15 and a child of nine. ICCT therefore asserts that rehabilitation and reintegration efforts for juveniles need to be based on 'two underlying assumptions: the importance of age and the importance of attitudes to violence' (van der Heide and Geenan 2017, 13).

However, RAN emphasises that while older children can be seen to have more agency and responsibility, they should not be included in adult services and need responses tailored to their developmental level (RAN 2016).

Whether or not children can be assumed to have criminal responsibility for their actions, what is unambiguous is that they would have experienced enormous and sustained trauma of multiple kinds, what has been termed 'cumulative risk' (RAN 2016, 6). They may have suffered trauma as victims of violence, they may have witnessed violence or they may have been traumatised by the experience of perpetrating violence and are consequently in 'need of protection and support' (Council of the European Union 2016, 15). RAN therefore argues that all children returning from Syria should be assumed to have experienced significant trauma and 'need interventions on this basis alone' (RAN 2016, 3). As a result of children's inevitable exposure to trauma RAN emphasises that it is crucial that all individuals working with child returnees should have trauma awareness skills, otherwise there is a high likelihood that children will experience further trauma during their resettlement and integration processes (RAN 2016). This engagement is necessary despite the fact that it may be difficult to work with such children, as one of the symptoms of trauma is social and emotional disengagement. Therefore, 'this is a slow gradual process that can take months to overcome' (RAN 2016, 7). If there are no early and holistic interventions, these children may well become involved in criminal and terrorist networks after their return.

What makes children particularly vulnerable?

Children are particularly vulnerable in a number of ways, which need to be taken into account in any interventions addressed to them as returnees. Children and young people are still developing their identity neurologically and socially, which makes them impressionable and vulnerable to indoctrination. The family and broader social environment in which young people are located can either protect them against radicalisation or make them more vulnerable if these networks support or condone violence. Many returning children will have been systematically desensitised to violence, which will lead to psycho-social problems as well as put the children at risk of committing extreme acts of violence. IS consciously exposes children to extreme violence and has also deliberately used children for propaganda purposes by filming them committing atrocities to maximise the spectacle and impact of these acts of violence. On the other hand, the malleability of children means that they have the potential to respond quickly to resocialisation into normative values and behaviour. Therefore, 'Understanding the extent of indoctrination, the exposure to violence and the living conditions' (NCTV and AIVD: 3) that children have experienced will be crucial information needed to assess each child on a case by case basis in order to develop multiagency responses tailored to each individual.

Roles of children in IS

Children are trained to play a variety of roles in IS as spies, preachers, recruiters, executioners, frontline soldiers and suicide bombers as well as a number of support roles such as preparing and cooking food, delivering messages and medical supplies, filming or photographing battle, helping wounded fighters to evacuate the front lines, donating blood to the injured, replenishing weapons and ammunitions, and whipping prisoners (Benotman and Malik, RAN 2016). They have also been eulogised as martyrs in death in IS propaganda material (Horgan et al. 2017).

Children are recruited into IS from the age of 9 and boys may undergo military training from this age. They are frequently forced to attend camps where they are subjected to intense ideological indoctrination, training in fighting skills (martial arts and self-defence) and how to deal with prisoners (RAN 2016). Horgan and colleagues have identified a variety of sources from which children are recruited into IS. These include:

- Children of internally displaced people and foreigners (including foreign fighters) who travel to IS controlled territory

- Children volunteered by local fighters and civilians

- Children recruited from local orphanages

- Children involuntarily taken from their parents (i.e., through abduction and/or slavery)

- Children, many of whom are runaways, who volunteer (Horgan et al. 2017, 652)

Horgan et al. outline a six-step process of socialisation of children in IS, most of which is underpinned by extreme violence. They call these phases 'Seduction, Schooling, Selection, Subjugation, Specialization, and Stationing' and explain them in the following way:

- *Seduction*: Initial exposure to IS ideas, norms and practices through propaganda, peripheral participation in public events, and indirect access to personnel

- *Schooling*: Routine, direct exposure to personnel, accompanied by intensive indoctrination

- *Selection:* Focused attention from recruiters, screening for aptitude and grooming for military training or other roles (e.g., spying)

- *Subjugation*: Physical and psychological brutalization through intensive training, isolation from family, wearing a uniform, and deepening of commitment through acts of loyalty, sacrifice, and discipline; emergence of solidarity via shared hardship

- *Specialization*: Fostering expertise and exposure to specialized training

- *Stationing*: Role assignment and deployment; including participation in public events to recruit additional members (Horgan et al. 2017, 655-6)

Reintegrating children

Reintegrating children who have participated in conflict either as witnesses, perpetrators, victims or in all three capacities involves unique challenges and opportunities that require both individually tailored and collective responses. Thus far, according to Horgan and colleagues, 'The Sabaoon project in Pakistan's Swat Valley is currently the only child-centered reintegration program [for violent extremism] in the world'. It tries to prevent re-recruitment to violent extremism through extensive post-release monitoring and ongoing support of children (Horgan et al. 2017, 659).

The first step, as noted by several agencies (Benotman and Malik 2016; RAN 2016) will be to make individual assessments of each child to evaluate their needs holistically and develop a comprehensive approach to their reintegration, including 'an extensive period of support from a community network' (Benotman and Malik, 63). This would comprise, for example, support for the effects of trauma and other psycho-social needs, a review of their educational and employment needs, an evaluation of the extent of their radicalisation and attitudes to violence, an assessment of their family environment (as facilitator or inhibitor of radicalisation), an appraisal of their potential criminal culpability for violence and their suitability for particular deradicalisation programmes.

Evidently, this type of integrated plan will require close multi-agency collaboration, including sharing information and skills, possibly in an inter-disciplinary assessment team set up for this purpose. Despite the clear benefit of such an approach, there have been significant challenges in actually implementing multi-agency coordination in related contexts such as the response to juvenile offenders in the criminal justice

system in Britain where, 'academic and government reports called for greater coordination among authorities, frontline workers and other civil society actors' (Benotman and Malik 2016, 73) because despite numerous local authority and civil society outreach programmes for preventing gang recruitment and violence, insufficient coordination among different actors undermined the effectiveness of these programmes.

Thus far, as ICCT notes, governments have attempted to deal with juvenile violent extremist offenders primarily in three different ways, namely through (1) treating them as adult terrorist offenders, for example in Palestine, Peru and Saudi Arabia where, although dedicated juvenile legislation exists, it is not utilised in the case of juvenile violent extremist cases. In addition, these countries are currently attempting to lower the age of criminal responsibility to respond to the increase of juvenile violent extremist offenders. These young people are held in adult prisons and are subject to harsh sentences including the death penalty (van der Heide and Geenan 2017). Besides the moral and ethical problems associated with this approach, which may contravene human rights protocols on the protection of children, the risk of this approach is that young people will be further brutalised as a result of being kept in harsh prison conditions where they are vulnerable to victimisation by adult offenders and the opportunity for rehabilitation will most likely be lost.

Other countries such as Austria, the Philippines and Jordan treat these young people as ordinary juvenile criminals, using existing legislation for juvenile offenders, including specialised youth courts and more lenient sentences, which provide for diversion and detention in specialised youth facilities. This approach could potentially lead young people incarcerated for violent extremism to radicalise their peers. There is also a danger that there is not sufficient expertise available to address the ideological components of violent extremism, which differ from the factors that contribute to conventional criminal violence. Arguably this approach could be politically contentious in some contexts and be perceived as a 'soft' response to terrorism (van der Heide and Geenan 2017).

Emerging literature on the reintegration of juvenile foreign fighters or young people who may have been exposed to violent extremism has posited that existing criminal judicial infrastructure for the treatment of juveniles should be utilised to respond to young people who have been involved in violent extremism (Mullins 2010; Cherney 2016). The International Juvenile Justice Observatory argues that, 'Approaches to promote disengagement from violence and extremism will be more effective if they build on existing structures for crime prevention and rehabilitation' (International Juvenile Justice Observatory 2017).

Benotman and Malik assert that the psychological characteristics and push and pull factors experienced by juveniles involved in violent extremism can be compared to young people involved in gang violence and therefore strategies to address juvenile criminality can be utilised to counter violence carried out by young members of IS. They note the importance of the community in this approach and argue that, 'Reintegration methods for gang members are most effective when they engage in community values, and important lessons can be learned from the successes and pitfalls surrounding reintegration of gang children' (Benotman and Malik 2016, 72).

On the other hand, there are limitations to the criminal justice approach with regard to juveniles involved in violent extremism, most importantly they don't address the collective nature of this violence and the ideological components of violent extremism. In this context, lessons and practices from Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs, which are a well-established response to soldiers in post- conflict settings, could play an important role in reintegrating child violent extremists. On the other hand, there has been criticism of current DDR programmes for not 'paying enough attention' to 'the significant religious or political indoctrination that has increasingly been employed in current conflicts' (Benotman and Malik 2016, 51) and not focusing enough on the specificity of the needs of children as opposed to adult soldiers (Benotman and Malik 2016).

Providing young violent extremist offenders with specialised treatments may avoid some of the risks outlined above but as the ICCT points out, most countries in the West are dealing with small numbers of young returnees, which may not justify a costly specialised programme (van der Heide and Geenan 2017). The ICCT thus claims that 'the first question that needs to be answered by individual governments is whether the number of juvenile cases warrants creating separate facilities, and how best to combine insights from other juvenile offender categories (child soldiers, drug addicts) with the existing knowledge on radicalisation and violent extremism' (van der Heide and Geenan 2017, 12).

Role of communities in reintegrating children

A critical component of DDR programmes is an emphasis on the reintegration of former child soldiers into their families and communities who may be concerned that children could act aggressively as a result of their involvement and exposure to violence (Veal and Stavrou 2003). The ultimate goal as RAN argues is 'to build connections between families and communities thereby offering resilience and stability for the child' (RAN 2016, 9). RAN argues that the level of support that a child receives from their family and community is strongly correlated with positive social behaviour and feelings of connectedness after they have been involved in conflict. Therefore, providing reintegration services within communities and including the family and community in the reintegration process, is the most effective manner to properly reintegrate children. On the other hand, there may be instances where the family itself is *the* risk factor, for example children who have been brought by their parents to IS-held territories. In these instances, 'upon their return, it *may* be necessary to consider the removal of a child from a family' (RAN 2016, 3). However, this 'should be the absolute last resort as the impact upon the child will be significant and unpredictable' (RAN 2016, 3).

In attempting to encourage identity transition away from violent extremism, RAN argues that new role models, a suitable community and an active peer group are 'all essential elements in the process' (RAN 2016, 11). To facilitate this Quilliam suggests a support network, administered by a local NGO and possibly funded by the state, which could coordinate community actors and ensure that the voices of children are heard, which it argues is critical in order to facilitate successful, long-term reintegration of children and reunion with their families where this is appropriate (Benotman and Malki 2016, 65).

Importantly DDR programmes for children need to be culturally sensitive and tailored to the local context to be successful. Research in Mozambique found that over and above a number of activities supporting child soldiers to recover from the trauma of their involvement in conflict, 'the need of the former child soldiers to be accepted by their families and communities after the war' was seen as the most pressing (Benotman and Malik 206, 54). To facilitate this DDR programmes have focused on sensitising and strengthening local communities to prevent stigmatisation of children associated with or directly involved in previous conflicts (Reed 2010; Veale and Stavrou 2003). Therefore, 'community sensitization campaigns, community works projects and outward support of traditional community rites were some of the most important activities related to the successful recovery of many of the former child soldiers' in Mozambique (Boothby et al. 2006, 89). Here, 'Local military, police, teachers, and community leaders were targeted and encouraged to support the reintegration of former child soldiers by taking collective responsibility for the fate of the returnees' (Boothby et al. 2006, 97). The reintegration of former child soldiers was marked by traditional ceremonies and healing processes. These were seen as important not only by former child soldiers themselves but by family and neighbours who felt these were vital for rebuilding community trust and cohesion.

Quilliam recommends the implementation of programmes, 'that train parents and increase public awareness' through collaboration between civil society and government, which is implemented in a range of community spaces such as schools and religious institutions (Benotman and Malik 2016, 63). In addition, when making an assessment of the needs of child returnees, 'assessors should consider input on the

readiness of communities to accept the children as part of their recommendations for long-term reintegration efforts' (Benotman and Malik 2016, 64). To facilitate the re-entry of young people, community leaders familiar with local issues and youth culture can provide role-modelling and mentorship.

A focus on community integration in the context of child returnees from IS is crucial because, as RAN notes, 'Daesh recruited children not as soldiers but as members of a well-defined community with a distinct identity and a clearly identifiable out-group' (RAN 2016, 9). ICCT also notes the importance of young people's social environment in their radicalisation and the 'strong and closed-off specific group culture' in which children are socialised into terrorism' (van der Heide and Geenan 2017, 5). Therefore, the sense of belonging and integration in a community that IS provided for young people needs to be replaced with equally powerful social attachments when they return. As children craft new identities and seek a new sense of belonging, it is imperative they find acceptance and opportunities to feel a sense of empowerment and self-worth within a non-violent lifestyle.

To be effective, DDR strategies will need to ensure not only collaboration with civil society but must also ensure that, 'children's voices are heard and taken into consideration' (Benotman and Malik 2016, 61). Wessels argues that the failure to improve on existing DDR processes is a result of a recurring failure to include children's voices and perspectives in all aspects of the DDR process (cited in Horgan et al. 2016, 659).

Despite the complexities around the reintegration of children outlined above, research in Mozambique found that notwithstanding the trauma and indoctrination young people had suffered, former child soldiers who were, 'provided rehabilitative services and accepted back into their families and communities' would, 'become productive, responsible and caring adults' (Boothby et al. 2006, 87).

Women as foreign fighters

The complexity of women's involvement in conflict in general and in organisations such as IS has only recently been explored in academic literature and in media coverage. As a result, 'the role of women in promulgating and countering violent extremism is an understudied but critical contemporary security issue' (Nusseibeh and Verveer 2016, 4). Gender shapes current terror and the organisational agenda of movements such as IS in paradoxical fashion, both strategically exploiting gender stereotypes to limit and confine the power women hold in the organisation and at the same time offering them a new 'freedom' within defined roles in the movement (Grossman, Carland, Tahiri and Zammit 2017). Thus 'women's active participation as terrorists both defies and exploits conventional gender stereotypes' (Laster and Erez 2015).

Although women have played key roles in many modern-day and historical armed conflicts and insurgencies, IS is unique in its targeted propaganda aimed at encouraging women to become part of its recruitment activities, particularly online. Women have consequently played a variety of roles in the organisation, particularly in relation to both online and offline social influence, social regulation and the facilitation of foreign travel (Grossman, Carland, Tahiri and Zammit 2017; Saltman and Smith 2015; Hoyle, Bradford and Frenett 2015), albeit constrained by patriarchal norms that continue to limit the nature of their involvement. Huey notes, 'Women of the IS have been visibly active as network members and as both creators and distributors of pro-IS propaganda' (Huey 2015, 2). They are 'particularly targeted on social media for *hijrah* – both to undertake it and to encourage others to do it' (Grossman et al. 2017, 10).

Tahiri and Grossman (2013, 32) use the concept of a 'convergence paradigm' to understand the interplay between a range of personal and environmental factors that need to coalesce for an individual to radicalise to violent extremism. These include individual choices, influences, motives and pre-dispositions; local and transnational social and cultural dynamics, settings and networks; social and ideological opportunities and constraints; and pragmatic considerations such as access to means and resources. Despite this, Scott argues that thus far, 'neither the media nor policymakers have fully grasped the depth of female involvement in

terrorist organizations, especially jihadist' (2016, 292). Bloom contends that the lack of analysis of women's role in terrorism is part of a longer term trend in research on terrorism which has 'revealed little about what motivates women to commit terrorism' (Bloom 2011, 5).

Women have often been stereotyped as passive victims of violence. Scott argues that this leads to a 'dangerous oversimplification of complex gender relations in many parts of the world' (2016, 291). Patel remarks, 'The language used by media and by governments to explain women's involvement in violent extremism remains rooted in a victim narrative that denies women agency in their commitment and desire to be part of the cause' (2017, 25). Where there is irrefutable evidence that women have been involved in violence, this is minimised as not being the result of their independent agency but a consequence of their 'blind obedience to men' (Scott 2016, 291), either in coercive patriarchal relationship with male authority figures such as fathers or as a result of romantic attachments to men involved in terrorist organisations, popularly described in the media as 'jihadi brides'.

Such stereotyping ignores 'the striking degree to which young women themselves are actively involved in recruiting like-minded "sisters" to the cause' (Cottee 2016, np). Huckerby (2015) also observes that, 'Despite stereotypes about their domesticity and passivity — the idea that they must always be under men's influence or tricked into joining — women are drawn to groups like the Islamic State by many of the same forces as men adventure, inequality, alienation and the pull of the cause'. Framing women solely in connection to men, as McDonald (1991, 9) notes, 'conveniently serves all ends': it privileges men as powerful, women as weak and acting solely in relation to men, and frames women's decisions as entirely emotional rather than ideological or otherwise cognitively oriented.

Therefore, analyses of women's involvement in conflict have drawn on stereotypes that caricature women as 'emotional' and without political agency. Their participation in political activity is perceived to be driven by these 'sentiments' rather than intellectual identification with a cause. Paradoxically both women and men are in fact driven by a combination of sentiment and political acuity. As Bloom argues, 'The reality of women's motivation is a complicated mix of personal, political and religious factors sparked at different times by different stimuli. Like a man, what has inspired a woman to join initially might not be the same reasons why she remains in the organization or why she decides to become a front line operative' (Bloom 2011, 11).

However, understanding the complexity of women's subjectivity and identity and the reasons they become involved in terrorism, and retreat from it, is critical for effective responses to violent extremism that craft programmes which recognise the multiplicity of women's roles as perpetrators, by-standers, facilitators and victims. Wilmot (2015) notes in relation to women's involvement in Boko Haram they are often both victims and survivors of violence as well as perpetrators of it. She contends that most women join Boko Haram voluntarily or because they believe there are no other options for them and may become suicide bombers to seek revenge for the deaths of their spouses or parents, as well as reunification in the afterlife. Therefore, 'the two narratives of female involvement in Boko Haram—passive victims versus active participants—are not mutually exclusive. Both reflect the complexity of gender in insurgencies' (Wilmot 2015).

Women's participation in terrorism

As is the case for other actors in recent violent extremism, it is difficult to conclusively estimate the number of women involved in current violent conflicts. In 2015 there were an estimated 550 Western female migrants living within Islamic State's self-declared borders (Hoyle, Bradford and Frenett 2015). Reports suggested around 60 of these were women from the UK (Khan 2015), 70 from France, 40 from Germany, 20 from Belgium, and 35 from the Netherlands (Stoter 2014).

Bloom quantifies women's involvement in one of the most spectacular acts of violence in contemporary history, suicide bombing:

> Between 1985 and 2010, female bombers committed over 257 suicide attacks (representing about a quarter of the total) on behalf of many different terrorist organizations. The percentage of women since 2002 in some countries exceeds as much as fifty percent of the operatives. The women have killed hundreds of men, women, and children and their acts have maimed, blinded or crippled thousands more. Dozens more have tried and failed, and allegedly hundreds are being trained for the future. (Bloom 2011, 2).

While women have been involved in many violent conflicts there is no doubt that the frequency with which women are being recruited to carry out acts of atrocious violence has been increasing. According to Bloom, the numbers of female suicide bombers in Iraq rose steadily, from eight in 2007 to 32 in 2008 and eight more in 2009–2010 (2011, 3). Twenty-five percent of all fatal attacks since 2002 have reportedly been carried out by women (Scott 2016, 292). Approximately 3000 women from the Arab and Muslim world as well as the West have reportedly joined IS (Saikal 2016, 318). In March 2015 alone, 70 young women, including 9 schoolgirls, reportedly left Germany (RAN 2016, 5).

The use of social media by IS has enabled women to play a particularly important part in online recruitment and propaganda. Huckerby (2015) notes that 'roughly 10 percent of [IS's] Western recruits are female, often recruited by their peers through social media and instant messaging. The percentage is much higher in France: An estimated 63 of the 350 French nationals believed to be with the group are women, or just below 20 percent'. Reports in 2016 put the number of French nationals leaving France to go to Syria at more than 900 (Nossiter 2016).

As a result of this increased mobilisation, women are now forming a larger component of returning foreign fighters. The Dutch security agency AIVD noted recently that approximately a third of returnees are women who include families and several women that form or formed a family with a Dutch or foreign husband still in the conflict zone (AIVD 2017).

Roles of women in IS

The increasing significance of women in recent terror is a result of a number of factors, but importantly it has been argued that it is linked to shifting norms in Islamic terror groups such as IS, which has opened up space for women to play a more direct role in such organisations.

The role of women in jihad has been deeply contested in Islam since antiquity (Saikal 2016). According to Saikal, 'While some Islamists have argued for women's participation in an indirect or passive capacity-to provide support for male Jihadis and to produce the next generation of Jihadis, other Islamist figures have argued for women's direct participation in jihad, including combat' (2016, 316). As Saikal notes, 'IS is not the first or only extremist group that has attracted and deployed women in both passive and active jihadi roles' (2016, 319). However, IS is 'distinguished' from other groups by the 'scale of its deployment of females and the tasks that they are assigned or coerced to perform' (Saikal 2016, 320). In this context, many women have 'migrated from support roles such as providing food and shelter, smuggling weapons, or providing comfort to men to more violent activist roles' (Bloom 2011, 7).

Women have emerged as critically important actors in the recruitment of both women and men to IS as well as disseminating propaganda on social media. The internet has also created the opportunity to establish global networks between women. According to RAN women in Syria have provided advice to women leaving their own countries in the West to participate in combat, with practical advice on what to pack, how much money to bring etc. (RAN 2017a). Some research has argued that women's 'superior network

connectivity' facilitates recruitment and helps contribute to the durability of terrorism networks whose longevity can be correlated with the 'fraction of women that are in it' (Manrique et al. 2016).

Other roles that women play are as 'morality activists, police, and rule enforcers' (Saikal 2016, 318) particularly in the armed IS female unit, the Al-Khansa brigade, which enforces moral and dress codes for women, meting out violent punishments for those who are deemed to have violated these codes (Saikal 2016).

Scott (2016) and Bloom (2011) have noted the valuable role that women can play in terrorist organisations by exploiting gender stereotypes and beliefs about femininity, which portray women as weak victims or inherently peaceful nurturers. As a result, security officials, border guards and other law enforcement personnel are less likely to perceive them as potential perpetrators of violence. This enables women to play supportive roles in terrorism undetected, for example couriering money and weapons, as well as executing more deadly missions such a carrying out suicide bombings that target civilians. Consequently, Bloom argues that women have a higher kill rate and success in penetrating 'soft targets' than men. Female terrorists therefore give organisations a strategic advantage because of the 'element of surprise' (Bloom 2011, 1).

Scott and Bloom also argue that involving women in terrorist acts of violence has another strategic advantage because in general women receive a much higher level of media attention when they commit acts of violence as a result of 'cognitive dissonance' between women's assumed social role and the commission of violence by women in terror attacks. Counter-intuitively this high level of media attention often glamorizes women's participation in acts of violence and functions as effective propaganda for terrorist groupings.

Nevertheless, Bloom asserts that women remain a second choice for terror operations and are usually used when terror groups are relatively weak and where 'male operatives are unavailable, when a target is particularly difficult to penetrate or when they hope to evade capture' (Bloom 2011, 3).

Grossman et al. (2017) have identified a number of 'push' and 'pull' factors, which draw women into an organisation such as IS. They argue that while women may have similar motivations as men for becoming involved in terrorism, the *experience* of these push and pull factors and the ways they play out in women and men's lives is often qualitatively different. For instance, while both male and female Muslims may face discrimination, the way they experience that discrimination is different as women may be targeted for wearing head coverings, which makes their Muslim identity visible, while men are more likely to be stopped by police when driving.

Evolution of women's role in jihadist movements

The increased involvement of women in violent extremist conflict is importantly, as already noted, the consequence of evolving debates within extremist Islamic organisations about the role women should play in jihad. Bloom (2011) argues that until relatively recently it was largely secular, 'left-wing' organisations that included women in their ranks, but she asserts this has changed over time. She notes an 'ideological shift' in Islamic organisations as discussions around women's role in jihad unfolded online and fatwas were reportedly issued stating that women's obligation to participate in Jihad 'is equal to that of men'. According to Bloom, this shift was led by Sheikh Yusuf al Qaradawi, an Egyptian cleric living in Qatar who 'has legitimized the use of women as suicide bombers' (Bloom 2014).

Bloom argues that changes in al Qaeda's structure preceded this ideological shift in IS as al-Qaeda fragmented into a variety of regional affiliates who, 'were more inclined to involve women in front-line violent activities' (Bloom 2014). While officially al-Qaeda continued to reject the involvement of women in

combat, at a regional level, in Iraq, Chechnya, Pakistan and Uzbekistan, cells began using female bombers from 2005, although other Islamic organisations such as the Taliban continued to exclude female fighters until very recently.

From 2004, a web-based magazine called *al Khansa'a* was released by al-Qaeda, which 'changed from advising women what to do while their men were on Jihad to telling women they, too, could be Jihadis and even be suicide bombers' (Bloom 2014). In 2011 al-Qaeda also released an online magazine in Arabic, *al-Shamikha*, which exclusively targeted a female jihadi audience (Scott 2017, 291). Over time, 'even the most traditional of the Salafi Islamists, Al Qaeda and the Taliban (in Pakistan)' used women to 'deadly effect', along with combat roles for women in various regional insurgencies and conflict settings such as Sri Lanka, Chechnya and Nigeria. According to Bloom, 'women now provide both the inspiration and symbols of Jihad as well as its actual operatives' (Bloom 2011, 6).

The role of women in IS and its official and unofficial attitudes to women are complex and ambiguous, which Saikal (2016) argues has allowed the organisation to make strategic use of women while simultaneously remaining highly patriarchal. In July 2015, IS released a document entitled 'Women in the Islamic State: Manifesto and Case Study', which outlined its position on women's role in jihad. It endorsed women's participation in both supportive and active roles in jihad and called on women to join IS and play roles, not only as 'homemakers, wives and mothers', but also as defenders of IS in an active combat role. (Saikal 2016). It depicted an idealised picture of women's life under IS in a society free from discrimination where women would be able to freely practice their faith. This was a particularly powerful message for women living in the West who have faced considerable social discrimination and marginalisation as a result of their Islamic practice.

Bloom also argues that IS's use of women was not only the result of a change in attitudes but a pragmatic decision as it increasingly sought to attack 'soft targets', which women are more easily able to access because of their perceived docility. She writes, 'When an improvised explosive device is strapped around a woman's midsection, it gives the impression that she is pregnant, throwing off security forces who don't expect a woman — let alone one who is pregnant — to be carrying a bomb' (Bloom 2014).

Finally, Bloom asserts that women have been more frequently utilised by organisations such as IS because they are effective recruiters not only of women, but of men, whom women allegedly 'shame' into participation in jihad, both online and offline: 'It is a powerful narrative when women (especially online) accuse men of being unmanly unless they step up and join the Jihad to protect their sisters in Islam' (Bloom 2014).

Why women join IS

Why do women join organisations such as IS? The critical difference between IS and similar terrorist organisations has been its focus on state-building and, within this, an explicit appeal to women to join this enterprise in roles that are presented as empowering, albeit within contexts dominated by highly patriarchal conventions. However, the propaganda and social influence of IS has offered women an opportunity to break free from some of the cultural and parental restrictions they may have experienced in order to exercise their agency within the IS project, creating new forms of solidarity and identity. Bloom (2014) suggests that women's involvement in actions like suicide bombings are an attempt by women with sometimes limited options and opportunities, to seek respect and honour and achieve a form of immortality as perpetual martyrs, who will be venerated as heroines by this and subsequent generations.

Scott (2016) goes further in suggesting that women have not simply responded to the opening up of space in extremist organisations, but have also driven some of these changes. In general, women are propelled to

participate in terrorism by many of the same factors that motivate men (Scott 2016, 289; Grossman et al. 2017). However, women's *experience* of these motivating factors may well be gendered (Grossman et al. 2017). The gendered nature of the experience of involvement in terrorism and the factors that motivate women's participation are therefore critically important to examine in order to understand the *way* in which women become involved in terrorism, and the extent to which they are drivers of change within terrorist organisations and movements.

Factors that motivate both male and female actors include political and religious beliefs; a desire for revenge, redemption, or honour; an aspiration to spur societal change and address socio-political grievances; utopian ideals, belief in the prophesy of the caliphate and a perfect state of Islamic governance, a desire for power, adventure and excitement, a search for meaning, identity and a sense of belonging, a desire for empowerment and rejection of parental restrictions.

There are differences in the form that men and women's engagement in the activity of an organisation such as IS, takes. Bloom argues that because women are often excluded from formal religious education and the civil society spaces in which men become politicised, they are frequently drawn into political engagement through their relationships with men, whether brothers, cousins or partners. Bloom suggests 'the best predictor that a woman will engage in terrorist violence is if she is related to a known insurgent or Jihadi' (Bloom 2011, 12).

Reinforcing Bloom's findings, while there is much research evidence which shows the importance of male social networks to the radicalisation of men (see for example Gable and Jackson 2007; Gill and Corner 2015; Passy 2003; Sageman 2008; Weimann 2012), Grossman et al. (2017) note that, at least in Australia, female networks do not appear to be as critical a pathway for the radicalisation of women, although they can function as a source of solidarity between women who have already been radicalised. Instead, women are often drawn into terror networks as a result of close associations with radicalised men, primarily in their family networks. The weight of male influence in these instances is exacerbated by women's socialisation into the belief that they should follow the men in their lives, even where their own ideological or personal beliefs are not congruent with that of a male spouse or relative. Grossman et al. (2017) note, however, that the Australian data suggests that male influence *on its own* is insufficient to drive women toward violent extremist beliefs and activities, unless there is clear evidence of coercion, leverage and manipulation. What does appear to be the case is that male influence, when this *converges with other drivers* of the kinds discussed above, may provide an accessible and meaningful route for women who are seeking ways to respond to the various push factors outlined above.

In Australia, Grossman and colleagues (2017) have identified key push, pull, role and pathway features that characterise the involvement women and girls into IS. The chief drivers for women are *grievances,* including sense of personal, social and/or political victimisation, loss of dignity or sense of injustice (Huckerby 2015; Saltman and Smith 2015); *lack of social connection/belonging* within the family, community or broader society; *perceived threat* to identity, culture and/or belief systems; *vulnerability,* including lack of knowledge and/or skills, social isolation and lack of confidence or resilience, and *idealism and conviction* to seek social change, defend and protect religious or social beliefs ((Saltman and Smith 2015; Hoyle, Bradford and Frenett 2015; Cottee 2016; Schmid 2015), or protect and help others perceived as vulnerable or persecuted.

The major attractors for women are *social influence by others* which highlights the promise of empowerment, status and agency for women (Rafiq and Malik 2015); *freedom to* gain control, challenge boundaries (Benhold 2015; Nacos 2015; Marcoes, 2015) and drive change and transformation; *freedom from* existential uncertainty about gender-based purpose and identity (Cottee 2016; CPRLV 2016), as well as values- and gender-based social conflicts, constraints or demands; *affirmation of identity and meaning* through sense of sisterhood, solidarity and collectivism linked to a higher, pioneering cause or purpose

(Saltman and Smith 2015; Hoyle, Bradford and Frenett 2015; CPRLV 2016), and *legitimation and efficacy* through transforming emotions and beliefs into purposive action (Grossman et al. 2017).

Very few Australian women to date may be classed as direct *violent* actors (Grossman et al. 2017). The primary roles played by Australian women within violent extremism are overwhelmingly those of social influencers and 'active radicalisers' who create and amplify online and offline messaging and recruitment efforts. A second key role is as 'enablers' of violent actors and networks. These enablement roles fall into two categories. The first is that of *ideological enablers,* who believe in the violent extremist cause, see themselves as fellow travellers, and provide material and psychosocial forms of support for terrorist activities, including financial, communication, information and logistics support. The second is that of *relational enablers,* who may provide similar forms of support to ideological enablers, but who do so based on commitment or loyalty to a family, person or relationship rather than out of ideological conviction (Grossman et al. 2017). While not covered in Grossman et al.'s study, a sub-category for relational enablers may involve women who are *coerced enablers,* that is, women who cooperate or participate out of fear for their own or their children's or other family members' safety and wellbeing if they resist efforts to involve them in support or influence roles. While this category has not yet been investigated empirically, there are anecdotal overlaps that suggest this may be a potential factor to explore when considering reintegration models and responses.

The distinction between ideological and relational (or coerced) enablers is a critical one when considering the reintegration of women returnees from conflict zones. Ideological enablers may present a different risk profile to relational enablers; relational enablers may have stronger ties to social and community networks that position them positively for reintegration; ideological enablers may require higher levels of monitoring; relational enablers may feel more vulnerable if they are widowed or otherwise separated from a man who was the primary psycho-social anchor in their lives and may require different or enhanced levels of community support as a consequence.

Reintegrating women

How then should reintegration models respond to the complexity of women's involvement in violent extremism in ways that builds their agency and helps them to reintegrate into society? And how can countries effectively assess the impact of women's experiences in conflict zones in connection with their motives for return?

According to RAN, female returnees have been returning to their home countries within the EU for one or a combination of several reasons: some are disillusioned after their experience of hardship and oppression, or after their husband was killed; others come back for medical treatment and family support. In a few instances, 'women have been bought free and rescued by their families. Some return due to family pressure' (RAN 2017a, 21).

The EU recently noted the need for specialised responses to women returning from conflict zones:

> It is also necessary to reflect on how to deal with other family members, and in particular women: many may have suffered from abuse and may be traumatised, victims of violence, including sexual violence, and should have access to protection, support and counselling; they may, even if they did not have a fighting role, still believe in the Daesh ideology, and may have supported Daesh in other ways, and hence may pose a threat, and thus need rehabilitation and reintegration (Council of European Union 2016, 15).

Involving female community members and leaders in developing reintegration responses for those women who return is thus an essential element in designing such specialised responses. Internationally, however,

despite various resolutions and reports urging stronger involvement of women in CVE more broadly, Aoláin (2016, 282) found in a review of 43 Security Council Resolutions addressing terrorism and counter-terrorism between January 2013 and May 2015 that only 15 mentioned women or sexual violence and only two mentioned the Women, Peace and Security agenda of the UN.

Although women are on the 'frontlines' of violent extremism as perpetrators, recruiters as well as leaders working on counter-radicalisation initiatives, d'Estaing (2017, 103) notes the 'limitations' of current CVE programmes and policies in meaningfully addressing the diversity of women's voices and experience and their tendency to draw on stereotypical conceptions about gender identities. She calls for the full participation of women at all levels of decision-making in both formulating and implementing CVE strategies in order to create effective and sustainable CVE interventions, including those focused on reintegrating adult women returnees.

Bloom similarly emphasises the 'need to provide pathways for women's exit from terrorist organizations' (Bloom 2011, 19) and notes that few current de-radicalization programs specifically cater for women, despite the importance of women in potentially radicalising subsequent generations, while Hoyle et al. highlight the crucial role of the mother in the case of girls who (attempt to) join IS, commenting, 'There is evidence to suggest that women's families have a strong influence in terms of persuading prospective female migrants at least to delay, if not reject migration entirely' (2015, 16).

The limitations of current approaches in relation to women are not surprising. Studies have shown that within post-war programming, for example, 'girls are, for the most part, rendered invisible and marginalised' (Denov 2008, 813). Those programs that do exist tend to view girls as victims of sexual assault and do not take into account their varied experiences (Denov 2007). Quilliam also notes the 'foibles' of previous initiatives to reduce gang violence which, like initiatives addressing extremist violence, have often ignored the particular experience of girls, including their experiences of sexual violence and their own involvement in violence 'to prove themselves as part of the group' (Benotman and Malik 2016, 73). d' Estaing argues that, thus far, few women have been involved in the drafting of strategies and frameworks on security and peace internationally and that 'women are often consulted as an afterthought in planning for PVE/CVE work and in many other security processes' (d'Estaing 2017, 110) rather than being active drivers of strategy development. A gender-sensitive paradigm shift, 'in preventing and countering violent extremism' – including disengagement and reintegration processed – 'would integrate different perspectives from the beginning of the design of policy and measures, to include women, as well as youth and religious leaders' (d'Estaing 2017, 110).

Conclusion

The reintegration of child, women and family returnees has become a core policy concern for many governments, including Australia, as individuals involved in conflict and terrorism in Syria and Iraq now seek return to their home countries. While governments may seek to prevent the return of some of these actors, especially but not exclusively those who have directly participated in combat, some who have played key roles in conflict (whether combat-related or not) will return regardless and may not be prosecuted as a result of the difficulties of collecting evidence from conflict zones.

Evolving government policy in Australia over the last fifteen years has laid the groundwork for effective counter violent extremism measures that complement legislative responses to foreign fighters. As part of the developing understanding of CVE in the Australian context, there has been increasing recognition of the importance of communities in responding to violent extremism in general and, now, to the challenge of supporting the successful reintegration of children and women who may be either or both victims or perpetrators of extremist violence overseas.

There remain significant gaps in knowledge and practice as a result of the newness of many of the current conflict dynamics. The relative sparseness of literature dealing with reintegration issues from previously held IS or other violent extremist conflict zones demonstrates how recent this challenge is, and the importance of looking to cognate models and processes to inform how Australian agencies and communities can best deal with challenges related to trauma, mental health, disengagement, community resilience and the coordination and information-sharing required by professional service providers and authorities responsible for community safety and wellbeing. There are few programmes internationally that specifically address the needs of women or of children involved in the conflict in the Middle East. We still lack contemporary empirical information about the nature of their experiences in conflicts, their motivation for participation or the likelihood of their retreat from ideological positons that support violence.

Nevertheless, there is a strong body of research evidence underlining the importance of meaningful and equal partnerships between state and civil society to both prevent and respond to violent extremism – evidence that can now be extended to consideration of how effective reintegration models and approaches can be designed. There is also useful knowledge available in relation to the specialised understanding and knowledge required for the disengagement and support of children and women who may be positioned in complex ways to the conflicts by which they have been impacted and from which they now seek to flee.

As noted earlier, community resilience is crucial in this endeavour, since the vast majority of non-combatant returnees (and some foreign fighters who may be released from prison in future) will be reintegrated in local communities, requiring local support and resources for their reintegration to be successful. Communities' capacity to pro-socially re-absorb child and women or family returnees from conflict zones will define the extent to which such communities are able to develop the adaptive capacities that enable them to avoid stigmatising and excluding returnees, as well as the capacity to resist any attempts by returnees to reactivate community networks that support violence. This is a context where, ideally, 'violent extremists routinely meet disinterest and opposition and where recruitment attempts regularly fail' (Executive Office of the President of the United States 2016).

Demobilisation, Disengagement and Reintegration (DDR) methodologies that have been widely deployed in post-conflict contexts can provide valuable lessons about how to build community support for reintegration. Methodologies used to build community resilience in contexts of disasters are also a valuable resource. Going forward, it is vital that Australia finds ways to measure and track resilience to violent extremism, as well as to formulate a concrete vision of when resilience to violent extremism may be said to have been achieved. In the context of reintegration processes, community resilience could usefully be defined as *communities who are able to come together to reintegrate child, women and family returnees on the basis of democratic norms, and who are aware of and able to access and draw on relevant resources to support this process.*

Such an approach to community resilience in connection with reintegration will recognise that gender-specific, age-specific and culture-specific elements of returnees' identities and experiences will all need to be acknowledged and operationalised in how reintegration models are designed and implemented, supported by clarity of purpose and goals in the reintegration process.

In turn, this highlights that resilience is a key dimension not only of *returnees'* capacity to access and navigate (or in the case of children, be assisted to navigate) resources and support for peaceful reintegration within Australian society, but also of *communities'* capacity to willingly and proactively provide such resources and support. In so doing, resilient communities will be able not only to extend individual support to those who need it, but also to model democratic and peaceful means of living in a dynamic, diverse and open society, extending compassionate understanding toward those – in particular children and their families – who are genuinely attempting to rebuild shattered lives.

Such resilience will recognise that, as the literature demonstrates, a key driver – indeed, perhaps *the* key driver – both for vulnerability to *and* disengagement from violent extremism is sense of belonging. While government can and does provide essential resources for sense of belonging in material, economic and social policy terms, research shows that it is the daily, local experience of belonging (or not belonging) that can prove decisive in how well or otherwise someone is able to rebuild their sense of community, security and normalcy. In this regard, community support and participation in successfully reintegrating child and women or family returnees is not merely desirable, but fundamental.

In this context, the literature suggests that for reintegration processes involving children, women and families to be successful, there must be strong congruence between the specific approaches designed for this purpose, and the broader CVE fmodels implemented by government more generally. For reintegration efforts to be optimal, they need to be articulated as part of a broader suite of measures aimed at building strong, safe and well societies through preventing and responding effectively to the risks of radicalised violence. This includes meeting the needs of those who are able to be disengaged and diverted from involvement in or exposure to violent extremist conflict, and encouraging the development and sustainability of viable and authentic partnerships between governments and communities in so doing.

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON REINTEGRATING RETURNEES

Community perspectives on reintegration were explored through the hypothetical scenarios of 'Waleed' and 'Maryam', based on a composite of real cases as outlined above. The analysis below examines how community interviewees understood a range of issues related to these two individuals in the context of narratives that are illustrative of the 'real-life' challenges which child and women/family returnees, Australian government agencies, community service providers and community members face in relation to the reintegration of children and families within Australian communities.

This chapter begins with analysis of community perspectives on the challenges facing returnees as they reintegrate within communities after coming back from conflict zones.

It then moves to consideration of what community participants see as the primary reintegration support needs; the roles and supports that communities can offer; the resources they need to do so; the challenges, risks and barriers they believe they may face in providing such support, managing risks, and the prospects for building viable community-government partnerships in designing and delivering a community support model for successful reintegration of children, women and families.

What are the key challenges and risks for those returning from conflict zones?

Challenges for returning children

The main challenges identified by community members for returning children such as Waleed were:

- Trauma based on experiences in a conflict zone

- Social isolation from peers and others in the community

- Lack of a positive male role-model in the absence of a father

As outlined in the literature review, children returning from conflict zones are particularly vulnerable for a number of reasons, most obviously in their dependence on their parents for both basic and 'higher-order' needs, including protection, food, sense of security and socialisation. Children in families where one or both parents have radicalised to extreme violence are in an invidious position, since it is their parents who have been, and will likely continue to be, their most powerful moral and social guides. What agency do children have in such contexts? At 14, Waleed would have been seen as a 'man' of fighting age by IS. At the same time, this age was seen by community respondents as a particularly vulnerable stage for young people as it is a crucial period for identity formation and transition to adulthood. As one interviewee noted, *'Fourteen is a problematic age, it's a dangerous road that they are on, they can break free from parents' guidance, and that would be like a red light flashing'* (CR 1). The information community respondents gained about Waleed from the scenario does not indicate clearly whether he was directly involved as a perpetrator of violence, but it is a reasonable assumption that he was exposed to extreme violence or has viewed extreme violence online, as reflected in the images he draws. A significant number of community respondents felt that his artistic rendering of violence in the cartoon illustrations he drew suggested either direct or indirect efforts to cope with traumatic experiences or feelings.

Social isolation

Many community participants identified the challenge that Waleed's apparent social isolation could pose to his re-integration into Australian society. They were concerned that feelings of social isolation could *'make*

him vulnerable to the same path as his father' (CR 5) and stressed the importance of socially connecting Waleed through both formal mechanisms, such as educational, recreational and faith-based institutions and activities, and informal social links to others in his local area through his interests in art or new opportunities through sport.

Participants noted in particular the importance of the school environment for effective reintegration in the life of a young person such as Waleed, including bonding with his peers and positively connecting with his teachers. One interviewee explained their concerns about how well a school might cope with someone in Waleed's circumstances: *'What is happening at school, is there support at school, is he being bullied at school? Young people at that age want a sense of belonging, hope, purpose'* (CR 18). Community participants thought that one risk of Waleed's withdrawn behaviour was that he might fail to develop connections at school, as in other areas of his life. This risk was perceived as making him more vulnerable to being drawn back into radicalised social groups, particularly through his online activities: *'There is a communication barrier here. What's concerning is that this is with both teachers and classmates – he seems to be very isolated'* (CR 18).

Community participants were worried that Waleed's perceived struggle with a sense of belonging might also be exacerbated by:

> …the divisive rhetoric of many politicians. He will be hearing messages [such as] 'You don't belong here, you should go back to where you came from'. When young people are being told that by politicians and media, constantly exposed to negative imagery about Muslims, this can lead to a sense of isolation. It is difficult to feel part of Australia, if external images you are consuming are also a rejection of who you are. Local landscape as well as what experienced overseas would impact on him. (CR 18)

Related to his social isolation, interviewees noted Waleed's lack of involvement in after school or physical recreational activities, which they thought would result in him spending much of his spare time online. One interviewee noted, *'A lot of kids have gone through the internet to radicalise. His mum works odd hours, there is no one to supervise his activities when he's on his own. It's very concerning'* (CR 12).

Some participants also wondered about how Waleed's mother Sandra's position as a convert to Islam might contribute to Waleed's isolation within his local Muslim community: *'My experience suggests that converts to Islam in Australia – Anglos – even though he's born into it, if she's not integrated, especially with his father not around, he won't be integrated [either]'.* (CR 12)

Lack of a male role model

The absence of Waleed's father, whose dead-or-alive status overseas is ambiguous in the scenario, and the question over whether (if alive) the father continues to be a radicalised influence in his son's life through online engagement, loomed large for many community respondents. A significant number of community participants noted the challenges posed by the absence of a positive male role model for Waleed, including one who could help re-integrate him into his local Muslim community in a constructive manner: *'His father is not around to take him to mosque, [Waleed] might not even be going to Friday prayers. Not having a steady Muslim male father figure in his life is a big challenge'* (CR 12).

Another interviewee outlined the particular significance of a male role model to a young boy of Waleed's age, saying:

> It's difficult for a young man growing up with no father figure. At 14, the mother is pushed to the side in terms of not having control vis-a-vis physicality and authority for Waleed. The father is not there to give Waleed guidance going forward. The family connection becomes blurred by [Waleed

wondering], 'Where's my father, is he in a conflict zone, is he killed, what's the story?' (CR 18)

What are the perceived risks for returning children?

Risks for returning children

The chief potential risks for returning children such as Waleed were identified by community participants as:

- Negative parental influence

- Idealisation of absent father

- Re-radicalisation

- Mental health issues

Negative parental influence

Several participants noted the potentially negative influence Waleed's mother Sandra could have on Waleed given her continued involvement in financial transfers overseas. They viewed these activities within the scenario as a potential indication that she had remained radicalised: '*The five identified transfers would be something that could make trouble for Waleed*' (CR 7). As other respondents observed, '*Children are products of their environment. If he sees his mum transferring money, or she's connected to people overseas, he'll be curious, do research himself, and so it becomes like a direct contact or avenue for him*' (CR 12) … '*A 14 year old is in an age group where he's susceptible to influence that can lead him astray*'.(CR 17).'

Others argued that Sandra's money transfers could call her to the attention of authorities and might even threaten her ability to retain custody of her son:

> Because his mother's been making these financial transfers, she's in the sightlines of the authorities. This has implications for Sandra and also for Waleed. If she's not careful, she may not be able to retain custody if she gets arrested. So she needs also to bring it back into line if she wants to look after her son. She needs to know that transferring funds to people suspected of supporting violent action brings legal risks that have implications for her son. (CR 17)

And still others felt that Sandra's transfer of money overseas may be exacerbating her already precarious financial situation as a single mother:

> Is the mother funnelling money overseas that Waleed stands to lose by? She is in direct control of his income. Is she meeting his needs and is this a risk for him? (CR 18)

> A single parent is always a risk factor, and she's on a limited income, and some of this may also be going overseas as well, bringing further constraints. (CR 17)

Idealisation of absent father

As we saw above, the absence and unclear status of a father overseas was seen to create challenges for young people like Waleed. Participants worried that Waleed's father's role in the conflict, combined with his continuing absence, could lead Waleed to idealise his father Malik, creating complex feelings of loyalty and identification with Malik both as a father, and to the radicalised cause Malik likely supports. As one participant noted:

> This kid is 14, he's going to be around people saying your dad is a hero, your father's a lion, died for a cause. He has already built up his profile at that age so he's already got a huge sign, he'll be looked

up at as someone who is the descendant of someone who is a hero. At 14, it's too much for someone at that age. If [the bonds felt by Waleed with his father are] only ideological, it's actually easier for us to deal with, but when you bring in a mixture of emotions underneath the shell of ideology, there's emotions sitting there being harnessed'. (CR 1)

Other participants agreed there was a risk of Waleed's romanticising his father's involvement in violent extremism: *'He might be wanting to get in contact with his father. Because he was with his father when he was so young, the image is probably a great one – dad can do no wrong. An idealised image that may not be reality'* (CR 12). They saw this idealisation as potentially isolating Waleed from the broader Muslim community, who would be likely to reject the values that Waleed's father was perceived to have stood for, which would risk *'the danger of marginalising the child'* (CR 1). As another participant noted:

Then too you have the stigma within the Muslim and also general community of a father who's fought with IS – so his father would be seen as damaged goods, and the stigma of the Muslim community not giving support because they see the father having betrayed him through his selfishness. (CR 17)

Waleed could be placed in a position of considerable emotional and moral ambiguity, still loving his father but unclear about how to interpret his actions:

For a child at this age to discern that his father's actions were bad but that he still loves his father – that's a tough dilemma and it's emotionally confusing, to distinguish between the [father's] actions and the father as a father. The absence means additional problems of idealising as well. (CR 17)

A further risk identified by community participants is that Waleed himself could be idealised by individuals in extremist networks as a result of his father's actions or status:

The son, 14 years old, he'd be welcomed by these (violent extremist) groups locally. He would be looked at as a hero, freedom fighter, went overseas, your father is a martyr, whatever. He'll have support but it won't be the right support. He won't' feel marginalised, like 'I don't have any friends'– he will have friends, but not the right friends and the same goes for his mother. (CR 1)

This in turn could make it very difficult for Waleed to distance himself from his father's extremist ideology if it felt like a betrayal of the father himself: *'When they have someone who they care about, someone who they are attached to in some way… there's a feeling towards that person, there's a guilt. … He is my father, how can I not look at him as a martyr, so then a firewall comes up and now you are dealing with other things, you are dealing with emotions and psychology that need to be addressed'* (CR 1).

Re-radicalisation

One consequence of these complex emotional ties and conflicts, coupled with his experiences in violent conflict zones, was seen by community participants as placing Waleed at risk of either failing to disengage from violent radicalised ideology, or re-radicalising if he does not receive the right kind and level of support:

At the most extreme level, the risk is he'd follow in his father's footsteps. He might run away, turn his back on his mother if she can't help him. He's only 14 – he may realise that no one has helped him and if he's a bit older seek to 'help himself' by joining the wrong group. If he has no life here – 'my father's gone, I have no friends, I have no meaning' - even though it's forbidden in our religion. (CR 5)

Fourteen is a tough time, probably the toughest. He could fall into some sort of extremist thought and views. He could create an 'us and them' psyche regarding Muslims and non-Muslims, if he's not

reintegrated well. That's if he has no circle of friends to break down these stereotypes and this kind of thinking. This could be the environment for developing extremist views. It might not translate to anything sinister but he could fall into those thought patterns and behaviours. At the very least, he risks hatred of non-Muslims or even other Muslims. (CR 17)

In this context Waleed's continued isolation was seen to *potentially 'bring Waleed as a young man to start to react. That reaction is not born from nothing – it comes from "no one wants me", "no one listens to me", "no one is interested in me". This drives him towards more negativity and more reaction'* (CR 7).

Waleed's heavy online activity was also seen as a potentially risky response to such feelings:

The risk is that he'll meet someone in one of these countries who wants to use him as a tool to act out their ideas or agenda of radicalisation. He could read things that could lead him to act aggressively or in a violent way. That could put the children at school and in the community around him at risk. He could get in touch with the people his mum is sending money to, because he's looking for his father. If he is in contact with his dad and his father has been radicalised, that could also be a big risk as an influence – he could be manipulated so quickly. (CR 12)

Mental health issues

On the other hand, as several participants pointed out, Waleed may simply *'end up as a lonely child with severe mental health issues, maybe even suicidal thoughts'* (CR 5), or begin to act out in antisocial or self-destructive ways:

Psycho-social thoughts, belief patterns and self-esteem and lack of confidence are his biggest risks. How do you get confirmation of your social self if you're in your own little bubble – how do you get a sense of what you've achieved and that you're valued without good friends? If this is missing, he becomes a social hermit who doesn't tap into his potential and stays vulnerable. (CR 17)

What he does now is going to basically determine his future. I wouldn't like to see him getting involved in criminal activities, tarnishing his reputation, possibilities of employment; this could have long-term implications. A vicious cycle if he gets involved in risk-taking activities, drugs. (CR 18)

Challenges and risks for returning adult women and families

The key challenges and risks identified by community participants in relation to female and adult family returnees were:

- Stigma and social isolation

- Re-radicalisation

- Mental health issues

Stigma and social isolation

A substantial majority of interviewees focused on what they saw as the highly interrelated problems of social isolation and that women such as Maryam in the second hypothetical scenario may face. As outlined in the literature review, women (like some children) may occupy complex subject positions in relation to violent extremist conflict as both victims and perpetrators. Accordingly, community respondents felt that establishing Maryam's original motives for travelling overseas was paramount in understanding how government agencies and communities might subsequently respond to her needs and challenges during reintegration:

The first thing we need to identify is why did she go overseas in the first place? We need to find that out. She may have been a victim, she may have not even liked the concept [of Islamic State] but she had no choice, so you'll deal with her differently, you won't worry about her ideological integration work. [But] some of them, she will be proud of who she is and what her husband represents, that's a totally different ball game. One of them will be a victim who wants to be like everyone else and integrated back into the community, the other one isn't reintegrating in the way we would understand, she would actually be a source of another type of integration [back into radicalised networks], that's all possible. (CR 1)

Nevertheless, community participants felt that as an adult, Maryam is likely to be seen as less 'innocent' and more 'blameworthy' than a child such as Waleed, even if she travelled to Syria with her husband as a relational enabler (Grossman et al. 2017) to support her family, rather than to pursue her own ideological beliefs. The interviews reveal that the 'blameworthiness' of women is a complex construct that fractures along multiple, and sometimes contradictory, lines. While for some women cultural gender scripts compel them to fulfil marriage obligations in a context where *'marriage is an ideological milestone'* (CR19), in meeting these marriage obligations, when a woman such as Maryam returns she may be seen by others in the community as having betrayed her prescribed maternal duties to protect her children:

A lot of them struggle with their own family [if they return]; [they are] often blamed, they put the child at risk, [and it's] difficult for their parents to overcome. [People] will have trouble understanding what motivated her, [her decision to go overseas will be] seen as a very poor choice. You can't summarise [her decision to leave] in that way, there's a lot of emotion involved, there are relationships, manipulation, there is a process she goes through before leaving. (CR 1)

Therefore, community respondents felt there is likely to be *'some social distance from certain parts of the community, to the point that she could be ostracised or verbally assaulted'* (CR 19). This social distancing may proceed from diverse standpoints *within* Maryam's local community, however, reflecting the lack of consensus on her choices and their consequences. While some may see her as treacherous in abandoning the cause of establishing a caliphate and of the marriage vows dictated by this commitment, others may be able to distinguish between her choices as a relational enabler and her husband's more ideological drivers:

[One] part may have supported her leaving and will call her a traitor for returning, seeing her as boycotting the cause. The portion of the community who sees her as a traitor to the cause will see it as a betrayal of her values around marriage, and this could impact her… she'll feel betrayed. Another part of the community will see it that she obeyed, went overseas, and kept the family together and they will be able to separate his actions [the husbands] from her value. (CR 19)

Returnees like Maryam are also likely to experience anger from some parts of the Muslim community for bringing shame, enhanced surveillance and vulnerability, and *'disrepute'* to the faith and identity of Islam in an Islamophobic world; as one participant commented, Maryam's return means, *'Now we have to pay the consequences, we'll be targeted and name called and giving licence to haters who want to trash the Muslim community. The community feels they've been made more vulnerable and exposed'* (CR 17). This may lead families and communities to see individuals such as Maryam as *'tainted'* and to isolate them accordingly:

I know two personally, their wives and children have been abandoned utterly by the community. The guys go to the court, talking big and tough, looking supportive of those up on charges. But 3 months in, no one visits [the wives and children], no one knows them, the families are isolated and there are rifts within the families. On her husband's side and her own family's side there may be conflicts. There is a lot of blame – she may be blamed for putting her family in a bad position, or for driving the husband to travel, or what have you. The women are victimised from all sides and the

last thing they want is to be seen as failing as a mother for example. (CR 9)

This stigma could lead to considerable social isolation for Maryam even in everyday contexts: *'She could face social isolation as people may be afraid to associate with her. This may manifest, for example, in other mums not wanting her to participate in a mother's group, even though this is totally unrelated'*(CR 11). Some respondents feared that Maryam could thus end up being doubly isolated: *'That then makes her task of reintegration quite difficult. The mainstream might view Maryam as suspicious, and the Muslim community would see her as a risk in terms of guilt by association and unwanted attention from the authorities'* (CR 9). The fear of increased stigma and surveillance for communities is explored further in the next section.

Re-radicalisation

As was the case for child and youth returnees, community participants thought social isolation, rejection or disengagement from local community contact and support could result in the risk of re-radicalisation or a failure to de-radicalise for returning women such as Maryam:

> The risks are for both Maryam and her kids. She is highly vulnerable and she is quite an easy target for people who know about her past and would realise that if she's not getting the support she needs, she is a target for recruitment…The risk is that she would fall back into radicalised circles. We might alienate her by not meeting her needs and she'll rebel and say later… I'm going back to that group. We need the right holistic support. The support is critical not only for meeting her adjustment and reintegration needs, but also as a protective factor to prevent re-radicalisation. (CR 6)

> I think the risks are that she could fall in with the wrong company. She may be taken advantage of…. I don't think it's a big risk, but that she could feel so alienated from the community, she might actually start to feel that she doesn't belong here anymore. You want to avoid someone becoming so disillusioned with lack of support or belonging [that they start to think], 'The people overseas were more supportive and offered a better community for me' – and then she could start leaning in that direction. If you're under tremendous pressure and stress and all alone, with health challenges, then clearly they are at risk of shutting themselves off from the community. If she shuts herself off from people who want to help her, that's the worst outcome and needs to be avoided at all costs. (CR15)

> Isolation, depression and she could start thinking, 'Why did I come back, it was better over there', and then romanticising that part of your life despite the challenges. She might think well, Daesh were right because their message was, 'Do you want to stay humiliated in your country, you're not wanted, you don't belong'. If her experience in returning affirms that [messaging] because she doesn't get the support she needs, it could lead to isolation, inability to function, and she becomes vulnerable to social recruitment back to that ideology. (CR 16)

Others, however, thought that Maryam was most likely to have travelled to Syria because of *'beliefs about how husbands and wives should interact, assumptions about gender roles. Hard to see whether she has strongly held beliefs, and particularly if she would act on this. Seems she was mainly looking after children overseas'* (CR 11). For these participants, the key radicalisation risk for Maryam would be the extent to which she continued to stay emotionally and socially connected to a radicalised partner: *'The issue would be around Sam, her new husband – there is potential [for radicalisation] if she is caught up with another partner who is radicalised'* (CR 11). Because of this, social interaction and engagement with returnees is *'paramount, that's how you de-radicalise people. You don't let them go meet up underground and push them into dark corners'* (CR 20).

Mental health issues

A number of interviewees saw Maryam as at risk of a range of mental health challenges: *'If she doesn't move*

close to her family, she is vulnerable to post-natal depression, potentially socially isolated. She has a child with developmental delays plus a new baby, this is a lot to cope with' (CR 11). They noted the impact that a deterioration in Maryam's mental health could have on her *'ability to mother [which would] then impact her kids'* (CR 15), and questioned the circumstances and impacts of Maryam's second marriage:

> I've heard stories that if their husbands have been martyred, they are quickly remarried to anyone else. Looking at whether that relationship she formed with Sam was even consensual, and if not, then it's a whole other kettle of fish. She's pregnant with his child, so what does that mean – she might need sexual assault services. (CR 19)

The same respondent thought Maryam was likely to be at risk of developing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), given her experiences in a war zone. This would be *'bad for her and bad for her kids. If she develops PTSD, it can spin off into generalised anxiety, but it can convert or it can somatise and turn into a physical disorder on top of her existing health challenges. Her GP would need to understand this'* (CR 19).

What kinds of support do community members think returnees from conflict zones need?

Support needs for returning children

Participants identified a range of psycho-social support needs for children and young people returning from conflict zones. The top needs identified by community respondents were:

- Social support/engagement in local community

- Personal/psychological support

- School support

- Religious guidance

- Whole-of-family reintegration approach

Social support/engagement in local community

Social support and integration of Waleed into his local community was identified as a clear *'priority'* (CR 5) by a majority of respondents: *'The main support need is to get him re-engaged with the local community'* (CR 22). Through this re-engagement, participants believed Waleed could build *'trust and confidence'* (CR 7) in those around him as well as being able to meet his social needs for *'friendship and emotional support, social connectedness and sense of belonging'* (CR 5).

Involving Waleed in inclusive youth groups and activities was seen by several participants as a way of creating a crucial sense of belonging and social safety: *'In a community, any school can be judgmental but ub a youth group, there is much less judgmental attitudes and this is what Waleed needs – to participate and feel accepted without being judged – "they don't look at me like I'm the son of a terrorist"'* (CR 17). Participants suggested sport, religious and other community-based youth activities as outlets to connect Waleed in prosocial peer environments.

Such efforts to engage Waleed with those around him would ideally cater to his existing interests and talents – in his case, through his interest in art and illustration as evidenced in the scenario. This was seen to have potential social and also therapeutic benefits, with one respondent seeing the option of involving Waleed in after-school art classes as a means to help him process his experiences:

> Maybe through his art he can express what's going on in his mind to adults around him. I think of people I know in the past who have been withdrawn but who created art that helped express their

feelings or memories. They can't speak to people but if he could express what's inside him – that might help. (CR 12)

Another participant, however, felt that getting Waleed involved in some sort of physical activity was a key priority to help literally and symbolically ground him in the local community so that he both feels and is perceived as 'present' in local community terms: *'In his online activity and his drawing, he is NOT HERE – he is somewhere else in his head, overseas, with his dad, somewhere that isn't here'* (CR 22).

Participants also felt that creating a sense of belonging and engagement for Waleed through peer-focused activities could play a critical role in diverting him from any existing or emerging vulnerability to radicalised violence through his online activity or previous exposure to violent radicalisation overseas:

> If you're worried about the kids, set them up with other kids in a youth group. Online we aren't always in full control, but the [face to face] social circles you can monitor... A good youth group, friends that will basically take him on a pathway that guides him toward something that's better than what he's got at the moment, the isolation, the excessive time online, maybe learning from his father. (CR 17)

In line with community data above on the challenges posed by cases where the father is deceased or otherwise absent, participants also thought that role modelling and mentorship offered benefits for socially reintegrating young people like Waleed:

> He probably needs a male role model. They say that for young [men] the mother can take socialisation to a certain point but they get to 13 or 14 and they need a strong male role model. There are mentors out there in the community, we just need to mobilise them. (CR 18)

Personal/psychological support

Alongside social reintegration needs, several respondents identified the need for Waleed to have culturally appropriate psychological counselling to help him grapple with the *'images in his head'* (CR 5):

> There is a lot brewing in his head that you might not see. What's he thinking? How does he imagine people who are not Muslim? What is he thinking when he engages? A lot of question marks. (CR 22)

In this context, participants were clear that Waleed and children like him *'need a qualified counsellor or psychologist who has had cultural intelligence training if they are not Muslim. Someone who has a holistic approach, who isn't going to be judgemental, jump to conclusions'* (CR 18) to provide more intensive clinical support in tandem with the community-based social support discussed above.

Schooling support

In particular, the local school environment was seen as a key support and engagement site for meeting Waleed's reintegration needs, serving as what one participant described as a *'second home'* for children in Waleed's age group. In addition to the obvious benefits provided through peer socialisation, sense of efficacy in developing new learning and skills, and the potential for positive connections with teachers and other school staff who might serve as role models or guides, several respondents focused on the role of the school in providing ancillary support for Waleed. As one participant suggested,

> The school could offer counselling and maybe some programs. The first step should be taken by the school. The school is someone's second home at that age. If the counsellor notices that he's been withdrawn and lonely she should take those steps to do more. If the counsellor is aware of the issue in school, then she might be able to interlink with support access for [Waleed's] mother. (CR 5)

Participants were not united in their thinking about whether or not placing Waleed in an independent Islamic school would facilitate his integration. While one respondent was strongly in favour of this – *'A child like that shouldn't be put in a public school, he could be [and would be seen as] a risk to others, you would need funding to put him in an Islamic school, it would be less judgmental'* (CR 1) – other interviewees felt that the major issue for Waleed was how responsive teachers were to his needs, rather than whether he was in an Islamic or government school. As one respondent elaborated,

> I've been doing cross cultural training for 17 years with service providers and professionals; it is not hard to determine whether someone is culturally sensitive. I would try and find out if his teachers are compassionate, supportive or are they Islamophobic. I would try and find out how much support he is getting at school: is his school supporting or exacerbating the situation? And then possibly look into an Islamic school. But they are all very different. It would be about finding a suitable school. (CR 18)

Religious guidance

Several interviewees felt that Waleed needed specific positive religious guidance to facilitate his reintegration and in order to challenge some of the problematic interpretations of religious doctrine that they speculated he been taught by his father and IS. This would include, if available, individuals who have a *'similar Salafist methodology'* to that of IS adherents, abjuring violence and *'not extreme but going back to the old traditional texts'* (CR 1). One respondent argued that Salafist approaches can be *'misinterpreted'* if there isn't a *'contemporary hook on it; they think they are Salafist but they are actually not'* (CR 1).

Where Salafist scholars are not available, participants said that other observant groups could build trust with Waleed so that he has someone whom he feels he *'can open up to, who are not trying to extract information from him'*:

> Trust is key for reintegration. These people are driven by religion; it is their incorrect understanding that leads them to make [poor] decisions, and the way to address this is through the religion. (CR 1)

> Rather than oppressing people with extremist views, it's better to identify them and challenge them and have the religious leaders challenge them. When you suppress those thoughts, you're making martyrs out of them. Challenge them – ask, 'Where's your evidence?' (CR 20)

For other interviewees, religious guidance primarily concerned socially integrating Waleed into prosocial religious institutions and networks along with his peers to foster the right kind of social influence, rather than a more direct engagement with his doctrinal beliefs. These community participants felt religious guidance could involve ensuring Waleed is linked up to the youth support services associated with local mosques which serve as social as well as religious institutions i.e. *'not just a prayer area'* (CR 22): *'If his friends are going to the right places and he goes with them [he will be fine]'* (CR 17).

In this context, selecting a positive and appropriate religious approach and vehicle means the more directly ideological aspects of Waleed's reintegration could also productively be addressed, since some mosques *'try to be more youth oriented'* and create a context in which *'misinterpretations'* of Islam can be addressed (CR 22). These mosques, according to one respondent, emphasise that:

> You can't interpret the religion just the way you want. In the Koran it says time and time again, respect the land you live in and its laws. It's not like it's not clear. You go to an Arabic person, it's clear, and in translation it's clear too. But people love to create misimpressions in every faith. (CR 22)

A whole-of-family reintegration approach

Several participants noted the importance of ensuring appropriate support is provided for Waleed's mother, Sandra, in order to ensure that she would be able to effectively support Waleed and ensure his reintegration. Community respondents thought Sandra would need dedicated support in facing a number of challenges identified in the scenario when she returns to the country: *'She has health issues, she's vulnerable and alone without the husband'* (CR 5).

Thus a critical first step for participants in reintegrating Waleed would be to facilitate Sandra's reintegration so that she is able, with her own needs being met, to effectively support Waleed's needs as well:

> Sandra will need the help of the Muslim community and the resources they have to offer [to her as a mother] – they'll be the first port of call. The local mosque community can then break those barriers down so they see she's gentle, not violent, not a threat or a problem for the community. That's a process that needs to happen, and the Muslim community and Sandra need to reach out to each other. (CR 17)

This was seen to include reassurance to Sandra that (subject to her ability to remain within the law) Waleed would not be removed from her and every effort would be made to keep her reintegrating family unit intact, in order to counteract fears that *'with all the terrorism laws, the child would be taken away from her. Laws, policies are changing all the time, there might be a correctional order on her'* (CR 1).

Indeed, several interviewees stressed that where children and mothers are reintegrating together, it was important to ensure the needs of children were also met in order to adopt a holistic approach to reintegration for the family unit as a whole. In this sense, participants conceptualised the reintegration process as a virtuous cycle, in which meeting the children's needs appropriately will also assist the mother's integration, and vice versa:

> It will stress [the mother] if she doesn't meet her children's needs: developmental delays, child health, making sure they are not socially isolated. It's a package. (CR 6)

> Considering her background, they need to be reintegrated in a holistic manner as Australians. … They need that support since young people can quickly become hard-line. Considering this is the background they come from they need a holistic approach to faith and to Australian society. (CR 16)

> A lot of it comes back to Sandra and her effort to connect with the community, because we are still not well organised in this regard. Hopefully, she will make connections – with the plethora of functions happening in the community, weekends, weekdays, functions and events galore. There is a [current] gap in where she can get this guidance when she first comes back… the connection she needs is someone to give her the guidance about where the best fit is for her and Waleed. Someone who can see what's going to help her and Waleed, through working through the scene. (CR 17)

Support needs for returning women and families

In addition, Interviewees identified a number of direct support needs for returning women themselves outside their role as carers or supporters of children. The main needs identified included:

- Community and family support

- Psychological support

- Economic and services support

- Case management approach

Community and family support

A significant proportion of interviewees emphasised the importance of community and family support in creating a basic sense of belonging for returning women. One interviewee argued meeting these social needs should take priority over material needs, which, they felt were *'secondary to feeling at home'* (CR 11). However, reintegrating women like Maryam (in Scenario 2) into *'the community'* is not necessarily straightforward, since the 'Muslim community', like any other faith-based, social or cultural grouping, is not a homogenous entity. Accordingly, participants emphasised the importance of differentiating between various components of Muslim communities in order to identify exactly where returnees such as Maryam might fit, with specific emphasis on helping avoid the risks of re-radicalisation:

> The 'community' is very big; within it there are types of people with their own circles. There is no such thing as integrating into the whole community, but at least one can provide them with a circle that becomes their world, people with similar experiences who don't judge them, who are willing to help them. Also [there are] outdoor activities, camps, education classes: keep them busy, marginalisation is a very dangerous thing. [IS] really harnesses thoughts, they are thinking all sorts of stuff when they are on their own, they feel abandoned. (CR 1)

> Her vulnerability means she will grasp whatever hand is reaching out to support her – even if it's the wrong hand. That's why the community needs to surround her and protect her form the wrong influence, and this is a community responsibility. Everyone has a stake in this. (CR 15)

Similarly, some participants identified the importance of family support, where available, for returnees. They thought ensuring, as far as possible, that there is a functioning system of family support around returnees was *'central to reintegration'* (CR 1). One respondent noted the particular importance of family support to help Maryam negotiate the multiple challenges she would be facing:

> You need some level of support from people who we feel comfortable with. It's mentioned she's really close to her sisters and family, and that's a positive in terms of managing stress, which she has – she has grief and loss, trauma background, she's pregnant, facing health issues. Having her sisters is really important. (CR 6)

Unsurprisingly, the issue of feeling a degree of trust and comfort for returnees in their support networks was seen as important by participants. One respondent pointed to the risks of returnees such as Maryam self-isolating after they return because they might be suspicious of friendly overtures or offers of support from community members:

> She may be suspicious. Are they being paid by ASIO to become friendly with her? Some people I've spoken to are quite wary of people, self-isolating because they don't want to, afraid of someone saying something to someone else, don't trust people. (CR 11)

Psychological support

A strong majority of community respondents emphasised the importance of counselling and psychological support for returning women like Maryam, whom they perceived as likely to *'have been exposed to a lot of violence and trauma, even if it was just hearing about what others had done or experienced. It's about getting her mentally fit enough and strong enough to stand on her own two feet'* (CR 9).

Many participants felt such counselling was essential to help Maryam process her experiences of and responses to being in a conflict zone as a first step towards moving beyond them:

I've no idea what she saw, went through, witnessed or the effects of that trauma for her, mentally and physically. She'll definitely need to see a psychologist – that would be a must, because otherwise, how will she make sense of what she's witnessed? (CR 16)

What she'd be working through is clearly losses, loss of identity, loss of community, potentially loss of relations with family if her actions have affected the family negatively. (CR 19)

As noted above in relation to Waleed, a number of respondents discussed the importance of providing culturally appropriate mental health support for Maryam and once again identified the challenges that other Muslim women have experienced, or may experience, in accessing culturally informed professional support. One participant cited 2013 statistics from the US indicating that '50% of clients from minority groups don't return to a second [counselling] session because they don't feel understood' (CR 19). Another noted research indicating that '[Muslim] people didn't trust psychologists', with 'one person [in the study] who felt that were being used as a case study by the psychologist who was fascinated by their story' (CR 11).

This may lead to the reluctance of women like Maryam to seek mental health support, particularly in an environment in which many people may not realise their own mental health needs and also experience a sense of social or cultural stigma 'associated with seeing a psychologist' (CR 11). As one participant commented:

If she [Maryam] isn't enabled in some way to find someone she can be candid with, she won't go. She needs rapport, [a sense of] trustworthiness [on the part] of the service provider. If she is born and raised here with a solid Western identity, then her openness to mainstream services would be greater. If she is from a migrant background then the [need for] cultural safety or culturally similar service provider is probably higher. There is a perceived cultural and religious safety in accessing Islamic professional services. I won't have to explain to you my religiosity, my cultural background and we can get straight to the problem. (CR 19)

However, there are a number of other interrelated reasons for women, especially in Maryam's position, feeling more comfortable with counsellors of their own faith. One reason relates to anxiety about the reputation of the Muslim community: 'If she comes to mainstream services – Muslim women are hesitant to go, they don't want to bring disrepute to identity of being a Muslim by fulfilling the stereotype. So many people will put off going to a mainstream service to protect the faith' (CR 19). Another interviewee anticipated that Maryam would experience a high level of mistrust as a result of her status as a returnee, particularly in relation to law enforcement and child protection, which might also undermine her willingness to access psychological support or be open during the process:

She would be suspicious of speaking to anyone as she's struggling. She'll feel that anything she'd say would be used against her. If she is struggling with mental health she might talk about coping difficulties, but she'd be worried that child protection would take her kids away – so she might minimise or not talk about that with a counsellor, not open up about her problems. It's very difficult to get past this fear. Returning families like Maryam would definitely need a single trusted source: a Muslim, preferably from her similar ethnic background who shares her language and her gender. (CR 9)

Not all participants agreed with this, however, believing that the small pool of accredited Australian Muslims created other kinds of risks for women in Maryam's circumstances. Some community respondents argued that there are potential complexities to matching returnees with someone of a similar faith and racial profile, particularly when this community is very small. According to one participant, women 'may be afraid that what they reveal will be reported to family if the psychologist is part of the same community' (CR 11). On the other hand, if there are counsellors outside Muslim communities who have built up trust with local

communities over time, it is *'possibly better to go for someone outside the community'* (CR 11).

Economic and practical support

Most interviewees stressed it was important to provide Maryam with basic economic and practical support and facilitate her access to services in order to facilitate her reintegration. As one respondent explained, *'You can't solve the reintegration without solving the economic question. Part of integration in modern society involves economics. Everything costs money. You're not living in the village anymore, where you don't need much money. In modern society, you turn on the tap and there's a water bill'* (CR 8).

Another respondent pointed out that Maryam's *'lower order'* needs had to be met before more complex *'higher order'* issues related to reintegration could be addressed, including impacts for future generations:

> We'd say she is a vulnerable person, we need to support her and help her settle back in to life here in Australia. If you don't meet the Maslow Hierarchy[1] basic needs, she won't be able to reintegrate. You want to break the circuit of the cycle of poverty that otherwise would send her child into the same cycle. Link her with services, provide her with accommodation and some financial assistance (CR 6).

Case management approach

To effectively meet both the psychosocial and material support needs canvassed above, almost all respondents identified Maryam's need for sustained case management support to integrate and coordinate services that could address the multiple and complex challenges she would be likely to face:

> The fact that we don't have a lot of people in this situation gives rise to the fact that we may need 6-12 months, the first period of her reintegration, to assign her a one to one religious or community case worker. The resources we spend as a community organisation on someone to do that may be well worth it. (CR 17)

There was very strong support for a model in which returning women and families dealt with ***a single point of contact*** who coordinated and integrated services and support, thereby providing a consistent relationship and connection for women and children who are attempting to navigate multiple, often complex service delivery systems, especially given the broader re-adjustment issues they are likely to face in having returned from an overseas conflict zone:

> It needs a single coordinator or case worker or community worker, someone who is the point person. He or she has the Maryam file and is monitoring her progress across all these different areas. [She needs an] integrated model of support and care for reintegration – the key message is 'you will be supported'. You have to send this message. (CR 15)

Participants noted that the case management approach also recognises the specificity of the issues that need to be addressed, with each case likely to require slightly different service and support calibrations: *'Structurally, it's also recognising that these people have unique needs and you have to be flexible and have to accept that one size will not fit all. A support model that can accommodate the uniqueness of each set of circumstances is very important'* (CR 9).

This is especially important for those returning from overseas locations who may be at an even greater disadvantage in terms of navigating unfamiliar systems and environments on their own. As participants

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[1] [1] Maslow, A H (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review,* 50, 370–396; Maslow, A H (1954). *Motivation and personality.* New York: Harper.

observed:

> A challenge for people in the reintegration scenario is that they are disconnected from both mainstream and local community networks and structures: early childhood, maternal, education, etc. (CR 9)

> There is a strain in dealing with multiple systems and needs – education, health, Centrelink, housing. I'd want to make sure she has some support – a social worker, a community worker she can turn to at any time to provide her with advice, support, a shoulder to cry on, someone who can say you're not alone and direct her on how to meet her needs and find support. And to help her map out her life for a year – it's the uncertainty that gets you, and the insecurity it breeds needs to be addressed. (CR 15)

In addition, respondents noted that an important role of a single-point case manager is not only to provide integrated support and services in a practical sense, but in so doing to reinforce for women such as Maryam and their families the motivation to pursue a positive future that lies beyond the reintegration and readjustment phase of their return – a *'view of the horizon, some hope and something to aim for, for the future – that there is a future for her'* (CR 15).

What roles can communities play in supporting child and women/family reintegration?

Perceptions of community acceptance in supporting returnees

The interview data for this study offers a highly complex and heterogeneous array of responses in terms of how likely communities are to accept and engage with returnees from conflict zones associated with violent extremism.

One key to understanding these responses is to acknowledge the diversity and lack of consensus within Australian Muslim communities on a range of issues, including how they should respond to those associated with violent extremist conflict.

As one participant put it, it is crucial to recognise that there is *'no consistent view or consensus within community, and this is an important point to note. [There are] those who do, those who don't (want to support her) and those in the middle who just don't want to get involved'* (CR 15). The complexities described by participants relate primarily to communities and networks with strong ties to Australian Muslim life, in which respondents expected most returnees from Syria and Iraq to be located for reintegration purposes.

We discuss these responses in more detail below. First, however, it is also worth noting what participants said in relation to how non-Muslim communities would respond to returnees. Once again, there was no clear consensus. While one interviewee argued that *'there would be more acceptance from the broader community than the Muslim community,'* (CR 9) another felt that the degree to which non-Muslim communities accepted multiculturalism and integration of different cultures was a key indicator of how well or otherwise returnees were likely to fare:

> If Maryam was living in a conventional white Anglo community, I think there would be an issue. People aren't exposed to others from Maryam's background. Something simple like wearing a hijab might be for them, 'Oh my god, she's a terrorist and we need her out'. [Alternatively], in areas with a lot of multiculturalism, they have learned to integrate and be more accepting. People feel more comfortable about asking questions. The more knowledgeable and better they've been at their own integration, the more they are open to others integrating' (CR 6).

A third interviewee expressed concern about the type of treatment that a returnee such as Maryam might

get from non-Muslim service providers: '*You'd like to think that service providers would act ethically, fairly and impartially, would not be biased in the way they engage with Maryam, but people are people. That may have an impact in how they treat her*' (CR 15).

In terms of the Muslim community, participants outlined a wide variety of potential responses, noting that Islam '*is a big umbrella*' (CR 6). These revolve generally around whether Maryam is more likely to be seen as a victim or a perpetrator, a passive fellow traveller or an active supporter of radicalised violence, and also the extent to which she is perceived as having violated behavioural or social conventions or expectations for *Muslimiyah,* many of which are generationally inflected. In fact, generational issues were a significant element raised by participants in describing the diversity of responses they expected from within Muslim communities. One respondent anticipated that Maryam might face intergenerational resistance from certain parts of the community who are more '*strict*' in their beliefs because she had remarried, depending on '*whether second or third or first generation. First is more strict, then they become more relaxed*' (CR 6).

Another participant similarly identified the potential for generational divisions in terms of accepting returnees. This respondent anticipated that older people would reject returnees like Waleed and be more fearful of risks, while her own contemporaries were more likely to be indifferent because they are more used to interacting with a range of people, are not as aware of the potential for radicalisation, or simply don't see it as '*their problem*':

> If it was my mum, who is from overseas, and doesn't interact with others so much, she'd push them away. She'd be frightened of the negative influence. She'd want me to back away, don't get involved. That's an initial reaction from many parents: don't get involved. They're afraid the child will be sucked into it. For younger people, like my friends – they wouldn't care. Not because they don't care about Waleed, but because they wouldn't feel so threatened because they don't understand the threat. They haven't been educated. They'd see a kid like Waleed and go yeah, that's just his problem. So for the older generation, it would be an active exclusion or pushing away out of fear of bad influences. For the younger ones, my friends, it would be more indifference, not bothering to get involved because they don't see it as their problem. (CR 5)

Other respondents also anticipated mixed responses, and the detailed comments of one participant on this issue are illustrative of the general sentiment from the community cohort. This respondent thought some community members would be likely to rally around women like Maryam as a '*mum without a husband around, [with a] young kid*' (CR 15), a point reinforced by others who felt communities might be more likely to accept Maryam if they saw her as a victim of her husband's manipulation or coercion. Similarly, some participants said there would be willingness by community members to facilitate reintegration, especially for young people, through everyday activities out of a sense of community and religious obligation: '*A lot of the men would bring [Waleed] into the mosque. They'd see him as vulnerable, no dad there and take up that responsibility*' (CR 12).

However, *while 'there will be compassion and sympathy*' for women like Maryam if she were seen as the victim of her husband's will to travel, there may also be '*blame towards her and her husband [if he] is not dead. If they look at her as a victim, manipulated by her husband, this would put a barrier between her and her husband, how would she make [her marriage] work?*' (CR 1).

Others in the community, however, might see a returnee such as Maryam as fundamentally '*tainted*' and '*would be concerned because of the impact on them*' (CR 15). There would also be those who didn't necessarily have an opinion about a returnee such as Maryam, but would '*not know how to engage with her given background, her experiences*' (CR 15). Yet others would be actively angry with Maryam because of the disrepute they felt she'd bring to the Muslim community: '*They'd see the damage to the Muslim community*

as irresponsible' (CR 15). Those who felt this way might consciously ostracise Maryam, because they *'might feel she's a threat, she'd be viewed with suspicion'* (CR 15).

In addition, *'Some community leaders will shun her – they disagree [with her choice to travel] and cut her no slack, or they're worried about the taint'* (CR 15), a point also made by another participant, who cited perceptions of Maryam's own attitudes toward her previous actions and beliefs as a critical element governing how community members might respond:

> It would be challenging depending on her standpoint – is she nostalgic? Depends on where she's at. She's lost her husband, her life has been turned upside down and if this is her attitude, then the community would be welcome. But if she comes back as a Daesh supporter, then that would be a problem. I've never attended an event where people have supported this, even though I know it would exist. So if she's not a supporter, people are compassionate and would want to help. (CR 16)

Other respondents cited similar impulses to exclude and ostracise by family as well as community members, based on their own observations of how those seen as wrongdoers can be rejected:

> I've seen it happen as a Muslim leader, they wouldn't want their children to play with Waleed. The Muslim community was not as welcoming as it should have been [in another case I remember], someone who spent 7 years in jail for armed robbery. He was completely rehabilitated but his family and friends completely ostracised him, [and then] he was approached by an extremist group. (CR 18)

This interviewee linked such responses to the feelings and behaviour of:

> A community under siege. When the majority of Muslims are outraged about what Muslims are doing overseas and spend so much of their time speaking out against terrorism and extremism, anything that reinforces that stereotype, it is the antithesis of what they are trying to preach, it causes anxiety, so again it's that absolute preoccupation with trying to challenge the narrative about Muslims, and Islam. (CR 18)

The same participant adds that in his view, Australian Muslim communities are generally 'ill-equipped to deal with individuals like Waleed and very reluctant to associate themselves with problematic individuals, with anyone associated with radicalism [who] might tarnish their image' (CR 18). As noted earlier, this is often linked to a concern about the stigma of associating with individuals who might have been involved in violent extremism and would thus attract the unwelcome attention of law enforcement: *'In the Muslim community there'd be a lot of suspicion, if for no other reason than that they don't want to be associated with someone who might be a person of interest with authorities... The community might say, all well and good for the mainstream to be accepting, but we are the ones who are under the microscope'* (CR 1).

Similar comments were offered on the diverse responses likely to emerge from community leaders as well as community members:

> Some imams would be the first people to come to her house and others would be much more hesitant. Quite diverse. Some would say, 'If they want to they can come to me'. [They] don't want to be perceived as forcing their way into the family, they may be concerned that 'she will be suspicious of me, think I'm trying to get information, blame me for her husband radicalising'. Difficult situation to be in. There is not really a correct response and definitely not a uniform response. (CR 11)

Would you personally accept and engage with a returnee in your own community?

The previous section dealt with what participants' imagined or anticipated would be the responses of others in their own community if faced with the prospect of engaging with or supporting those returning from conflict zones. When interviewees were asked about what their own personal response would be to having returnees such as Waleed or Maryam living in their local community, as expected, most stated their support and acceptance. While some of this may be ascribed to the presence of social desirability bias during face to face interviews (Collins et al. 2005), participant responses were generally complex and thoughtful. Several respondents said they would feel their way toward building a relationship with returnees in their own local areas or networks by being '*open but… wary*', with their responses significantly shaped by learning more about a returnee's current views and standpoints:

> I'd be careful about how I associate myself with her as well. I'd make sure I was very open but I'm not blindly trusting either. This would be with anyone, not just Maryam. Trust is hard to give, you have to earn it and not just give it away. I'd be open but also a little wary. I would not just invite her over to dinner, I'd start with meeting in the street, casual contact. That's me as a person, I don't get close to others that quickly. It would be a staged response. (CR 6)

> It really depends on her political views. If she is supportive and aligns herself with the political ideology [of IS], then I don't want to have a bar of it, because that's now a person I don't want to be associated with, that warped thinking; I don't subscribe to it. It's toxic and it's not the kind of community or the kind of thought process I want in my community. All my work is about bringing communities together. [But] f she doesn't have [a violent extremist] philosophy, she went with good intentions, got sucked in, I'd definitely embrace her and welcome her to the community. If she's on the boundary I'd still welcome her to the community, because you can still create change. But if she's adamant in her thinking, then no, I couldn't have a conversation with her. (CR 16)

Other community participants offered specific examples of how they might offer support to Maryam or Waleed:

> I would invite Maryam over for dinner or a Sunday barbecue. In the month of Ramadan, Muslims open their homes to non-Muslims. So why can't Muslims open up their doors to people like Maryam? … If we don't meet people's social needs, we are failing and reintegration will not happen. (CR 8)

Still other participants felt that they would be practicing either compassion and offering redemption to those who made errors or poor choices and were now vulnerable, as well as offering a sense of belonging to younger children who had no choice in whether or not to travel:

> Maryam is clearly vulnerable and I'd hope people would reach out to help and assist. You could debate the wisdom of her going overseas… I can understand why she did that even if I don't agree. But the full horrors of IS weren't necessarily known [then]. Maybe she didn't know what she was getting into. Maybe if she was aware of the full extent of [its] horrors and she would've said to her husband its either you or us. She's made a mistake but she shouldn't be permanently ostracised or victimised for this – it's not fair or reasonable. (CR 15)

> [Welcoming her into my community] would help save the future of her children. The innocents are the children who did not choose to travel there or be born there. We'd need to create an environment where they can return for rehabilitation. Many [women] were victims of domestic violence before they went over. They were conditioned to travel, to support their husbands. It wasn't necessarily an informed choice. I would have no problem with my kids going to school with Maryam's kids because they're younger kids. If they were a bit older, maybe not. (CR 9)

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Finally, several respondents observed that the degree to which communities are able to demonstrate acceptance of child and women/family returnees will send crucial signals that could play an important preventative role in the context of broader CVE efforts, reducing risks for others who may be vulnerable to violent extremism:

> I'd like to think that Waleed would be a great case study of someone on the edge who can go several ways, and what can the Muslim community do to steer that path for him? (CR 17)

> The more we push them away, the more they're going to lean towards the other side. If we want to help them, we can't push them away. In fact, I want them in my community where I can reach them. (CR 5)

Community roles in providing support to returnees

Interviewees saw communities playing a number of roles in relation to informal social support; religious support; financial support, and community leadership support. While it is possible to distinguish between the practical and the social analytically, community participants stressed that in practice, these forms of support are often closely interrelated.

Informal social support

Most interviewees saw the community as playing a critical role in relation to informal social support for both Maryam and Waleed, believing such support would have a central role in positive reintegration outcomes when offered alongside more formal interventions. They saw the returnees' local community as the *'first line of contact'* when individuals return to Australia:

> [Maryam] is going to be more responsive to support from her own community. First line of contact after the screening process by security agencies, should be community support as first line of contact. This is very effective, there are cases out there where women have come back and sought support from the community; they need it and seek it. (CR 1)

While many interviewees saw informal relationships and networks as important, the majority also anticipated local community organisations playing a key role in systematically facilitating the integration of returnees into local networks when they first returned, so that over time, as returnees established themselves, this could occur more spontaneously:

> They [the community] can provide a sense of belonging, neighbourhood and neighbourliness, a safe place to go and have a chat or a coffee. In my experience, the best source of support like this is unstructured informal support. Formal processes can create a level of anxiety... But there is a balancing act – how do you make it informal and unstructured but also useful for the person reintegrating. That's where the case management model kicks in – identifying such places, helping them connect and encourage them to access courses or groups they can connect with. (CR 9)

Informal support for a **returning adult woman**, for example, could assist her in developing friendship networks with other mothers and help connect her children to community and social networks of their own, especially where there is initial reluctance to accept a returnee's children into local networks and groups. In considering Maryam's circumstances in Scenario 2, one respondent felt Maryam would develop social connections more naturally if she was living in a Muslim-dominant neighbourhood: *'If she is housed in a highly Muslim majority area, she may well have a Muslim neighbour. The role of the neighbour, to be neighbourly, could be something that might happen more organically. It doesn't necessarily need to be socially structured or contrived'* (CR 5).

Other suggestions from participants (CRs 6, 16) for types of community-based informal support for adult women included:

- Practical guidance on readjusting to Muslim life from women in local communities, e.g. where to buy a hijab, where to get halal food

- Inviting her to join a 'mums and bubs' playgroup where she could be supported through friendship circles, other mums and care for her kids

- Volunteering in local community events to foster a sense of belonging and social inclusion

- Fostering bridging connections with the wider community, e.g Salvos, Red Cross *so she doesn't exclude herself from the wider community'* (CR 16)

- Reaching out through informal community friendship networks and welcome gestures, e.g. bringing flowers, inviting her to community dinners and events – *'What we do here is identify someone who's coming back into the community, and we target someone else in the same area and say can you go visit her and reach out. Even if it's originally set up or contrived to begin with, it can become organic. It starts artificially through a database and then takes off from there. We match for kids, gender, etc.'* (CR 16)

Similar suggestions, modified for age-appropriate activities, were made **around informal community support for children and young people** returning from conflict zones. The emphasis here, as for adult women and family members, was strongly focused on activities and networks that would foster sense of belonging, acceptance, feeling safe, and the normalcy of everyday life in Australian communities. Participants anticipated that returning children and young people could be integrated through a variety of local community initiatives, including school-based programs, informal mentoring programs, and youth groups or camps that would help children like Waleed *'build peer support and engagement that would allow him to break him out of his shell and turn his mind away from his troubles'* (CR 12).

However, as some interviewees pointed out, Waleed could only connect with such programmes if he was aware of them; in this regard, effective case management would be critical to ensure that he is linked to initiatives that could help support and integrate him.

Some participants felt it was incumbent on community members to create a normalising environment that would encourage Waleed and his mother to participate in community activities, but noted that the precursor to this was ensuring that *'you have [returnees'] trust to establish those links'* (CR 7):

Everyday people need to normalise the community experience of Waleed and Sandra – to make their daily lives as normal and everyday as possible! That's their role, without judgment, starting Waleed and his mum off on the same footing as everyone else. We judge people by their virtue and goodness as a Muslim community – easier said than done, but that's what we want to aspire to. Giving them a go with no judgement and come as you are. (CR 17)

Ordinary people can't provide any professional assistance. But they can be more open – creating conversations, following up, being friendly and creating ongoing connections with people to help them feel like they belong – 'let's catch up'. (CR 22)

Religious support

Some interviewees mentioned the role that communities could play in terms of offering religious support, especially for returning adult women. This included creating an informal sense of spiritual support for returnees, which could be as simple as *'somebody asking, "What do you need?" or praying for and with them'*

(CR 11). More systematic engagement in religious classes where adult women could find *'comfort and support'* and *'spiritual nourishment'* (CR 15) was also suggested, as were informal Muslim sisters' circles *'to learn Arabic, recite Koran, learn the tenets of the faith, go into it more deeply. She could participate in that, religiosity is a key coping strategy'* (CR 16). The sisters' circles were also seen as a way to build social networks and connections in the community, including *'coffee meet-ups for isolated sisters – single parents, converts, people without family connections, they'll hold family outings and things like that'* (CR 16).

Financial support

While many interviewees saw the state as responsible for providing primary financial resources for reintegration, some respondents felt that communities should also contribute financially by helping returnees to access resources for private health care, if necessary, or to facilitate access to job opportunities through community networks:

> The community does this all the time and can help in this regard. It helps with feeling a sense of purpose and contribution. (CR 16)

> So what needs to happen is community attitudes need to shift. To say I'll be accountable, I have a moral and religious obligation to help my fellow man and I'll come to the party….Maryam could be supported in this way by the community to find the affordable accommodation she needs, to access support through being near her sisters. We could also contribute to private health care that would expedite addressing her health concerns. (CR 8)

> [There could be] support from community if she wants part-time work so she doesn't feel dependent on others all the time. The community can offer part-time work through admin, child care centres, restaurants or local businesses. If she wants to upskill herself to be a bookkeeper, then providing for training needs through community organisations is also a good idea. (CR 15)

Leadership support

The role of community leadership (not necessarily restricted to 'formal' or titular community leaders) to help facilitate returnees' reintegration was also seen as important by a number of participants, especially to help bring along community members who may be reluctant or anxious about supporting returnee children and women. The emphasis here is on ***publicly visible*** community inclusion by key community influencers that educates and encourages others to follow their lead:

> Someone has to lead the way and show how it's done. One respected individual or family in the community has got to visit and invite [Maryam] over. There may be a fundraiser or community event – she needs to be included. Invite her and sit her at a VIP table and the MC or president of that association and acknowledges her presence, welcomes her and her children. We are here for you – that's what we need to publicly acknowledge and display in terms of support. All it takes is the courage of community leaders to step up. And you need a marketing campaign. Get the local politicians to do it. You say, 'She was caught up in the wrong place at the wrong time. It wasn't her war'. (CR 8)

> There is value in educating the community; you don't want people saying, 'I don't want that kid to go to school with my kid'', or 'I don't want my wife with that woman'. The community is susceptible to compassion. Explain that they are our brothers and sisters, can't push them away. But obviously there needs to be that process of starting off with the leaders of the community, different mosque groups, [places] where doors open to them, they are welcomed, can be a part of existing programmes. (CR 1)

What resources do communities need to support returnees?

Community willingness to support the reintegration of child and women or family returnees relies on having appropriate resources that make such assistance possible. It is thus critical to understand how communities see their resource capacity, and what gaps may need to be addressed to help communities help others to successfully re-join local Australian communities. The key resource gaps that communities think would need to be addressed in order to provide such support included:

- Training and education

- Coordination, networking and mobilisation of existing resources

- Skilled professionals

- Funding for community services

Training and education

A number of community respondents identified training and education as critical in order to be able to effectively support returnees. They noted that community members *'often don't know how to respond'* (CR 11) to concerns or issues related to violent extremism, and therefore the need to equip them with this basic knowledge. One respondent recalled community education initiatives where volunteers went out to *'day care, parent sessions, all over, to teach the difference between why would you call children's services or Child FIRST versus child protection? The idea is if you're not sure, give us a ring'* (CR 6). They advocated a similar approach in relation to helping communities understand the issues in the context of reintegrating returnees.

Participants also commented on the complexity of issues that may be raised in relation to reintegrating returnees, and the skills that would be required to negotiate these complexities. They felt that the community as a whole, in addition to specialists or leaders, needed to be equipped with some of these skills:

> It's quite a skill to be able to support someone and not say something wrong. Mothers are often blamed for what happened to sons, not the father. Being able to navigate how to talk to someone, need to be careful, not rush to judgement. Education would be helpful for the general community, but it's hard to do. Ultimately this is the goal: for the whole community to understand how to engage, etc. You could go to leaders but it's important for general community to be on board [because] the community is bigger than religious or community leaders. (CR 11)

Other respondents underlined the importance of giving community members appropriate resources *that 'help them understand people who come from this history and how to treat them – some specialised authority who can give some background and also promote some empathy'* (CR 17), with resource suggestions including the *existing 'AMF Building Community Awareness training manual'* (CR 5). Such resource packs could assist communities in referring returnees to the correct organisations and relieve the burden for community members of feeling that they alone are responsible for meeting their needs:

> If I have the resource pack to know which services are out there and which services do what, I could say, 'I feel for you, go to this service, they're amazing and can help'. … The community needs to be equipped to provide or refer on to support without delivering it themselves. It's a lot of pressure and responsibility for communities to feel they need to deliver service- style support. (CR 6)

Coordination, networking and mobilisation of existing resources

Several interviewees outlined the need to more effectively share information in order to ensure existing resources are utilised to the greatest effect, as well as create an integrated response to returnees:

There's no service providers network to keep us all hooked in to what we are all doing. We don't know the breadth [of resources], there is no point of contact – schools are awesome at having intra-organisation networks, teachers, principals, counsellors' networks, etc. [But there is] nothing like that across our Muslim community resources. It's not integrated, more fragmented at the moment. A *database of culturally appropriate practitioners would be very helpful in this context*. (CR 19, emphasis in original)

I think there needs to be something at community level – community members being aware of resources that already exist. When I first came here I wasn't aware of what was out there. So it's about, for example, a community meeting space, where info could be displayed. An information desk, where you can come and ask about things, maybe staffed by volunteers from within the community. (CR 6)

Others saw a funded community worker or community workers reporting to a centralised structure organisation as a useful means to connect '*the intelligence of the community with the services*'. Otherwise, they argued, a failure to share information means '*we have no data, we only have perceived problems*' (CR 7).

Participants also noted that resources to be shared may range from the more concrete, such as a training manual, to intangible forms of knowledge that are critical to making a system work for a particular community, for example '*finding other women who have some sense of the system itself – the cultural brokerage role is vital here. It's these cultural bridges that garner the trust of women to access community support*' (CR 19):

Resource sometimes are intangible. So it's about knowing how the system works. I have a philosophy – don't reinvent the wheel. Tap into existing resources, but the Muslim community doesn't always know how the system works. Say reporting family violence or hate crime – we have these problems, but we don't report because we don't know how, that it's only for the white fellas and we just have to suck it up. Having networks and knowing how to access them. Redirecting services our way – that's a resource. But lack of awareness and lethargy about making these systems serve us are problems. (CR 8)

Skilled professionals

Numerous respondents emphasised the need for more skilled professionals and trained case workers in Muslim communities who could assist in the reintegration of returnees, including the need for a more gender-balanced skills base: '*There is not a single male Muslim youth worker who is trained properly. We've advertised for a Muslim youth worker and 70% of applicants are women. We need training in youth work, in social work, in mental health*' (CR 8):

Do we have the skill set and types of people in the Muslim community? Not really. It could be social workers, community workers youth workers, people who are trained in dealing with trauma and vulnerability. We have women's organisations and mosque based community organisations but are they skilled enough to deal with potentially acute cases? I'm not sure.

So an important resource is having the training and capability within the community to deal with these cases – there won't be many, but there will be intensive needs and involvement. The community should be on the front foot with this, not the government – these supports need to be community based. (CR 15)

One respondent noted that part of the reason for this absence of skills was the fact that many psychologists and psychiatrists were employed in '*mainstream roles where the jobs are... there are no Islamic hospitals, for*

example, though [an interstate community group] just established an Islamic mental health group' (CR 20). Another interviewee noted cultural barriers to developing more mental health professionals, since *'a lot of families pressurise their kids to be doctors, lawyers etc.'* (CR 18) as more lucrative and prestigious professions compared with social service careers.

Funding for community services

Unsurprisingly, several community participants argued that better funding for community organisations is necessary to facilitate the reintegration of returnees who are likely to require *'intensive support'* (CR 22). They noted that currently many community organisations rely on volunteer staff, but that the reintegration of returnees *'cannot be done on a voluntary basis through good will. The first resource needed would be funding to employ community based staff'* (CR 9). They noted that community leadership also needs to be resourced *'to understand and provide targeted and informed guidance'* (CR 17).

Volunteering is both highly valued and widely practiced within Australian Muslim communities (Peucker 2017); however, volunteer burnout is also well-known phenomenon (Jansen 2010; Gabard 1997) and community participants were concerned that over-reliance on volunteers' time and resources could prove counter-productive for reintegration support efforts:

> To be honest, we're all volunteers here and it's taxing. We want government to support community. If they could put money into a program, say for example, visit your neighbours with depression program. Funds for a coordinator. We're already doing the work but we could do it much better if we had resources and a part time coordinator we could be much more effective. We've been telling government for years, just put money in community. Just resourcing professional services won't go the distance. [Maryam] will need to turn to trusted community relationships and services first as she's reintegrating. (CR 16)

> We are expecting volunteers to do everything. It's easy for people who are paid to sit in an office to criticise us. But get out of the office and pay the people on the ground who are doing the work and things might shift. (CR 7)

They also underlined the importance of integrating not just services but also funding provision in order to ensure that fragmented funding does not lead to unnecessary competition between community organisations:

> There is a mentality that is like… 'Oh, they're divided, the community is not working together'. When you are unevenly distributing funds to different groups, what do you expect? If you identify a single worker or group of workers who are there for everyone – events, connection with services or agencies, channelling everything through a single structure – it would work much better. (CR 7)

What challenges and risks do communities face in supporting returnees?

Failure to address the resourcing needs above translated for community participants into a number of significant challenges and risks for communities themselves in supporting reintegration processes, as well as other non-resource-linked challenges and risks. The primary challenges and risks identified by community respondents were:

- Increased stigma, reputational damage, surveillance and media scrutiny

- Risks to community safety posed by returnees

- Risk of failing to provide community support

- Shortage of culturally appropriate skills and resources

- Lack of structured support, leadership and funding

Increased stigma, reputational damage, surveillance and media scrutiny

A substantial proportion of respondents argued that fear of negative repercussions from law enforcement authorities, and the belief of many within Muslim communities that they would be assumed to be guilty by association if they associated with anyone linked to violent extremism, would potentially pose a major obstacle for communities in supporting returnees.

> People who attend her mosque would be afraid that they would be monitored; leaders may be concerned that they would be targeted as creating a safe haven for extremists. There are mosques that are known to be monitored. The fear that 'I'm around this person' is a common thing that makes people disassociate: 'I won't have any problems with ASIO'. The risk would be getting ASIO's attention. If ASIO is approaching individuals associated with Maryam, it would raise their suspicions about her, with the possibility that [community members] could withdraw from Maryam. (CR 11)

> Someone who's come with that sort of history doesn't get greeted with the open arms you'd like to see because there is a fear of' if I associate with you, the authorities will look at me'. ... When the Pendennis guys were arrested, for the first year they were seen as damaged goods, and their families too, and there was a lot of distance put between them [and others] by members of the community. (CR 17)

> They know these people are under surveillance. Who wants to go to a woman's home when you think they're under security watch or surveillance by ASIO? (CR 20)

Participants reported that anxiety about being implicated by association in violent extremism has previously shut down conversations about the issue, which inevitably deepens misunderstandings and makes association with anything connected to violent extremism, including support for returnees attempting to reintegrate, a risky proposition:

> I think fear of reprisal from government, fear of reputational damage (in terms of people aligning you with this CVE work) and also fear of authorities suspecting you as being somehow involved. There's a lot of misconceptions within the Muslim community about what constitutes risk in terms of violent extremism. Even having discussions about violent extremism creates suspicions. Do they want to set me up? Do they know more than they're saying? It's a taboo topic and the elephant in the room. It's of increasing concern but no one wants to talk about it openly. Anyone who talks about it openly is seen as an agent of the authorities. Simple discussions about CVE are seen by the community as an intelligence gathering exercise. That's a key issue for the work of reintegration. (CR 9)

> They think it's too hard, too overwhelming and too risky for the community, so that fear could play up. (CR 17)

These anxieties are reinforced by a broader sense of perpetual siege around Muslim identity and belief from non-Muslims both in Australia and internationally, heightening fears around surveillance and '*guilt by association*' even when trying to decrease vulnerability for others to violent extremist messaging:

> Above all, the Muslim community feels very much the guilt by association; this means we are always watched. We tell young people be careful on trips you take... My son said to me three years ago, 'Have you seen this IS video, it's pretty powerful?', and I nearly had a panic attack – and he's a youth

worker, he just drew attention to their powerful messaging so he could work with youth who might be vulnerable, but I panicked that someone would come knocking on our door if he was even looking at this stuff to help others stay away. (CR 16)

Hand in hand with such perceptions goes heightened sensitivity to the impacts of negative media portrayal of the Muslim community, particularly in relation to terrorism issues, which has been the subject of much recent research (von Sikorski et al. 2017; Aly 2016; Ballentine 2017, *inter alia*).

The anxiety that this invokes translates into a desire to avoid saying or doing anything that could further tarnish the reputation of the Muslim community: *'The fear of guilt by association is powerful and the media focus exacerbates this'* (CR 8). As other participants elaborated,

> I've seen firsthand in Melbourne, when mosques are presented with an adolescent exhibiting behaviour leaning towards extremism, they don't want to be implicated [or] associated with them; they are hesitant to open their doors to someone like that. [They] don't want to be on the first page of the *Herald Sun* – 'this person was jailed for being part of a terrorist plot and they used to frequent this mosque'. (CR 18)

> The media getting hold of this is also a risk for the community in terms of backlash and damage to community reputation. I could see my board saying, 'do we want this person here because of that, perhaps she should go somewhere else'. (CR 16)

However, a few participants also thought this risk could possibly be mitigated if they were working closely with government, so that communities alone were not targeted by media for harbouring those returning from conflict zones but were instead seen to be contributing constructively as partners within a government policy and programming context:

> If government is supporting us to support Maryam, then we can probably deal with the media. We're all on the same page then. (CR 16)

> If the government's approached us and we are taking the lead in working with them to help someone reintegrate, it shouldn't be a problem. (CR 6)

Risk to community safety posed by returnees

Alongside contemplating the social and reputational risks involved for communities as a result of supporting reintegrating returnees, several respondents also expressed concerns that returnees might pose security risks to safety, including direct harm to local communities. These harms were seen as both non-violent (for example, radicalising others; breaking the law) and violent (mounting an attack within the local or broader Australian community). This concern seemed to be most acute in relation to Waleed as an adolescent male, who was seen as more likely to commit direct violence in contrast to adult mother Maryam, and was related by participants to Waleed's perceived vulnerability in terms of appropriate guidance, previous influences or experiences, and his age:

> The community perspective may be worried about whether these people are violent. The community might feel this person could bring harm to us, may think in an extremist way, may carry out activities that are against the law. If he's coming back from a Muslim country and is a bit connected to his religion, they may think his or her dress suggests that they are extremists, etc. (CR 22)

> A lot of people would say even if the authorities cleared Sandra and Waleed, what do they know – this resourcing of terrorism is happening in far more ways than they realise. (CR 17)

I would also worry that Waleed might become radicalised and might influence other young people in the area. (CR 18)

Waleed's apparent disengagement from social life and his drawings of '*all these beatings and executions*' was of concern to some respondents who expressed anxiety that he may '*act out whatever he is drawing*' (CR 12):

It's an alarm that Waleed is disengaged and not behaving well. This indicates that he needs to be contained and redirected, or else the authorities need to be informed. It's a sign he's moving from the normal social behaviour towards something anti-social…The community would need to share their concerns with authorities about what he is drawing and his behaviour. (CR 7)

Another interviewee expressed concern that the lack of male guidance for Waleed could lead him to misinterpret Islam in ways that could lead to violent consequences:

If he was to go to a local mosque and listen to a sermon, his idea of what the local imam was saying might be different, and there's no father telling him at home what is right and wrong. If the imam made a comment that Waleed took the wrong way, it could be catastrophic for the community around him. He could meet other teens on the outskirts of the Muslim community who could influence him – he's young. Maybe somebody online, 17 or 18, who could send him in the wrong direction. He's lonely, so he needs an older male who could lead him. (CR 12)

Risk of failing to provide community support

However, despite these safety concerns, some participants were concerned that such risks needed to be weighed against the possibility that unsupported returnees could actually pose a more substantial risk by making returnees more vulnerable to (re)radicalisation:

You don't know if you're supporting someone in Syria and not just Maryam. But also the risk is that if she's an innocent person and you don't support her, you may be helping re-radicalise her. You have to be open but alert, and knowing how to identify potential risks as they may emerge, and knowing how to react in a crisis. (CR 6).

Thus, the greater risk was *not* doing anything to reintegrate individuals such as Maryam and Waleed:

The less [communities] know the less they're able to help – that's the main risk. I don't really see any security risks here. The main risk is actually to do nothing. (CR 5)

I'd feel [the community] faced risks if they didn't step in to provide this support, not if they did. (CR 12)

Shortage of culturally appropriate skills and services

The challenges identified above by participants sketch out some of the potential obstacles, inhibitors, concerns and resistance that community respondents felt were raised by the scenarios they considered in the study.

However, overall, community members felt that there were reasonable prospects for engaging community support for reintegration of children, women and families returning from conflict zones, particularly in light of the fact that most participants were realistic in recognising that there would never be 'whole of community' consensus on these issues. The approach most favoured by community respondents was to leverage those people and organisations who did explicitly want or feel obliged to support reintegrating returnees, while reassuring those who were reluctant or resistant about the risks in so doing.

Nevertheless, a key obstacle articulated by participants from communities relates to a perceived lack of appropriate qualifications, skills and service delivery *by Muslims* and *within Muslim communities,* even where the will to support or assist is present. This apprehension is partly related to a perception that the support needs of returnees are unique so that any service provider – mainstream or otherwise – would struggle to meet the demand: *'It's a very niche-y, a unique, fairly new, specialist and complex area with complex needs that an ordinary social worker or counsellor is probably not going to be able to meet'* (CR 17). However, many interviewees explicitly identified a lack of skilled and credentialed or qualified Australian Muslim professionals in areas such as social work and psychology, which have traditionally not enjoyed the prestige of other professions. As a consequence, said a number of participants, *'There is a shortage of Muslims in the welfare sector – youth, child protection'* (CR 9).

In addition, some respondents also worried about the fact that religious or other community leaders, however ill-equipped they may be to do so in participants' eyes, are compelled to carry the burden of social support in communities because of the dearth of skilled social service professionals:

> Imams are under resourced, they don't have the professional skills or qualifications to deal with cases like this. You need qualified psychologists, it's not a religious issue. (CR 18).

> People giving bad advice can make the situation worse. (CR 15)

> People need education and awareness to know what they're actually dealing with, not wild speculation and fantasy. (CR 16)

Community members noted that while many people do turn to religious institutions for assistance with a wide range of social issues, these institutions are largely staffed by volunteers, with limited time and professional expertise: *'People ring wanting help and they are just provided with traditional advice – be strong, it's a test from God, but no practical support'* (CR 9).

Respondents also raised the issue of a lack of culturally appropriate service delivery, which they saw as critical to the both the short- and longer-term success of reintegration efforts for those returning from conflict zones. They cited a perceived chronic *'service deficit, which is about the lack of qualified practitioners who have both an Islamic cultural understanding of working with community plus actual qualifications'* (CR 19), which meant that the crucial alignment of cultural and professional skills cannot be mobilised for reintegration efforts:

> [To] understand what Sandra [Waleed's mother] has been through, where she's at, what the challenges for Waleed are, someone from inside the Muslim community with the right professional knowledge and experience as well as community connections is really vital. [But] at the moment we just don't have them, either the resources or the level of qualified workers that we need, or even the funding to get this level of training up, especially for the intensive case work needed in these relatively rare but important and unique situations (CR 17).

Lack of structured support and leadership

Some participants were also concerned about the absence of existing structured support mechanisms at community level for reintegration, including the question of who could lead or direct this process. Respondents worried that this could mean:

> There wouldn't be any consistency, so that some might get lots of support, and others might get less or none. It's about giving communities opportunities through established or new structures that allow them to welcome [returnees]. You do need someone as a leader to take the initiative in organising other community members – someone has to get things started. Without this leadership

or initiative, people will just drift or not know how to offer the support they might be capable of. (CR 6)

Lack of funding

Finally, lack of funding that would help communities offer their support to aid reintegration prospects for returnees was identified as a potential barrier in terms of both resourcing and volunteer fatigue:

> Resources! My community has some professionals who are capable but their capabilities are overstretched and they need more funds to do their job well, especially for intensive support like this. Without resources, no one is willing to fund this out of their own pocket, nor can they. A lot of the community already does voluntary work, and they get tired to the point where they say enough is enough. (CR 22)

How should perceived risks for communities be managed?

Managing a range of risks perceived in relation to community support for reintegrating returnees was an important question for many community participants. Their key suggestions for managing some of the risks identified above were:

- Community interface

- Background law enforcement monitoring and referral

- Community training in risk identification and management

- Support, engagement and intervention

- Case management

Community interface

Community participants generally acknowledged the role of law enforcement in managing any potential risks related to returnees. However, there was an overall sentiment that the community should be the primary 'face' of interaction with returnees unless risks escalated beyond a clearly identified threshold, arguing that law enforcement engagement should be as unobtrusive and as much in the background as possible:

> The monitoring and surveillance will be there regardless – but this should be unobtrusive, as far away as possible from the public perception…as light a footprint as possible. And Maryam should feel that she is not being scrutinised every minute of the day. (CR 15)

This respondent also argued that if *'early warning signs'* for radicalisation were identified in relation to a returnee, the first point of intervention should be within the community,

> The community must interview her. If I were aware of such a thing, I'd absolutely intervene. I'd speak to her first and explain the reality of the situation and hope she'd see an alternative and I'd provide an alternative as a community leader. Ultimately if your question is would you report to authorities because there is no other option – yes I would, but it's a last resort and I see no other way, then I'd have a conversation with someone I trust in law enforcement. (CR 15)

Another participant used the metaphor of a bank, which has a friendly, visible community 'face' for customer service supported by a back office where the more complex and technical work of financial institutions actually gets done:

Law enforcement must be involved but as a support mechanism not an interface. The Muslim community and agencies must be the interface. Law enforcement and government agencies must be behind the scenes supporting this interface mechanism at community level. Back office support is the right role for law enforcement to be playing in managing these risks. Customer service up front is the role of community agencies – managing the back office of the operations is for law enforcement. People who walk in see the smiling faces of the community agency and not the stern faces of law enforcement – that's how to manage these risks. (CR 8)

Law enforcement monitoring and referral

There was general agreement that, beyond a certain threshold, someone who is showing signs of actively planning violence should be '*handled by the police*' (CR 11): *'I think if the risk reaches an unacceptable level, like she passes the yellow line and crosses the red, then it's a law enforcement issue and the case manager or social worker have a duty of care to report on to law enforcement'* (CR 9).

However, there remains ambiguity about the exact threshold at which community engagement would yield to law enforcement intervention. Some participants felt that under certain circumstances, the community should remain engaged even when law enforcement becomes involved because this will ultimately help police succeed in minimising a potential harm or threat:

It depends what the risks are. If you're telling me that she's intending to cause harm to the community or the wider community because of her beliefs, then we need to bring the professionals in – AFP, law enforcement. Even in the harm scenario, though, I'd still bring community in as well as law enforcement straight away. If law enforcement comes in without the involvement of community, that's when the problems start. Get your community elders in from the beginning. (CR 16)

Participants also thought that the manner in which law enforcement authorities handle returnees, right from the beginning of the reintegration process, can have a significant impact on their ability to manage potential later risks posed by returnees, and also play an important role in countering negative narratives about the authorities:

It all comes down to treatment by AFP of returnees. If the person comes back and they are ill-treated in some way – even if it's just a perception of ill treatment, and they're aware of their surveillance or interrogated as if they're a criminal, then they are making the job of any [violent extremist] recruiter much easier. But if the person returning feels the AFP has their back and they are supported [through fair, empathetic [treatment and referrals], this provides a counter narrative to 'everyone's against us, they're going to intern us, arrest us, surveill us'. If the person's response [is] 'the AFP has gone out of their way to be supportive and helpful, they were fair, they had questions to ask but they've helped us get on with our lives', this can be instrumental in shutting down a really unhelpful rhetoric. (CR 19)

Training of community members

The negotiation of trust versus risk was an important consideration for community participants in thinking about how to manage the risks of community support for returnees. Several community respondents felt that risk could be managed by equipping community members with adequate knowledge and training, for example to identify elements and degrees of risk or concern. This was seen as particularly important for community leaders, who may receive confidences from returnees or those close to them that could potentially implicate them in illegal activities or pose highly challenging judgments. One participant outlined this dilemma at length:

It's important that people working with [returnees] know how to identify risk very well. There are things that would be said that might incriminate [those providing support] but [returnees] are telling you this because they don't believe you will go and tell the authorities. So there are things that we need to keep really confidential, but then there are things that we don't keep confidential if they pose a threat to our national security. We need to make these judgements. You are not obliged to tell [police or security agencies] all the detail, even if you work with them; they respect that, they understand that. But it's a double edged sword: what will happen if there is a risk that isn't disclosed and it builds up to something and action isn't taken? That becomes everyone's problem, so you need to measure the benefits and harms. This is a very slippery slope, and we need to know how to manoeuvre with returned families. (CR 1)

Along similar lines, other respondents suggested that 'if you equip a community well enough with tools and skills around safety and how to respond to concerns or crises, then they are trained AS community members or first responders to not panic but deal or make the right phone call' (CR 6); 'Certain members of the community need to be trained to assess violent risks from people like Maryam. They need to have the skill set to be able to pick up the cues to make this assessment' (CR 8).

Support, engagement and early intervention

Many community participants felt balancing community safety with continued engagement of returnees at community level was a vital aspect of risk management:

It's quite complex but I think we have no option but to support and continue to support, if only for the sake of the children, even if the intelligence suggests otherwise. If we gave up on people, there would be no one in any program who could help them. Persistence is so important. The risks to safety must be managed, but that doesn't mean stopping the support – it just means being sensible about managing the risk to ensure the safety of others. Both can be done at the same time, but if you stop the support you're just making it easier for the person to have a justification to escalate their behaviour. (CR 9)

Indeed, early intervention by community members was seen as forestalling bigger risks that might otherwise lie ahead:

At the end of the day, if it gets to the stage where they are actively undertaking high risk activities, then law enforcement will be involved anyway and there is nothing you can do to stop them. You want to try to avoid that – so early intervention, having that continuity, being able to pick up the early signs is so important because otherwise your hands are tied to help them and it becomes a straight security issue where [authorities] may not be focused on helping [the returnee]. (CR 15)

Integrated case management

Another way respondents suggested risk could be managed relates to integrated case management. As noted above, picking up on early warning signs is critical in effectively managing risk. Participants thought integrated case management facilitates this by having a 'system in place where there is a person who is the liaison for the whole case – someone in the middle between law enforcement and security on one hand, and support providers on the other, who has the whole picture and can coordinate and make decisions with a panel about the response' (CR 9):

The community should have access to someone expert like an experienced social worker who could assess [Maryam's] situation, maybe a case worker who could assess the risks. My view is that we should keep law enforcement far from the front line unless absolutely necessary. If Maryam is going

through a situation where she is becoming at risk, the case worker assesses, maps out a plan and includes law enforcement in that conversation, and decides how to address [the situation]. (CR 15)

Community-government partnerships for reintegrating returnees

Willingness by communities to partner with law enforcement

Some community participants were very comfortable with the idea of partnering with government and law enforcement, expressing unequivocal willingness to do so and providing rationales for this view:

> There's a lot of history and evidence that these shared partnerships and collaborations can actually work. (CR 17)

> In my community we've been very willing to partner for a long time with law enforcement. We want the best for our community and we're happy to work with government and law enforcement. We've been developing a better relationship. Law enforcement originally took over and got backlash, but they're listening now and we get each other now – it's working better. We do training with each other. It's much better than it used to be. (CR 16)

Several other respondents said they were willing to collaborate with law enforcement if police adopted a *'community-friendly'*, non-securitised stance toward returnees and the local community:

> There needs to be some level of statutory involvement by law enforcement in the right way. Not someone with guns and uniforms rocking up to Maryam's door. It could be someone in plainclothes coming to say hello. It doesn't need to be advertised. But they do need to be involved and they hold sensitive information relevant to risk and safety that we are not privy to. … You can't do things overnight. It's a shift – you can't just say here's a police liaison, now interact with them. You need to educate, explain and to get the right people in those roles – police who know how to engage with community members and bring them along. (CR 6).

> If police are coming as police, it won't work. But if a police officer is running a community program as a youth worker, he'll be more trusted. He has the law behind him, and that knowledge but that's not his main identity or role in this context. People don't trust law enforcement. They have to have a relationship with any agents or agencies coming in for that to work. No uniforms, no police cars – it would signal trouble and scare people away. (CR 12)

Ambivalence about community-police partnerships

On the other hand, a number of other participants expressed mistrust in law enforcement in particular, consequently seeing only a limited role for police agencies in locally based reintegration processes. They noted that positive relationships may be built up between individual community leaders and particular law enforcement officers, but these individuals may then move on, leaving the broader culture of the institution unchanged. As a result, hard-won relationships between community and law enforcement can be undermined:

> Every time we feel that the police are starting to get it, they do something that shows they're not getting it, so no. We keep asking for enough information to help us intervene early on. The [policing engagement team] gets new people and they seem to get it and then they show that the institution doesn't get it. The individual law enforcement person can only do so much – the rubber hits the road with the institution. There is clearly a trust deficit in both directions, and we've raised it up to Commissioner level. They say they understand but that operational factors prevail. (CR 15)

Another participant explained how community-law enforcement relations are further complicated by the heterogeneity of different orientations and foci within the same policing organisation:

> Let me put this in two contexts. In certain situations the [policing agency] are nothing but helpful. This has really worked in terms of supporting families, relatives of foreign fighters, etc. I've had situations with clients who have said this. But I've also had the opposite, where a person has been not just surveilled but provoked with leading questions, and the attitude of [certain] officers only goes to reinforce that they're out to get them. And this just increases the threat – it's so counterproductive. Within [policing agencies] there are lovely and genuine people with their own approach, and there are people who are just alienating. And this manifests between different teams as well: one team whose goal is to build relationships with the community, then there are other investigative teams. And what's unfortunate is that you get two very different approaches, and the one that gets around is the alienating and insulting one – that's what colours perceptions. This is unfortunate for an agency that needs to be on the front foot but is on the back foot in terms of negative reputation. (CR 19)

Yet while law enforcement institutions may be heterogeneous or inconsistent at times, community members' own attitudes to law enforcement can be equally complex and variable. As one participant put it:

> There are two sides to [community attitudes toward] partnering [with police] – one side is no, we are targeted, we don't want them, why are they stigmatising us. The other side of the community is more open to inviting police in and working with them to help these youth who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. So there is no consensus – some people feel one way, others are more open. (CR 12)

Other ambivalent attitudes toward community-police partnerships were articulated in terms of perceived disjunctions between community and policing values, seeing a limited but nevertheless important role for police early on in the reintegration process:

> I highly doubt that law enforcement support would be received well by community or by the targets for reintegration. Law enforcement cannot provide direct meaningful support. The objective doesn't align with the values that the community believes about law enforcement. If they can lock you up, they can't be your friends. But the meaningful role for law enforcement is at the beginning of the intervention, is to come out and say, 'We don't want to imprison you or entrap you. We have a duty of care to community safety, we are here, if we can help you let us know'. The clear message is we are watching you but we want you to succeed in your reintegration. (CR 9)

And a few participants were resolute in their belief that such partnerships were simply not going to be viable:

> There's a disbelief that federal authorities have any genuine perspective about helping us. (CR 22)

> Law enforcement is always seen as intimidating, whether or not it's true. Especially for people returning [from conflict zones], the attitudes towards law enforcement are not going to be welcoming. In the context of children and families who are returnees, law enforcement should not be involved in providing that support. I don't think these partnerships are the right way to go in this scenario. (CR 5)

Trust and terrorism

These more negative responses toward community-law enforcement partnerships speak more broadly to issues around trust deficits between communities and government on terrorism-related concerns and

programs, with mistrust and wariness characterising both sides for some participants:

> There is the danger of a community perception that you might be sharing intelligence with law enforcement -- this goes back to how much faith there is between the two bodies of government and community. (CR 1).

> Communities would be unlikely to partner with the police; people are very wary, not willing to get involved. With other social issues they can get on board with a police community liaison, but on this issue it would be more difficult. ... People would get flak from community if they are seen to be cooperating with the police. The fear is so real. It also depends on people's experience, if they had bad run-ins with the police and ASIO, they would be more reluctant. (CR 11)

Participants were also concerned that such *'flak from community'* for working with police on terrorism issues could have directly negative impacts on the reintegration prospects of young returnees in particular:

> You want to keep the kid's integrity – you don't want to have people saying he's the target of police or law enforcement interest ... [because] after law enforcement there is nothing beyond that. Rebuilding community-law enforcement relationships takes second place to the focus on ensuring [Waleed's] sense of safety and wellbeing and reintegration into the community. (CR 5)

What would successful partnerships look like?

Community respondents offered various perspectives on what successful partnerships on reintegrating returnees might look like if communities and government were to cooperate with each other. The main elements of successful partnerships on reintegration were identified as:

- Mutual trust and transparency
- Equality, mutual responsibility and joint accountability
- Credibility in support and program delivery
- Context-tailored responses

Mutual trust and transparency

Numerous participants emphasised that a successful partnership would need to be founded on mutual trust, transparency and accountability between community and government partners:

> A good community government partnership would involve complete trust and confidentiality. People given an opportunity to voice their concerns and are given a fair and equal share in that partnership. For that close working relationship to develop – trust, transparency and accountability. (CR 22)

> There needs to be mutual investment in the mechanisms that promote both trust and confidence. (CR 8).

A minority of participants thought that community-government trust and cooperation on issues like resilience and integration have increased in recent times: *'There has been improved trust of government by community over last ten years, police moving more into community resilience and integration space. There is more liaison work going on but obviously there will always be those trust issues'* (CR 1).

However, the majority argued that mutual trust is unfinished business and still needs to be firmly established:

The partnership I see is that the system has to trust the community. The trust has to be two-way. When ASIO comes to dig in my office and my house and I am saying to them, 'How can I help?' then something is going wrong. When they come with full force right from the beginning, why would I trust them? (CR 7)

Government needs to work to get trust back from the Muslim community: that is an issue. I think many Muslims feel that government has previously been disingenuous in previous government initiatives, like when they jump on the media, trying to get votes by being seen to be opposed to terrorism as opposed to a genuine concern for the welfare of young people. (CR 18)

It's really difficult to gain that trust. Law enforcement is always tricky, and people are wary. (CR 6)

Some respondents suggested that trust would improve with increased transparency about the relationship between community and government agencies:

To be completely honest, there's a lot of distrust of community organisations who partner with government but are not transparent [about such partnerships]. They come to us as community organisations but they have a lot of law enforcement [involvement] behind the scenes. Once people find out, they think there's been dishonesty and lack of transparency. Being transparent about the situation and what the goals and processes are is critical. (CR 12)

Participants also highlighted the need for mutual education and respect as a foundation for building mutual trust:

First is education both ways. Law enforcement can be prejudiced, they are just individuals. They have their own stereotypes and prejudices. They need training in getting rid of religious stereotypes and also understanding of who gets involved in these situations. The Muslim community also needs to be educated about law enforcement and the challenges they face and which these situations pose for government and the safety of community. [Communities] say, 'There's no issue' and I say, 'Get your head out of the ground'. We have people who intend to do us harm and they happen to be Muslim. The education needs to be two way, with an open mind and heart, and respectful toward and learning from each other. (CR 16)

Equality, mutual responsibility and joint accountability

A significant number of participants underlined the importance of a two-way partnership in which communities and government have equal standing and are willing both to listen to each other and engage in mutual recognition:

It needs to be a partnership between government and community – I mean between the institutions of government such as the public service, which is there to facilitate and cater for the needs of the people they serve. (CR 8)

Two way communication; genuine collaboration and mutual planning, not just being told here it is, work on it. Asking what will work for our community, not assuming. (CR 6)

This is a joint issue – our issue, not just your problem or my problem. We have a problem as Australians to keep Australia safe, why are some people attracted to this? I'd like to see a change of language – a change to using 'our'. Our citizens, our people – the same level of care and compassion from a politician who's not Muslim towards Muslims without identifying their faith. (CR 16)

Some participants felt that government has been reluctant to work in an equal partnership with communities in the past:

> I think one thing that government doesn't do very well is the co-design process. Government likes control – they have KPIs and they say we want to work with you but on our terms. That's the community experience of CVE so far. Trust means showing mutual respect. And incorporating Muslim views about what successful reintegration looks like. (CR 9)

They saw joint panels of relevant stakeholders from both community and government to manage the process of reintegration as one way of implementing more equal and mutually accountable partnerships on reintegration:

> As a structured model, we might have a panel or group that is in charge of all the returnee coordination. Case workers underneath them. That group would represent relevant government agencies, including law enforcement, child protection maybe federally funded. Then you've got resources from Muslim community members, and a coordinator as well, and also an academic from a network who understands the issues and can contribute observations would be helpful too. (CR 17)

Mutual responsibility in managing and growing such partnerships was an allied theme to emerge from this portion of the data:

> What happens is that government tries to make it a problem for the community and the community says, 'What do you mean?' It needs both in a partnership to work together to solve it. Government needs to offer welfare support, but the community needs to come in with some financial support via *zakat* (2.5% of disposable income to others in need, a major pillar of Islam). (CR 8)

And linked to mutual responsibility for participants was the idea of **joint accountability** for both successes *and* failures. Some participants were unsure whether government was willing to accept shared accountability, however, arguing that *'in the public domain, when something goes wrong like [the] Brighton [attack], we are seen as responsible for delivering the service and then failing if it goes wrong'* (CR 8). This highlights the sensitivity that many community participants stressed in relation to the reputational burdens of dealing with the challenges of violent extremism.

Credibility in support and program delivery

While respondents strongly advocated an equal partnership between community and law enforcement, a significant proportion also asserted that the reintegration process should be community led in order to maintain rather than jeopardise its credibility in the eyes of both returnees and those around them offering support:

> It needs to be directed by community, and followed by government as opposed to what it normally is: headed by government. (CR 18)

> You need a credible Muslim delivery agency or one that is run by individuals who are Muslims. The community must see this as a genuine attempt to reintegrate vulnerable families who may have been exposed in conflict zones. (CR 9)

Other participants made similar comments, noting that *'community organisations are trusted because they care'* (CR 11) and arguing that *'it is better for community to be the facing group and for government to be in the background'* (CR 15).

Some respondents took the middle ground on this question, suggesting that community and government could work productively together, with the community serving as the key delivery agent backed by government-based resources:

> If the community were to build their own capacities to be more resourceful, the government could see this as a channel or vehicle to say, 'As a government we don't have direct grassroots connections, but this set of people do. So how about we support this group of people to help them help themselves'. It's a partnership. (CR 8)

However, this interviewee also noted that such partnerships could face hurdles because fine distinctions between politicians of the day versus the more enduring institutions of government don't always survive the argument in community contexts: '*People don't trust the politicians [on counter-terrorism] and they don't distinguish between politicians and the institutions of government*' (CR 8).

Context-tailored responses

A number of interviewees emphasised the importance of tailored approaches with regard to the geo-cultural context in which an intervention is implemented and the individuals that the intervention is targeting. As one respondent explained, *'One size doesn't fit all, so different reintegration models might be needed in different communities or areas'* (CR 6). This would involve partnerships capable of synthesising relevant community knowledge and expertise with government knowledge and expertise to achieve optimal context-driven responses that are a good fit for particular communities:

> It can't be one size fits all as a model. It's different if the kids are older rather than younger – the risks increase with age. These kids are exposed to conversations in the home, they come from an environment that may glorify murder and brutality, they grew up idolising people who are criminals. They come with a world view that is different than kids who grew up here. (CR 9)

Lines of responsibility

Community members did not comment extensively on what the proposed distribution of responsibilities should be across government-community partnerships on reintegration, but they did make a number of suggestions in relation to both community and government lines of responsibility.

Community responsibilities

Mutual openness to other views

Some respondents argued that the community has a responsibility to adopt a position of open-mindedness when working with government on new ventures such as support for reintegration:

> The community's responsibility is to be open, not to have closed views, to be willing to listen. Be willing to process and understand new information, rather than having set views and rejecting the possibility. I think the community needs to be willing to listen to what the government has to say, and to give their own ideas and not just sit back and judge…Coming with a positive approach is a community responsibility, looking at the pros and cons. (CR 6)

Informal integration

Others saw the community's responsibility as primarily to facilitate informal forms of integration, for example, '*making sure [Maryam's] integrated into social networks, getting a level of family support she needs, getting a level of spiritual support, guidance and counselling she needs, and she is involved in community activities and organisations*' (CR 15). Several other participants expressed similar sentiments, saying, '*Community should to provide the services around personal and social support*' (CR 16) and '*The community responsibility is purely to try to integrate the generations and to bring everyone into the fold*' (CR 7).

Government responsibilities

Community interviewees felt that the primary role of government was to provide '*the services, making sure she's got access to legal services, health services, education support for her children, accommodation, cost of living and welfare for basic decent standard of living*' (CR 15). Several participants also reiterated the perspective that government should direct funds to support community organisation who could facilitate reintegration:

> The community needs more resources to help do this. Creating those buffer zones are really important and this is the role of communities – but it costs money and time. The authorities can't do this, only communities can. The responsibility of authorities is to provide the resources to help create this environment and structure. (CR 7)

Joint responsibilities

The key collaborative activity community participants envisaged undertaking with government related to risk monitoring, consulting and reporting:

> Both government and community are aligned and should be jointly responsible for monitoring around safety and reporting concerns, but government equally needs to not just go and do a raid the next day but consult with us about the issues and situation. (CR 16)

CHAPTER 3

GOVERNMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON REINTEGRATION

Initial government and professional practitioner responses to Scenarios 1 and 2

The initial responses of government and professional participants to the hypothetical returnee scenario they selected to work with (Scenario 1: 14-year-old Waleed and mother Sandra; Scenario 2: adult female Maryam and children) reflected the general sense amongst these participants that the situation presented by each scenario was both realistic and *'very complex and complicated'* (PP2), evoking responses of *'empathy'* (PP2) but also concern: *'[This scenario] is pretty accurate; I think that it's concerning, personally'* (GS 14). Almost all government and professional participants chose to work with the Waleed scenario featuring a 14-year-old boy at its centre during their interview. This suggests that policy and professional concerns may currently be more intensively focused on the challenges of reintegrating returning young people, in light of the numbers of Australian minors either travelling to or being born in IS-dominated conflict zones since 2014.

Empathy was expressed primarily in relation to the vulnerabilities discerned by government/professional respondents, especially for a young person such as Waleed. Some participants saw such vulnerabilities as primarily rooted in stage-of-life development:

> The concerns would be that there involve the prima facie presentation of what might be vulnerabilities that we sometimes see with young people. Now all teenagers have vulnerabilities they are going through a time of life when they are inherently vulnerable to a range of influences and alternative sources of authority, things like that. A natural thing and we understand that. (GS 13)

> It's a tricky age, a 14 year old, and a critical transition point. (GS 4)

Most, however, while expressing *'no presumption that it's a hopeless situation'* (PP2), felt there were additional, specific vulnerabilities and associated concerns linked to returnees' experience of violent radicalisation. These vulnerabilities were linked by participants to radicalised parental or spousal influence, direct exposure to or involvement in brutality, and the general ideological and social climate of life in an Islamic State-controlled conflict zone:

> He may show no outward signs of violence towards others, but to me that's nothing. A lot of the people we manage, you could meet them on the street and they'd shake their hands. It's what's behind their eyes and in their heads that's dangerous. (GS14)

> Waleed's exhibiting behaviours of being withdrawn, [as well as] his likely exposure to radicalised or extremist material, perhaps indoctrination. It's quite common that there are no outward signs of aggression towards others. The ones I've dealt with… with a 14 year old it's not the outward signs of aggression. The illustrating is quite common, violent images and pictures, sometimes challenges towards peers and teachers. [There are also] concerns in relation to [Waleed's mother] Sandra not protecting Waleed from radicalised or inappropriate content. She might be having inappropriate conversations with Waleed regarding his father and what he's doing overseas. If this came in as a report we'd say there was some level of risk for Waleed as a result of our assessment. (GS10)

> We're seeing elements of a context in which that person might also -- even if it's just by happenstance, run into influences or be exposed to influences that could be undesirable. (GS13)

What are the key risks and challenges for returnees?

Challenges and risks for returning children and youth

For government and professional participants, the main **challenges** for returning children and young people revolved around similar issues to those raised by community respondents. These included:

- Social isolation, disengagement and lack of belonging

- Normalising the reintegration environment

- Idealising a radicalised parent

- Managing information disclosure and privacy concerns around recent history/experience

The primary **risks** for children and young people's reintegration were seen to be:

- Impact and influence of parental behaviours and beliefs

- Psychological and adjustment risks

- Lack of acceptance by local community

Social isolation, disengagement and lack of belonging

By far the most critical challenge facing young returnees for GS and PP participants was the risk of social isolation, disengagement and lack of sense of belonging in real-life (offline) local settings. Many highlighted Waleed's withdrawn behaviours, lack of peer group relationships and the domination of online presence and activities in his life as cause for concern in relation to how Waleed interacts with his local community environment. They also commented that ordinary family support networks were very limited: *'Waleed is isolated, just living with his mum, though there is an auntie'* (GS 10). As other participants noted,

> He seems already to be socially disconnected, doesn't have friends... [This] makes it hard for a teenage boy. (PP 2)

> He doesn't have a wide circle of friends. For some people that age, that might be just a phase at this time of their lives, but it would still be one of those things that is or could be a personal challenge if missing that important role that peers and networks at that time of life can play in someone developing transitions toward more independent and adult skills. (GS 13)

Related to this is the perceived risk of more active processes of social disengagement by young returnees and their families for a variety of reasons:

> Some families are very isolated when they return. Others are very well supported but some are forgotten and not linked into any services. ... Linking Waleed in with appropriate services in the right environment would be a priority. (GS 10)

> A risk particular to Waleed would be an ever-increasing isolation, self-imposed isolation. Without knowing [details of Waleed's] online activity, he might be very engaged [online], but there would be a risk that without support he'd just withdraw more progressively, perhaps to protect himself in the absence of other protective measures. This will potentially have repercussions at places like school. Some teenagers prefer their own company and succeed later in life, but in this scenario there is that risk of progressive withdrawal without support via school or the home, and some extra-curricular risks. (GS 13)

The biggest risk is that he'll continue to disengage and drop out of school. He's only a couple of years off exercising his choice [to leave] school and drop out. (PP 2)

Such disengagement can in turn translate into other risks involving the peer and social influences that young people engage with:

He may well seek out friendships in anti-social or fringe groups if he's already not spending time with other kids at school. He could or couldn't go down the drugs or alcohol path; [his disengagement would place him in a] generic high risk category. (PP 2)

Normalising the reintegration environment

Another challenge for government and professional participants, as for community respondents, was that of reintegrating children and youth in ways that emphasise the normalcy and stability of peaceful, everyday life for those arriving from conflict zones. Most important in this regard was to get someone like Waleed back into routines that emphasise social interaction and being part of a peer or interest group:

My inclination is to as quickly as possible get [Waleed] engaged in normalising behaviours, whether that be enrolment and attendance at school -- one of the big consuming things of a teenager's time – or equally, finding him out-of-school pursuits in line with his interests which can normalise his sense of life. Absent there being any clear indicators of a likely spontaneous act of violence or being a threat to others, it would be about getting him into those normalising behaviours. (GS 13)

Treating them like normal people who belong. (GS 14)

Idealisation of radicalised parent

As were community respondents, a number of government/professional participants were concerned that the absence of Waleed's father further complicated the picture, insofar as Waleed may idealise a genuinely radicalised father; look for alternative father figures who reflect his own father's radicalised beliefs and behaviours; seek to confirm whether his father is alive or dead overseas; may be connecting with the father (if alive) online, or may be planning to travel to connect with his father in person, making Waleed a potential flight risk:

The absence of a father figure – is he likely to be influenced by others at that particular age? (GS 4)

With an absent father and uncertainty what's happened to the dad, [Waleed] might choose to 'find himself', as his father did, or go looking for or seek to vindicate his father. What might start out as pretty normal grief in relation to his father will turn to complicated grief. (PP 2)

One of the possibilities is that he's already trying to find his father through online activities. For a 14 year old, if he had a previously good relationship with father and that father's now absent, you'd expect it to be normal that he'd want to find that connection again. But [if he was rejected by his father and is still seeking him] that might be a flag that something has not quite worked out right in terms of his adjustments to his new life. Blocking out or repressing something. (GS 13)

An intensive focus on an absent parent can also potentially hinder opportunities to forge the ordinary relationships that young people usually develop in their own local contexts: '*[He is] clearly focused towards finding his father, not towards his real life relationships*' (PP 2).

Managing information disclosure and privacy concerns

There were significant concerns for a number of government and professional participants about the challenges posed by how much or how little of child and youth returnees' recent experiences and histories should be disclosed to others in the community, and what might happen if such disclosures did occur in an unintentional or unmanaged fashion. There were reasonable levels of comfort with disclosure to *'professional providers who will need to know the background information to be effective in service delivery'* (PP 2), but great caution around disclosure to general community members outside a community liaison, who could potentially play a meaningful brokerage role:

> As this family is being passed through the channels, our law enforcement responsibility is to keep confidentiality and information secure as [the family] are being handed into the community. So as soon as the family arrives it's kept hush-hush. I'd want months before anyone else got wind of this. The community liaison would have been vetted and hopefully he or she would keep confidentiality and have the right intentions. If an individual or group in community is committed to helping others come to Victoria, the rest can be played out by government in terms of security. It's about giving [a community liaison] tools to make both communities and the reintegrating family feel more comfortable. (GS 14)

Chief amongst these concerns was the prospect of **rejection by others in the local community** where young returnees were reintegrating:

> If [local community members] got wind or suspected that Waleed was somehow influenced by or involved in extremist activity, they would ask for the family to be relocated – similar to RSOs [registered sex offenders]. In fact the response might be very similar to that of RSOs. They would distance themselves from the mother, Sandra. It would be pretty full on. (GS10)

Media scrutiny and exposure was also a vital concern for some government and professional respondents, who felt that inaccurate or sensationalised media coverage could undermine efforts to reintegrate returnees and reduce community willingness to play critical roles in supporting their re-engagement with society. They were also concerned that, despite government support for programs, media outlets would target Muslim communities negatively regardless of any partnership or cooperation between government and communities on reintegration issues:

> If not handled correctly from the day they arrive, if any information is leaked in any way, the media will jump on it and blow it up and disseminate it, and that will cause terrible difficulty. Media would have their own agenda, whether [we're talking about] a genuine family, an at-risk family or a borderline family. … Even if you advertise it in a positive light, you'll have people on the other side of the fence with complete distrust, 'Why give government benefits to those fighting against decent people, now they'll make bombs', etc. (GS 14)

> It's a weak answer to say [to media] that working with government means government is responsible (for reintegrating returnees within the community]. The Muslim community would be seen to be the ones operating and working with these people, regardless of government assessments. (PP 21)

One respondent, however, thought that there would be benefits in developing a robust narrative to be deployed by a small number of selected advocates within the community in the event that media did sniff out a story concerning returnees in the local community:

I'd say, we are accepting these people and what would you have us do? Kill them? Deport them? It's against international law. Shouldn't we have them back rather than alienating them and sending them to greater risk of committing a terrorist act? I'd rather bear the risk of this than saying we're just plebs following government orders. The problem is we don't have a lot of media savvy people in the Muslim community sector. They get baited, provoked and don't know how to handle themselves dealing with journalists. It would better to deal with one or two advocates experienced in dealing with the media while the educational package is implemented on the ground, rather than having 15 different advocates having a chop. (PP 21)

The uncontrolled (indeed, potentially uncontrollable) leaking of information about child and youth returnees' past activities and involvement in violent extremist networks or settings was also seen to pose challenges about how best to maintain the delicate **balance between communities' 'need to know' versus privacy and confidentiality needs for returnees** themselves. High on the agenda was providing returnees with guidance and counselling on how to field questions and curiosity from others in the community with respect to their recent pasts, and also the capacity to be prepared for what others in the community may already know, or suspect, about their circumstances:

The support need here might be for Sandra and Waleed to have help with coping with people being curious, and how to develop a narrative to cope with that which will not set people offside [by denying or misrepresenting information] but will help ease their reintegration. (GS 13)

Government and professional participants felt that the goals of positive reintegration could be hampered by undue focus on what returnees may have done or been exposed to. On the other hand, they also recognised the importance of balancing returnee and community concerns on this issue, acknowledging that such balance can be tricky:

There's a balance between not telling communities details re privacy versus need to know for community safety sense. [However, there is a] risk for government regarding [communities saying] 'you knew but you didn't tell us' if something goes wrong. ... Who knows what is very important. People might be suspicious, or might think the best until proven otherwise. (PP 2)

Privacy and confidentiality – we can't disclose much to other community people. We can give other services some of our concerns and what they need to report. (GS 10)

Respondents also pointed out that unclear or uncoordinated protocols around information sharing can create further complications about how to handle sensitive information both between agencies and the community and in inter-agency contexts:

In [similar areas] they are doing a lot of work around privacy, when you can and can't share information between agencies. ... There are protocols around info sharing but I still think it hasn't been really clear what they are. (GS 4)

And there were concerns about ill-equipped school settings in which poor management of sensitive information about child and youth returnees could create problems or anxieties for schools:

There is no mandatory reporting, and there is a lack of understanding and awareness in [education agencies] about these issues. From a school perspective, it would be very challenging. (GS 10)

Impact and influence of parental behaviours and beliefs

As noted above, GS and PP participants were especially cognisant of the potential impacts of parental absence for children like Waleed. However, as for community respondents, the views and influence of present or remaining parents were also seen to present potential challenges for children and young people, calling for the same holistic 'whole of family' reintegration approach identified by community participants above:

> [Waleed's mother] Sandra's views are a challenge too. Given her age, it would be difficult to change her views. So the challenge here would be can we rehabilitate the mother's views at the same time as Waleed's? A case plan would work better in terms of her consent and agreement, and if she is in conflict with the aims of the case plan that would make things much harder. The psychosocial and environmental issues are the main challenges in this scenario. (GS 10)

> In terms of the risk for Waleed, [it's] hard to separate this from the risks to his mother. He is still starting to explore his autonomy and other sources of authority, but at the end of the day you still go home to eat at the same table and sleep under the same roof you always have, and it's hard to untangle the risks for him from the home environment – it's such a critical anchor point. (GS 13)

Where a parent who is the primary carer for a young returnee is either still supporting radicalised violence or at risk of re-radicalisation, their behaviours may also pose a range of other psychological and material risks for children. In cases like Waleed's, participants noted that associated suspicion, flight risks, and child separation may all play a potential role unless the *'issues around potential parental influence on his behaviours, and what is the right support that needs to be wrapped around him'* (GS 4) are addressed early on:

> There's a lot of security attention on Mum because of the travel attention, so he'll likely become suspect in a community sense because of this. The reasonable suspicion around his parent's activities will bleed across to him. (PP 2)

> If [the mother] potentially she gets into trouble with the law, the child may have to enter the child protection system. They may need to be separated. (GS 4)

> If the overseas finance claims [for Sandra] were to be substantiated, that is a further risk for Waleed – what happens if Mum is arrested and charged? He's 14 and dependent on her to provide for him. Hypothetically, Waleed might need to be placed in another environment – whether with family or non-family, which in itself can be traumatising. He might attempt to seek his father overseas. If there were to be concerns with Waleed escalating, this would put further strain on her and increase the flight risk further, as would her deciding to re-join her husband overseas. (GS 10)

In addition, the relationship between children and their remaining parent might also deteriorate following their return if a holistic approach to reintegration is not taken:

> There may be risks in [a child's] relationship to the mother – it could deteriorate, he could blame her for returning and separating family from father. It could go down the domestic pathway or he could become estranged. She could lose control over him. Alternatively, he could get treatment that would separate him from his mother or see her through different eyes, especially since she's his only family at this point. (PP 2)

Alternatively, however, the same participant noted that parents and children could bond intensively in 'us against them' mode to the point of excluding other relationships and support, with similarly negative impacts for reintegration prospects:

> Or they might bond together and become quite tight, rejecting other services and support. The big risk around this bonding is if they then shot off together – with two trips to conflict zones, [Waleed] will have capability beyond his years, and [the mother is] savvy and able to move around. It could get nasty. (PP 2)

Psychological and adjustment risks

The risks to appropriate child and youth development and adjustment for young returnees from conflict zones were highlighted by several government and professional participants, who painted a sometimes graphic picture from their knowledge base of the kinds of transformations that can occur in children exposed to severe violence and indoctrination over even relatively brief periods of time:

> Even 2-3 years spent in a conflict zone is enough to change someone who was born and spent early life in Australia. [Named foreign fighter's] kids – they would've gone from speaking English and Arabic in their household, and English with friends, to 100% Arabic in Syria, developing disdain for English; the ideology [would be] ingrained. In those developmental years kids absorb things like a sponge. I'd be very comfortable with the idea that Waleed could come back, having gone over at 10 [years of age], without much connection to Australia. It would be the IS aim to make him forget. Arms training, videos, strikes, hundreds of hours of indoctrination and training, going down the street and you watch a mass beheading. [Within] 6 months [spent overseas], fair enough, he's probably seen some stuff, but any more than two years, I'd be saying we'd be receiving a different Waleed than the one who went over. (GS 14)

> [There is a] question mark regarding what he's witnessed and what he's done, so I'd be worried about him psychologically. (PP2)

Other respondents focused more on the general challenges posed by traumatic experiences for readjustment to life outside conflict zones:

> I think, having seen previous examples, his development will be effected immensely. Whether this turns him into a terrorist or not is another matter, but it could make him an unproductive member of society – a hermit, homeless, a criminal if he doesn't have a normal social relationship with other members of the community. It will have negative personal impacts, psychologically and socially, regardless of the outcomes, in one way or another. (PP 21)

> I suspect lots of teenagers go through a destabilising traumatising period in their teenage years, don't get help or support, and still come out well adjusted. The difference might be that in the years preceding that they had relatively normal upbringings, whereas Waleed might not have had that luxury. (GS 13)

> For Waleed at 14, if there is no form of intervention from either community or government, there would be a risk of either self-harm through low self-esteem or self-hatred, low competence that affects future jobs and education, or [the risk of] harming others if he is easily influenced by other inappropriate peers. The desire to be in a group and belong is strong. He would be vulnerable to those influences. [GS 10]

There were also concerns, however, about not making easy assumptions about children like Waleed without careful consideration of the broader context in which concerning behaviours or forms of self-expression might be occurring:

> You'd need to know the nature of the cartoons [Waleed is drawing]. There could be, though it sounds macabre, an exploratory dimension, a satirical dimension. You'd need to analyse them in relation to other sources of info and correlate those a bit further. Taken in isolation, you'd have to see the drawings as another factor that you'd might consider concerning. But cartoons are not necessarily reflecting realistic perceptions of the world. (GS 13)

Acceptance by local community

Finally, government and professional participants noted the setbacks that would be created by lack of acceptance from the local community where children and young people are trying to reintegrate with their families.

> They might see him as a threat, depending on how he's interacted with them. In one case [with which the participant was familiar], a family was a part of our investigations. They locked in with community quite well, but [following an investigation] that family was entirely cut off after the raids. The mosque, the neighbours…not in an overt way, but they were not accepted back at the mosque, people moved away from them, ostracised them. It's now difficult for us to assist this family. (GS 14)

> It depends on how Waleed develops. [At the moment] he's not being aggressive, rather he's withdrawn. But if he were to fall in with other kids who were disconnected or to become angry about his situation, they'd pull back pretty quickly, leaving him and Mum more isolated. And I do wonder, noting [Sandra's] convert status, whether there would be a dynamic around the community because she is not a born Muslim, maybe for a sub-section of the community – this could also be an issue. (PP 2)

Challenges and risks for returning women/families

The challenge and risks for adult women and families returning from conflict zones identified by GS and PP respondents were very similar to those identified by community participants. These included *social isolation* and *psychological and adjustment risks,* including increased vulnerability for both adult women and their children if the returning woman is either widowed or otherwise separated from her husband**:**

> I think in terms of challenges, social isolation is number one, being around the family where there is that extra support. The key issue is isolation, being away from family. (GS 4)

> The psychological risks for [women like Maryam] are her isolation and her limited family support, which can lead to depression. Mostly it's the isolation. If she is in fact supporting [her husband overseas], the desire to be with him may be strong and he may be continuing to influence her from abroad, which creates further challenges if she is not receiving alternative forms of support and influence. (GS 10)

> The darker scenarios there are that [women like Sandra] struggle both under financial constraints and [other] pressures she may be facing, trying to raise a teenage boy as a single parent, possibly in a community where there's a mix of both support and hostility to her. That could well test her resilience. One possibility is that she'd reach a stage where she'd need to leave that community because of these stressors which would be destabilising for her and for Waleed. Or she allows herself to be taken into a relationship with a man…into a situation which is derogatory for both

herself and her son. That she feels that's her only way to survive. Of course this would probably be unhelpful for Waleed as well. (GS 13)

GS and PP respondents also noted the challenge of addressing adult returnees' ***inability or difficulty navigating service and support systems*** that are essential to successful reintegration for those with complex support needs for themselves and/or their children:

> [Maryam] is on Centrelink benefits—obviously she has a low income and her child's got developmental delays, so there is a need for extra support if you don't know how to navigate the system. If you are new to Australia, to navigate the systems can be tricky especially if she doesn't have family around. She's got medical issues herself. (GS 4)

What kinds of support do returnees from conflict zones need?

Support needs for returning children and young people

As we saw above, community participants identified the top support needs for returning children as *social support and engagement in the local community; personal and psychological support; school-based support; religious guidance,* and *a holistic, whole-of-family reintegration approach.*

Government stakeholders and professional practitioners largely shared these views but placed far more emphasis on personal mentorship and role modelling in identifying the following key support needs for returning children and young people:

- Mentoring and role models

- Social networks and whole of family support

- Psychological support

- Harnessing existing resilience capacity

Mentoring and role models

There was widespread conviction amongst GS and PP respondents on the importance of mentoring and role models for children and young people like Waleed. The role of such mentors and their position within communities was broadly conceived, encompassing religious, personal or interests-based guidance and support as required. As participants commented, such mentorship would provide '*good role models, given the fact that he doesn't have a father'* (GS 4); engage Waleed in activities beyond his online activity, extend his peer networks, and also help normalise the opportunity to lead a good Muslim life in Australia:

> Mentoring with a trusted person who has his interests at heart, especially in light of loss of father, helping him work out who he is. If he has any religious interests, then maybe a religious figure, but he likes to draw – mentoring by a local artist or art teacher would probably help more. (PP 2)

> I think what Waleed needs most is friends of a similar [Muslim] background who can understand his perspective and then get them involved in hobbies like fishing or spot or something, and then show Waleed that there are other options available than just being on the computer all day. The most important thing is to have peers, friends in his age group and a role model, male, a bit older, who can say we're all Muslim and we can live quite comfortably here in Australia without breaching any Muslim edicts and codes. (PP 21)

However, they also drew attention to the importance of care and selectiveness in assigning mentors, especially in religious contexts: *'But be cautious about who you set him up with, especially in terms of religious mentoring. An artist with the same style as him or a peer group would work'* (PP 2*); 'Indoctrination if [he had experienced] IS schooling: [mentoring] through a local imam, slowly changing that perspective over time, once a week – a slow and arduous process'* (GS 14).

Social networks and whole of family support

Most government and professional participants thought, as did community respondents, that the main support needs for child and youth returnees involved social support and inclusion, hopefully in ways that also align with the needs of young people's returning primary carers. Indeed, these social support needs were seen as closely bound up with the needs of returning family units as a whole, which can require a delicate balancing act in scenarios like Waleed's:

> The primary issues are social – an intervention that looks at his social relations, who spends time with and how time spent. Is he just an introvert or is his withdrawal and loneliness a consequence of his experiences? A fresh start in new school with different kids. But if his mother needs the continuity of her original community and Waleed needs fresh start in different location, conflict can arise. (PP 2)

> The family – conducting an assessment on the auntie, is she appropriate and if so, can we increase that contact? With the dad out of the house, we try to increase the relationship with the non-participating (in VE) parent, but in this case the Mum is still supporting the father, presumably. So the auntie becomes even more important. From experience, telling a 14 year old boy about the concerns with his parent doesn't go well – he disbelieves, we're the enemy, we've got it all wrong. So we go for other family members who can serve as a buffer and explain some of the issues, but here there is only the auntie. (GS 10)

This in turn points to the emphasis placed by respondents on ensuring as much as possible an integrated family support approach based on *'holistic assessment of Waleed, his mother and extended family's* support needs (PP 2) that aims to create stability and security in the family environment:

> Waleed needs to have stability in his home and his family if he's going to have a foundation to adjust well. It's going to do no harm to make sure that his home environment and the family that he does have is able to provide that stable environment. Stable in the sense of material needs, so he can have a good pair of running shoes, ordinary stuff for teenagers. But also, to the extent possible, things that aren't front and centre concerns that teenagers will still pick up on – bills that can't be paid that manifest as stressors elsewhere within the family, to try to minimise the intrusions of those. Trying to stabilise the mother's situation. (GS 13)

> Both scenarios point to an integrated family support model that could be applied. I think about [Maryam's] situation, the fact that she's got a young family and traumas from her time overseas; for her, an integrated family support model would be good. Equally with 14 year old Waleed, obviously he is with the mother, so in terms of early intervention, asking how you could wrap support around the family but also engage the young person in activities. (GS 4)

Social support networks were also seen to draw in **school environments** for young returnees, given the centrality of education at this stage of life for most children and young people. School-based support was seen by some respondents to involve not just practical and psycho-social forms of support such as

counselling, if needed, but also guidance on educational and vocational opportunity to create an alternative sense of social engagement and hope for the future to that envisaged in extremist conflict settings:

> Assuming that there's some normalisation in school attendance, there probably needs to be at least a point within the school environment that recognises there is an individual who potentially needs some additional support. I don't think it should be given if it's not seen to be needed, but there should be the recognition that it might be needed. … Probably also starting to introduce to him through the school system [to thinking] about vocation as well. Not that it's necessarily front and centre, but start parking those thoughts there. Schools do work experience and that sort of stuff, and it starts to lay out a longer term engagement with your society and elements of purpose and contribution. Not that this is the only means by which you start to develop those, but where there's government and service provider levers that we can touch on, you can start to plant the seeds for this. (GS 13)

Psychological support

There was also recognition of the individual psychological support needs that young people in Waleed's position would face as returnees, especially where families have been fragmented through death or separation. These representative comments reflect the range of approaches considered by participants depending on their own professional experience and standpoints:

> First, mental health support for Waleed. Getting him assessed, I don't care which tool – RADAR, VERA, etc., as long as it's done by a forensic psychologist. [There should be a] needs based analysis. If the needs based analysis was written in a context in which psychologists understand [the issues] on a broad level, you wouldn't need a specialist. Just focus on someone [who understands] PTSD. I'd be comfortable with someone who doesn't have absolute specialist knowledge. (GS 14)

> In order for him to get over his PTSD, then he's also going to need psychological and psychiatric support if he's drawing those pictures from memory, rather than from what he's seen online. (PP 21)

> Services in the community like Foundation House or Spectrum would be very helpful. Foundation House focuses on children with trauma or exposure to violence across a continuum, including return from conflict zones. Where kids have PTSD or fragmented family relations, they could offer support to [Waleed's mother] Sandra, setting goals and the same for Waleed, setting goals and giving him a role model to help with school, etc. (GS 10)

Harnessing existing resilience capacity

Nevertheless, GS and PP respondents were also keenly aware that children and young people returning from conflict zones may present not only with needs but also with pro-social strengths and resilience assets that can and should be identified and leveraged as part of a strengths-based assessment for each individual returnee. For example, in Waleed's case, this could be achieved through focusing on his interests in the arts and computing:

> Outside of school, Waleed spends a lot of time online .That's another thing to explore – what scope there is in his specific case to explore how his interests there can be expanded and parlayed into some other purposeful activity. That doesn't mean he has to go and sit with a bunch of other people on computers, but he can join an online interest and parlay this into something else. (GS 13)

Focus on protective and prosocial factors, such as his artistic interests. (PP 2); Engagement in recreational activities that suits his interests, e.g. an art class or club. (GS 10)

Support needs for returning women and families

Support needs for returning women and families identified by GS and PP participants received less comment than did the needs of returning children and young people, as far fewer government and professional respondents selected Scenario 2 featuring adult woman Maryam and her children. Nevertheless, those who did comment on the needs of Maryam or Sandra (Waleed's mother in Scenario 1) suggested adult female returnees' main needs would range from culturally appropriate social and religious support to psychological and health support.

In relation to social needs, participants stressed the importance of purposeful, religiously and culturally aligned support for women like Maryam and Sandra as they undertook the process of reintegrating within their communities:

> [It would be] necessary to try to reengage Sandra [Waleed's mother] with her original Muslim community, maybe volunteer activities. Was she happy before her marriage in her job? Maybe finding her another job that helps her to reengage with support in her local community. (GS 10)

> It says here Maryam was well integrated into the local community [before travelling overseas] so I think definitely in terms of religious leaders, religious guidance and counselling. The other thing I haven't talked about is that cultural overlay, thinking about the notion of having bicultural workers, that's important for agencies: knowing the culture, knowing the language. (GS 4)

In relation to physical and mental health, one respondent noted that these issues could intersect in complex ways for women in Maryam's circumstances:

> The fact that her children have developmental delays, and she herself has significant health issues, addressing the health and development needs is important. ... Given the fact that she was overseas in Syria, there would be trauma and the fact that she had young children who probably experienced trauma, this probably contributed to the developmental delays so you are obviously working with support for the kids. ... They would have potentially witnessed family members committing [violent] acts; I don't know that there is necessarily the expertise to try and understand what some of the arrivals have experienced. So it's probably an emerging field where we do need some specialist skills [in relation to] witnessing family violence and the [impact of] actual environmental factors of a war zone. (GS 4)

Who should provide which kind of support?

Across government and professional stakeholders, there was overwhelming support for an integrated community-government support model that combined:

- Informal community-based social support
- Localised agency-led social services and educational support
- Government-based risk monitoring and management.

School-based local support

School-based or -led support for reintegrating young people was seen as critical by some government stakeholders, given the centrality of school for both education and socialisation in young people's lives:

I'd have a combination of government to oversee whether there is engagement or disengagement and gauge levels of risk/concern, and support service roles from the school in terms of mentorship and activities plans. (GS 10)

Those elements I've discussed through schools and formal levers via government can cover off on some of these support needs. It comes [down] to balancing what might be the leveraged and obligated aspects of Waleed's life with the carrot, if you like, in terms of being able to foster his identification with personal interests. However, if it's something he's self-motivated to do through his own initiatives, over-formalising structures around this can diminish his agency; it just becomes programmatic. (GS 13)

Not all government respondents agreed with this approach, arguing that risk assessment takes time and should be conducted thoroughly before involving returnees in community-based or –led support structures, including local schools:

You can't integrate Waleed into a public school too soon. [There are] risks, even though he is showing no outward signs. [He needs to] show up at a government location where he can be observed, with an educational assessment phase before he is put in a local school. I'd rather Waleed interact with professionals in a secure environment dealing with a new Australian identity before we throw him into the deep end of school where he could be a trained combatant. The risks take priority here because he is 14, he's over the fighting age, at a very good level of training, the concern is his security and how dangerous he is. If he was a 4 or 5 years old, I'd be wanting to integrate a younger Waleed, but at this age, it's too dangerous. We ran a scenario where we asked various agencies what they could provide on such a scenario, and Dept. of Ed and DHHS could work together to offer an onsite home schooling program. (GS 14)

General community-based support

However, other GS and PP respondents supported the idea of more general, community-based programme support for young people returning from conflict zones, working across local government and organisational boundaries:

I think an integrated family platform is good: Vic Pol, maternal child health, a range of [community-based] support agencies; it is about safety and support, basically. … If we know [returning families] are going to be spread around the state there are specialist family violence and trauma agencies. (GS 4)

In the ideal situation you'd have a Muslim organisation with volunteers or paid employees who execute these programs. So you'd have councils holding functions for kids on school holidays, they'd have trips to the bush and beach and that. If you target some of these kids and say we're going to give you free trips to the bush, the beach, sports, and get them as a group and show them that it's all fun and halal within reason, then I think these guys will come into it. These programs might cross local council boundaries. If you have co-council cooperation then doing this at the local level might be more acceptable. You need participation for this to work, and trust. (PP 21)

What are community responses to reintegrating returnees likely to be?

Levels of community comfort and engagement with child and women/family returnees

In a very similar vein to the feedback from community participants, there was broad acknowledgement by government and professional stakeholders that it was ***difficult to generalise*** about community comfort and responses to returnees in their local communities, given the diversity of different ethnic, cultural and

geographic community settings that might have returnees based within them. Several participants thought that at least some communities would respond well, *'inviting [Waleed] and his mum to participate in neighbourhood activities or groups. It's really about helping create a positive environment and sense of belonging, that the community is a welcoming place for him'* (GS 10).

Others, however, thought this depended on the community in question:

> There are certain individuals in [various] communities who are very compassionate and welcoming. Community Support Groups [in these communities] already receive people from different ethnic backgrounds. I think they'd be open to it. (PP 2)

> There are some communities that would be more accepting of foreign fighter families than others. The cultural background and alignment is the most important. The difference is about communities who have recently arrived – if the [returnee] family is arriving in those [recently arrived] communities, they are themselves still bridging the gap and they'd be more likely to take them in than more established communities who have been here a while. The fear of the 'other' is different when you already *are* the 'other'. The communities that are more established have more sense of entitlement. (GS 14)

> The work we did with [one] community on ... families trying to create a new life, move away from the violence in [country] – the notion of someone wanting to [be involved in radicalised violence] would be a bit of a conflict, so I don't know how it would go. Potentially, I imagine those families could be quite ostracised and alienated from this community. A lot of their social and cultural activities are within their own community so they might be excluded by their own cultural groups at a local level. (GS 4)

In addition, echoing some (though not all) of the feedback from community participants, a number of government and professional participants were relatively pessimistic concerning how communities would feel about supporting returnees based on broader issues relating to mistrust of government, concerns about community safety, feeling tainted by association with terrorism issues, and feeling vulnerable to negative judgements by both media and other community members:

> They'd be too scared to have anything to do with Sandra and Waleed, especially if they're coming back from overseas. The rumour mill in the Muslim community would be, 'They're separated, [Waleed's father] Malik has disappeared in the Middle East', and Sandra will be black marked as being married to a terrorist whether it's true or not. I've seen it myself: the community will isolate them and ostracise them even if they have known them for years. Even families have ostracised [those related to them] on the slightest rumour of extremism support. So both Sandra and Waleed will have a tough time economically and socially trying to integrate or even participate in society. (PP 21)

> I'd suggest there would be some sense of risk relating to the children of local community members. They might limit contact between their kids and Waleed. There would be a reaction. There might be community meetings or neighbourhood meetings. (GS 10)

> The biggest challenge for the community is defeating stereotypes created by trash media. Not everyone who comes back from overseas wants to kill infidels. Some people have gone over in support of their husbands, like Sandra, but may not subscribe to the ideology. She may have felt a social or religious obligation to support her husband but now wants to come back. But the trash

media will paint her as just another IS supporter. And the community won't want to deal with her. The Muslim community also stereotypes. (PP 21)

What are the roles of community in supporting returnees?

Notwithstanding these challenges, government and professional respondents felt there were crucially important roles for communities to play in supporting successful reintegration by those returning from conflict zones. These roles primarily involved social support from others in the community to buttress returnees' sense of connection, inclusion and belonging at both local and national levels.

Social connection and belonging

Informal, everyday contact and engagement

A key role in the eyes of GS and PP participants revolved around the organic, 'everyday' roles that community members can play help child and women/family returnees feel a sense of social contact, acceptance and belonging. Such roles were seen in turn as highly valuable in helping normalise social relationships at community level for those who may otherwise feel they are on *'a very small island'* (PP 2) within the local community.

> Ordinary people can just reach out, just holding a conversation with people like Waleed and trying to understand where he's coming from rather than ostracising him. Something as small vas listening to Waleed's story, what are you doing, what are your plans for the future, what do you want to be, even this would assist. They don't have to go out and volunteer for hours on end with NGOs**.** (PP 21)

> It's about social connections and sense of belonging, building up [Waleed's] social capital. … if you can steer him towards [prosocial] people or groups, those different threads and layers can make the difference between whether he becomes an isolated introvert or whether he becomes more socially connected. (PP 2)

> You want to make sure there is a positive engagement and connection back into community [so that returnees do] not fly under the radar or become disgruntled; trying to … engage and intervene. (GS 4)

Normalising being back in Australia

Indeed, normalising the experience of being back in Australia as communities might do for any new arrival through everyday social contact was seen as essential to an effective reintegration process. As participants noted, '*Treating them like normal people who belong*' (GS 13) and ensuring they have opportunities to experience *the ordinariness of everyday encounters that are positive'* was seen as:

> Quite critical. Whether it's a neighbour who makes Sandra feel welcome and does the ordinary thing, like lending her things he doesn't have, or a community group that invites them to the street barbecue they're having at the end of the month, or even when Sandra and Waleed go out and they're not yet familiar [with their surroundings] and they're asking where is such and such. (GS 13)

As noted above, GS and PP respondents also thought that communities had valuable roles and resources to offer in relation to providing **mentoring and role models** to help returnees develop more in-depth relationships that would offer them an anchor within the context of everyday community life.

What resources do communities need to provide reintegration support?

Structural and financial resources

However, even such relatively informal support roles and mechanisms require some level of resourcing. Government and professional participants were clear about the range of resources they felt communities would need to make good on their capacity to offer support during the reintegration process at local levels. As one participant commented, while it's important that '*communities take responsibility for the wellbeing of others in their local communities*',

> Communities need to be benign and positive, non-toxic healthy communities with sufficient resources to do what they normally do [in order] to absorb and support people who need support and assistance. The more struggling a community is the more it struggles to offer resources and support to others. (PP 2)

This means, according to the same respondent, acknowledging that '*every community organisation is strapped. Helping community orgs and groups by giving them a boost in terms of financial resources or physical resources*' (PP 2) is thus vital. This was echoed by another participant, who suggested that government community grant schemes could be mobilised for this purpose:

> I'd like to think the community groups would be able to apply for community grants to help them support returning families. (GS 14)

Also highly important to government and professional participants was developing and implementing **consultation mechanisms** and **education and awareness resources** to be able to understand and respond effectively to the needs of returnees from conflict zones.

Consultation and preparation: Mapping community willingness and resources

Top of the list was developing **consultation and preparation** mechanisms and resources, with generous pre-arrival lead times, to map levels of community willingness to engage, existing community resources, and existing or potential gaps prior to basing a returnee within a local area. The following comments were representative of government and professional stakeholders' general views on this issue:

> With this project, you'd be wanting to contact community leaders six months to a year before families return, getting a pulse for who will help and what they can provide. If you have all this policy and government stuff that community has no idea about and you just drop a family in – here's our framework and by the way, meet the locals – it won't work. There would have to be willingness to consult with many different suburbs to find out who's willing to take [returnees] on. Each mosque that's part of Board of Imams knows that we have oversight of [returnees from conflict zones], and if they're not willing, we don't hear from them. That's up to them. So if you don't do the consultation first and prepare it will fall straight on its head. (GS 14)

> In a way, it doesn't matter so much whether a community is small, but it matters whether or not they're strong and cohesive. The cohesiveness of the Muslim community where the person is reintegrating matters more than its size. (PP 21)

Transparency was also seen as desirable in ensuring that communities are consulted with and comfortable about the role of government in managing the relocation of returnees within community settings, and this accorded closely with community participants' comments above relating to trust, respect and disclosure of partnerships between government and community organisations:

> [There needs to be] defined consultation with who wants to accept foreign families, and [clarity] that government is going to be looking over the top of it. [Communities] need to be comfortable with that. (GS 14)

Finally, participants felt that pre-reintegration consultation with communities was important to ensure that tribal, ethnic or sectarian points of tension were not inadvertently sparked by placing child, women or family returnees in the wrong setting or context: *'I'd like to think that there would be a consultation with the communities because if you put [returnees] in the wrong tribal or religious area it can backfire. Even when they arrive, if the hierarchy of the group rejects them, then that's it'* (GS 14).

Education and awareness resources

Related to this was the importance for government and professional participants of developing suitable education and awareness resources for communities so that they felt some sense of ownership and preparedness in offering support for returnee reintegration:

> I think an education package that could help volunteers in Muslim organisations or non-Muslim volunteers to understand the do's and don'ts of how you deal with people like Waleed. You train them, then you get [local or peak community organisations] to train up their volunteers, and from there it grows. Then you replicate that same in other states and territories. (PP 21)

> Mostly organisations should do what they are doing anyway, but they would benefit enormously from upskilling more generally – if they have youth workers they need a social worker; if they have a social worker, they need a psychologist. Having that additional layer of support and ability really makes a difference. (PP 2)

In designing such education resources, however, it is essential to avoid making these about specific children or families to avoid backlash or ostracism:

> It's critical not to make this about the specific child or family in the community's eyes. [If not designed properly], education resources could potentially make things worse, especially if connected to a family or individual coming back in. (PP 2)

What are the challenges, barriers and risks for communities?

Polarised responses that damage community cohesion

Among the most pervasive challenges identified by GS and PP respondents was potential lack of consensus or polarised community responses within particular community settings where returnees may be located, a point also made strongly by community participants themselves. As we saw above, government and professional stakeholders were virtually unanimous in cautioning against assuming a united perspective within communities. In turn, this can potentially pose a challenge to community cohesion sense of trust and stability by intensifying backlash against both returnees and those who support them at precisely the time when a confident and stable environment in relation to reintegration outcomes is most needed:

> Trust would be the first thing that comes to mind. It's in two facets: whether they are happy to take them in because they're a foreign fighter family, and they want to do something good for them, but are distrustful of what has happened. And there are communities that are very sceptical of government or law enforcement involvement – they think 98% of what we do is wrong and intruding on their privacy. (GS 14)

There is a risk of a fault line. Some backlash can arise for those who continue to want to help. That could also manifest around Waleed in the school environment. That would be one risk that I'd see there. (GS 13)

So the challenge is lack of consensus within a community about how to respond. Important not to think of 'the community' as a homogenous group, they will not present with one voice, one leader, one position – that's ridiculous and it won't happen and this needs to be understood and worked with. There is often a polarity of reactions, two extremes. … Some who would almost certainly not want anything to do with the family and would see the family's involvement in IS and fighting to reflect poorly and not want to be involved, [while] other friends might make contact again and be supportive, but also be frightened about what that means. (PP 2)

Influencing others to radicalised violence

A related challenge for communities – and also for government -- revolves around community-based fears that both child and adult returnees could potentially radicalise others, and the challenge here was identified by respondents as how to establish thresholds for identifying such influences or behaviours and protocols for responding to this at community level:

If the community is leaning either way ideologically, it might be concerning having this family turn up and influencing other kids, or Sandra influencing other women – in a mother's group, for example. She might be able to leak ideology and influence. That's another risk for communities, if they are on the edge and able to go either way. It would be difficult to change the mentality of community that's been [balancing on the edge] for a while. (GS 14)

Depending on how Waleed develop, [in the scenario] he's not being aggressive, rather withdrawn. But if he were to fall in with other kids who were disconnected or to become angry about his situation, they'd pull back pretty quickly, leaving him and Mum more isolated. … Of course – if he radicalises he could take others along. (PP 2)

What are the policy challenges for community reintegration?

Integrating the reintegration approach

The first and dominant policy challenge for government and professional participants revolved around the need to consider what we call 'integrating the reintegration approach'. This includes policy challenges related to *governance responsibilities and management* across local, State/Territory and Commonwealth jurisdictions and agencies, and developing a *systematic and consistent integrated service approach* that minimises the risks of returnees falling through the cracks because of inadequate arrangements around information-sharing, communication and/or coordinated service delivery.

Cooperation and consistency across government sectors and agencies

On the issue of working across State/Territory and Commonwealth jurisdictions and responsibilities, participants felt that rigorous clarity was needed, both for communities and for government agencies themselves, about who takes overall responsibility for the reintegration of child and women/family returnees, and how agencies can work cooperatively across state/commonwealth boundaries. Clear policy about oversight versus on-the-ground management was identified as a priority by GS and PP participants:

Governance issues around States and the Commonwealth. (GS 13)

One challenge is how State and Commonwealth can work together. If there's not clear communication between the two, it will go south, that's the main thing. The next policy issue would be who takes more or less control of the situation [on the ground]. Would it be a [State or Territory policing unit), or would it be AFP, if we're doing oversight of security or reintegration? I'd like one group to have the overarching authority to manage and make decisions. (GS 14)

Clarifying governance roles and responsibilities was also seen as essential if the consistent 'single point of contact' arrangements advocated by both community and government/professional stakeholders, which participants saw as *'paramount'* to ensuring successful integration, are to be effectively operationalised:

One of the main issues might be around responsibility – who takes carriage of [returnee] reintegration? Is it federal? Local? State? Agencies? Where I'm coming from is best practice regarding a single portal for continuity of care and [client] wrap-around. Even if it's not a therapeutic approach, just a systematic reintegration approach, [returnees] will need a single point of contact for care and support. This is very important for children and those traumatised. Consistency of care is paramount. (PP 2)

One government respondent argued that the community sector is currently too fragmented to carry the weight of reintegration without government intervention or support:

If [coordination of returnee support were] community-based, it would take a lot of time that could be wasted – sending Sandra round to a lot of different agencies, or one person in the community trying to coordinate on her behalf with all these agencies, it is time-consuming. Having government involved would be important. (GS 14)

Other GS and PP participants, however, argued that the trend for government agencies was moving toward a 'reformist' approach in which government agencies work more extensively with multiple community agencies and expertise. This was seen as an important policy direction that could be leveraged further in the context of reintegration policy and practice:

Reflecting on the Victorian context, there is a lot happening in the policy space in terms of integrated family support services, and there's a bit of reforming work that's happening now around early intervention, [including] NGOs, where there is trauma expertise as well. There are some good agencies. Depending on the situation [facing returnee families] it might be child protection; for example, if they had to remove the children from the family, it would be a statutory body doing that kind of assessment, looking at support but sometimes [they] contract out to a [community-based] agency. Most of it is about really good assessment and coordination of services that need to be wrapped around. (GS 4)

[It would be] very easy [for returnees] to fall between the cracks and fall foul of system inadequacies. [Such inadequacies] place real high pressure for high profile cases, and those cracks then get exacerbated. (PP 2)

They also pointed to policy challenges relating to privacy legislation and information sharing between government agencies and suggested considering lessons learned from international practice elsewhere:

There's different layers where [clients] are accessing potential services but that does require information sharing between agencies. This is hampered by privacy legislation. Where there is approval (for such sharing] you obviously need to have the right checks and balances, whether it's for the best interests of the child. I know in the UK they have some pretty good experience around their safeguarding legislation. (GS 4)

Balancing support and security strategies

The second area of concern for government and professional respondents covered the policy-related challenges of *balancing a focus on disengagement and rehabilitation* with a more *security-focused, risk-based approach.* Primarily, this related to how best to select and position service providers at community level in terms of their knowledge base and attitudes towards returnees. The signals sent by agencies on the ground dealing with returnees will in turn influence the broader attitudes of community members around them, and can prove either helpful or harmful to reintegration efforts accordingly. As one professional practitioner noted, policy makers will need to carefully consider the 'pitch' of communication and consultation around returnee issues across multiple audiences in managing the choice and orientation of service providers at the local level:

> Part of the community response will be guided by the service providers' attitudes. If the family are seen as people in need of support as opposed to criminals returning, there is a huge difference. That orientation and tone really matters; very important. This speaks to who the front line service providers are – are they community based, or officials from Child Protection as the owners of the policy and case management? If a Child Protection officer turns up at a family's home, that's a huge deal, especially if there is no child protection issue. The visibility of who turns up – police, child protection, etc. – will really make a difference. Balancing all this with community safety while keeping central the fact that this is a child – it's about getting the best interests of the child and treating them as a client/patient balanced against the concerns around safety. (PP 2)

How should perceived risks best be managed?

Major issues for government and professional respondents around management of perceived risks focused on the following areas:

- Risk assessment versus threat assessment

- Risk assessment for schools, service providers and communities

- Helping communities understand, identify and respond to risk indicators and thresholds

- Role of law enforcement in assessing and managing risks and threats

- Iterative reassessment and cross-agency information-sharing

Risk assessment versus threat assessment

There were implied distinctions suggested by this portion of the data between *risk assessment* versus *threat assessment.* **Risk assessment** related more to risks posed **to returnees; threat assessment** related more to threats posed **by returnees.** In reintegration contexts, *risk assessment* might be more concerned with indicators that signal existing or potential vulnerabilities or hazards that can weaken reintegration efforts for vulnerable individuals or groups: for example, a returnee's increasing disengagement, anger or depression, a community's reduction in willingness to support a returnee family, or a school or religious institution's failure or reluctance to understand signs that might indicate worrying changes in behaviour or attitude by individuals vulnerable to or traumatised by exposure to/involvement in radicalised violence.

Threat assessment, on the other hand, involves an assessment of how credible or likely a returnee's intention or potential for enabling or committing a harmful act of instrumental or affective violence (Meloy and Hoffman 2014) may be, and what interventions may be required to prevent or mitigate this. Both *risk assessment* and *threat assessment* were seen as distinct but key areas of overall risk management strategies

in how to deal with returnee reintegration in community settings, but clearer identification of the difference between 'risk' and 'threat' indicators would be helpful in developing policy and practice responses for communities and government alike.

Risk identification for schools, service providers and communities

GS and PP respondents thought it was important for schools, service providers and communities to have some knowledge of how to meaningfully and accurate identify risk indicators for those who have been involved in or exposed to radicalised violence, with one respondent noting it was critical that there be solid understanding of risk thresholds within communities, including *'transparency with communities and training on what the threshold indicators might be where law enforcement would need to get involved'* (GS 14).

This cohort of participants agreed unanimously that under no circumstances should such awareness materials target or refer to specific returning individuals or families; instead, the approach needs to be generalised educational awareness and resources so that local institutions and communities are not left unprepared and confused about the behaviour they are seeing or the steps they might constructively take in response:

> With a deterioration [in Waleed's] behaviour or other signs of becoming violent, maybe manifesting in the school environment, in an ideal world there would be the right mechanisms within the school system to be alerted to that early. This varies from state to state, but it could be treated like any other teenager exhibiting violent tendencies, working out a treatment option. Hence the idea of not leaping to the conclusions that manifesting the violence is related to previous experiences, but could be responding to stressors in his current environment. Looking at early treatment, with early detection, is very important. (GS 13)

> It depends on the nature of the risk – is it imminent? Foreseeable? Concrete? Is it different from other forms of violence in the community? The exact same duty of care that applies to other risks of violence applies here. You can never mitigate the risk down to zero. There is no certainty around what this kid has done, so it's pretty hard to predict unless you know what he's been involved in. Best practice principles suggest there is a presumption that what is in his best interests are the things that are in the interests of a 14 year old boy, not a criminal. (PP 2)

> Triaging what the risk is by the [community] contact liaising with government would be important; they can identify some of the indicators or, if we pass on information, would be able to [compare this] with what they've seen – they would be doing part of the oversight for us. If [a community] agrees to accept a [returning] family following an initial consultation, it would be a good idea for the community to receive an off-the-cuff pamphlet about returning foreign fighter families to help orient them. If the family's been in a local area for 1-3 months and they suddenly get rumbled, the community may not understand what government can and can't tell them. But if you prepare them beforehand with a rough understanding then that would be helpful. … If you could reach 1% of all Victorians, you'd still have a better understanding [of the process by communities than exists at present]. (GS 14)

Part of preparing communities around potential risk indicators can also involve reassurance about what risks communities are **less likely** to face, especially in light of the extensive ambivalence within communities identified above around whether or not they are willing to engage with returnees:

> [It's about] making allowance for [the fact that] there's been some judgements made around [returnees] by the AFP or state police that there is no actual physical threat [to others] here. (GS 13)

Threat assessment

By contrast, threat assessment was largely understood by GS and PP respondents to be very much the province of law enforcement and security agencies. There was relatively broad agreement that threat assessment was a critical element of risk management and that such assessments needed to be conducted early on in the reintegration process, with returnees being promptly and thoroughly assessed for *'any history of violence, suggestion of involvement in violence overseas, or the victim of any of that'* (PP 2).

In cases where a new (or dormant) threat emerges after a returnee has embarked on reintegration in the community, there was also broad agreement that this constitutes a criminal threshold at which law enforcement involvement is clearly required, though this might not necessarily exclude community-based support from continuing during an investigation:

> Given my bias on this, if there's been information come to light which is pointing more strongly to her engaging in a criminal activity, then there can be no question that a criminal investigation has to be put around her, notwithstanding how this fits with other investigations. (GS 13)

> Immediate law enforcement involvement, straight over the top. In any of the cases [outlined in the scenarios], say transfer of finance, we can trace that at any time. I don't think that would involve us necessarily pulling the family out of the community, but we'd have to hand the issue over to our investigative units. We could still support them, offer them assistance, but with a new perspective that their motivation might not be entirely genuine. We already do that. I'd be comfortable with [social service agencies] still controlling the process rather than this completely being handed to us [as law enforcement]. (GS 14)

One respondent disagreed with this approach, however, arguing that instead there needed to be *'a community intervention. … I'm a big believer in the UN Declaration of Human Rights. If we adhere to that here in Australia, we can't just profess to follow the rule of law; in a Western liberal democracy, you can't charge someone who hasn't committed an offence'.* (PP 21)

However, there were also concerns about ***variations in thresholds*** for when more security-oriented restrictions such as control orders or passport cancellations are determined to kick in. These concerns are ultimately related to broader issues canvassed in the policy challenges section above about how to determine *which agency or sector manages which aspects of risks or threats* posed to as well as by returnees, and when various agencies are *no longer empowered to act or intervene*:

> We do a triage and assessment and think about the threshold: 'Is the threshold too high? Is it a VicPol response or is it something that we can manage in the community?' If so, we are then thinking about what engagement needs to happen: referrals, case support and continued reassessment. For complex cases you might have to have a conversation with other agencies, how is this young person doing at school, or we're finding lots of young people starting to play up from a certain group, what can we do in that community? If the risk is too high would liaise with VicPol… as the first port of call. (GS 4)

> We share management of cases like this with local police, sometimes with AFP input. It is difficult to get an order that a child cannot leave the country – [you can only get this] from Family Court. We need an open line of communication with the AFP in terms of his access to passport, the father visiting Australia, putting him on the flight watch list, and so on. Having spoken to Federal Police, their thresholds are lower than ours – they'd be looking for a control order sooner rather than later. If Sandra was removed [because of criminal activity], we'd respond then to make sure [her son

Waleed] was engaging with appropriate services, on a watch list, being supported, and then we'd close our involvement. It would then fall on local community level. The AFP would sometimes rather we continue to monitor [an at-risk family] through a child protection lens, but we can't from a legislative point of view. We can't investigate a case unless there's an open report, and we can't keep cases open based on what might happen down the track. The monitoring falls back on local community support services, e.g. our safety plan for family members and an independent community service person who is required to report on the child and to monitor them – for example, [a community agency] like Spectrum. (GS 10)

Iterative reassessment and cross-agency information-sharing

A final issue raised by GS and PP participants in relation to managing perceived risks and threats related to the need for continuous ongoing assessment of returnees, and the need for rapid information sharing across agencies to manage emerging risks and threats as they arise. The emphasis here from respondents was on the need for transparency and collaboration in determining the best course of action to take when a risk or threat profile changes, and what the implications of this might be for different individuals in a complex scenario involving both children and adults who have come back from conflict zones:

From a child protection point of view, we'd need a very collaborative approach between Child Protection and VicPol. It is actually very difficult if there is a developing risk to community safety. If we substantiated the claims, it would lead to legal intervention from [the relevant social services agency] and Waleed would need to be placed elsewhere if it was Sandra in the frame because of her contact with [her overseas husband] Malik. We'd want to monitor his internet usage with reporting mechanisms in place by whoever is doing the monitoring. This would fall on a lot of the information sharing process – the challenge is gathering the information very quickly. VicPol and Child Protection have a great relationship, but getting everyone together who is involved to share information, interviewing Sandra and Waleed on the same day if there is an urgent timeframe, reporting back on a meeting, coming up with the risk assessment and the outcome… the bureaucratic procedures and policies can slow things down. (GS 10)

Developing partnerships between communities and government

Perceived willingness to partner

Government and professional participants thought there was at least '*a theoretical idea*' (PP 2) that partnerships between community and government could work in relation to designing and operationalising community support for reintegrating returnees from conflict zones. However, this was seen to largely depend on two factors: first, the kind of model that was put in place to action such partnerships, and second, acknowledging that, as previously mentioned, there would never be a homogenous consensus for either communities or government around the desirability of partnering on CVE initiatives, including reintegration. As respondents noted,

There is a tension [for communities] between reporting versus supporting – these can be slightly overlapping or dovetailing. … It comes down to personalities and attitudes in both police and community, and not seeing either communities or police as homogenous entities – there will always be individuals willing to talk to police and others not. The important thing is to be consistent throughout, to have as much transparency as possible … this goes to trust. It may take longer but it's worth it. (PP 2)

Some communities would really be up for it, others not. How do you manage the media, or the notion of the private? There are lots of wonderful organisations in communities – how do you tap into these where you do see that support? (GS 4)

I've no doubt that communities and law enforcement can work together. The absence of one or the other would make reintegration harder. The question is always going to be tailoring that cooperative approach to the particular circumstances of both the person who is being reintegrated and the community around them. (GS 13)

What would successful reintegration partnerships look like?

The most common partnership model advocated across GS and PP participants involved a case-management approach, incorporating multidisciplinary panel-style partnerships with both government and community representation that would bring '*everyone to the table*' (GS 4). These panels would be responsible for overseeing and integrating different aspects of community and professional expertise for supporting returnees, both returnee-facing and 'backroom' assessment and monitoring capabilities: '*A panel model [and] case management approach as with CISP, the AFP or Corrections is productive, gives a lot of oversight*' (GS 14).

Panel-based case management partnerships

This approach to community-government partnerships was grounded in the idea of an integrated case-coordination approach in which both returnees dealt with a single point of contact (POC) coordinator who was based within a community service provider agency capable of offering child- and family-facing interactions and support. The core notion underpinning such partnerships for these participants was that of comprehensive '*wrap-around support*' that ensured integration of both community- and government-based services and input. A prime issue, however, is where that '*key worker or contact person*' serving as the coordinator and broker for such wrap-around services would be based. For community members above, the single POC should clearly come from a community setting or organisation; government and professional participants, on the other hand, were more likely to assume government agency coordination:

It's about how do you make sure that there is wraparound support, a key worker or contact person who helps broker and facilitate access to services. I think in terms of community, you do need to know that there is support. If families are in a particular location, making sure there is a thorough assessment of what the needs are. If you think about the range of services that a family is likely to need then would you have a government agency that is the lead and facilitates the panel and brings all the service providers? This is one model. (GS 4)

The role of the single point of contact … is to understand the social landscape that sits around Waleed and his mum. Somewhere between social network analysis and familiarity with the local setting, who is in it and what their roles and capacities are. They need to understand this quickly and to link up people who can help with government as required. The essential thing is a strong relationship between the single point of contact who is close to the ground and can see these things and mobilise both [communities] and government – it's an iterative process. (PP 2)

With community, there is a vast array of services that are almost too broad and the family scan become overwhelmed. Having one single point of contact that coordinates the support – if [returnees] have to meet 3 or 4 different people it can undermine and overwhelm. One service, same building, specialise in these areas in an integrated fashion, that would be perfect. There are often too many referrals in place – although they are needed, it is too many, too much at once and

the targets can disengage. Have integrated services that are coordinated from a single POC service for reintegrating families. (GS 10)

Participants also pointed to some of the cultural signalling that can currently attend government-community partnerships with service agencies. The key tension here is between gravitating toward those agencies already experienced in providing such support who nevertheless may not be closely connected to the communities in which returnees are reintegrating, versus investing in upskilling of culturally appropriate organisations who are still developing their capacity:

> It's tricky because a lot of the agencies which we fund are Christian-based organisations, they are church-based. Some of the religious leaders at mosques have said but you are Christian-based, they are not seeing [agencies like ours] in terms of general social justice. … A bit of a minefield. … [It's about] looking at community capacity viz. ethnicity and religious affiliation [in the] few corridors where we'd be placing people. (GS 4)

Law enforcement roles in community-government partnerships

Also canvassed by respondents was what the role of law enforcement might be in such partnerships. A common view envisaged community-based police with relevant portfolios working in tandem with a jurisdictional CVE Unit who coordinate with specific community-based points of contact and community leaders:

> In terms of a multi-disciplinary process, I would see VicPol as being very much at the table. They know a lot of the information that we don't know. Potentially there might be a police contact for the family, depending what the model looks like. Not that you would want to over-police it, though. In terms of community, there are positive programmes that police do in communities through their liaison officers, their youth resource officers, so I think there are positive ways of police being involved at a community level and obviously police working with community leaders. But I think it's important as much as you can to connect to programmes and cultural services at that local level … as part of that reintegration planning assessment. (GS 4)

However, participants also pointed to some of the challenges and sensitivities involved in law enforcement engagement with reintegration, noting that such involvement needs to be highly tailored on a case-by-case basis:

> Especially in terms of policing involvement (in returnee reintegration), that's always going to be the critical challenge, getting that part right. In terms of what that looks like, it will vary from case to case – not least of all that law enforcement in each state works differently too. That's where it needs to be tailored. [For example], it might be quite important in that a young person gets confident with how law enforcement conducts its affairs in this country, and this might allay entrenched fear and suspicion. Having law enforcement more overtly engaged might be an important means to achieving that. In some scenarios, it could even be a positive. It is a two way proposition and has to work for both parties. (GS 13)

Key ingredients for successful community-government partnerships

The key ingredients to make such partnerships work were identified by GS and PP participants as:

- Information sharing and good communication

- Common guidelines, principles and boundaries across partners and jurisdictions

- Willingness to listen to each other

- Acceptance of each other's good intentions

- Honesty, integrity and transparency

Of these, willingness to listen, especially in terms of government willingness to listen to and take up community input, was the most frequently highlighted:

> Using the hypothetical of a community based person and government liaison, it's that they are listening to both what the community wants and also as to what government policy and tools can be provided to assist the returning family. If you have individuals with their own agenda and think they know everything about everything, it won't be a good partnership. There has to be available and clear information, and a willingness to listen to each other. I they don't listen to the community person it will cause all sorts of trouble indirectly. (GS 14)

Distributed responsibility across partners

There was support from government and professional respondents for distributed or shared responsibility across government and communities, *'not as a hierarchy but a horizontal platform of multiple areas of responsibility, working together'* (GS 10):

> It will only work if it is shared responsibility – if the community is willing to help, that is their responsibility in terms of communication with government, and this would go far in assisting the family to reintegrate. (GS 14)

However, the discussion around who across communities and government would be responsible for which parts of the reintegration matrix tended to echo earlier comments from GS and PP participants on the respective roles of community and government in reintegration processes.

Informal and social services support was seen by some as a prime role and responsibility for community members and civil society networks and organisations:

> Ultimately it falls on the community level because we can only link to appropriate services based in the community –this is where Waleed and Sandra are living day to day and interacting. Their frequency of contact is all local. (GS 10)

> No support role for law enforcement in my view. Clear-cut conflict of interest. (PP 21)

Safety and security were clearly seen as the responsibility of law enforcement, however, in keeping with earlier remarks on managing perceived risks: *'The obvious candidate in that is that law enforcement has the role for safety; that would be clearly be the part of the [partnership] equation that they'd be picking up'* (GS 13).

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS

The analysis of interview data above has sketched out perspectives on the challenges, needs, roles, risks and responsibilities that community and government/professional practitioner respondents anticipate children, women and communities would face as child and women or family returnees reintegrate into Australian society after living in overseas conflict zones. The following section offers an analytical synthesis of the key findings from each cohort, including consideration of common perspectives and themes that emerged across both community and government/professional participants.

Community findings

Challenges for returnees

The interview data shows that community participants think women and children returning to Australia from violent extremist conflict zones will face a complex and heterogonous response from both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. This may include support, rejection or ambivalence from different community members and sections within a given community setting. As respondents pointed out 'the community' is not monolithic and returnees will have to negotiate this social complexity to find their place in society again.

Social isolation and disengagement, stigma, trauma and the lack of a positive male role-model in the hypothetical scenario dealing with 14-year-old Waleed were identified as key challenges that could face children such as Waleed when returning to Australia. Potential risks impacting on the possibility of his reintegration were identified as the possible negative influence of his mother if she remained or became radicalised; idealisation of his absent radicalised father; his possible re-radicalisation through online networks, and mental health issues.

For women, trauma and mental health problems were also seen as critical challenges, along with social isolation based on community suspicion or stigma around the impacts (for her and for communities) of her behaviour and choices. Risks for returning women were also seen to include re-radicalisation if their support needs for social connectedness and positive influences were not met.

It is evident from the interviews that there are significant overlaps in the reintegration challenges of children and women. However, the *manner* in which women and children experience challenges related to mental health, social isolation and stigma, and their cognitive, social and psychological strategies for coping and resilience in the face of such challenges, are clearly different and require differentiated responses to their specific needs.

For example, in the case of child and youth returnees, the critical role of schools in providing a wide range of supports – ranging from social connectedness and educational and vocational engagement through to counselling, mentorship, expanded extracurricular activities and role models -- was highlighted in connection with addressing challenges faced by young people, whereas for adult women and families there was far more emphasis on local community organisations and groups, including religious, social, health and wellbeing, and volunteer or employment networks as a means of supporting older returnees during the reintegration phase.

Support needs

Support needs identified for returning children and women represent positive responses to the key reintegration challenges elucidated by community participants. For returnee children and young people,

these needs include social support and engagement in local communities; religious guidance; psychological and school-based support; mentors and role models, and, crucially, holistic whole-of-family support to ensure as stable an environment as possible in which children's and young people's needs can be met by their primary carers. Without such support and a stable home environment, the chances that young returnees such as Waleed will be reintegrated effectively are likely to be diminished. Interviewees also emphasised the importance of breaking down the social isolation that a young boy such as Waleed may face, both for his own mental health and to prevent his re-radicalisation or failure to disengage from violent extremist influence.

Support needs outlined for women and families were similar in terms of the emphasis on creating a sense of belonging and social inclusion for adult returnees, as well as the need for extensive psychological support. The importance of a holistic approach is also noted here by respondents who argue that provision has to be made to support the children of returnees in order to support women themselves more effectively as they undergo complex processes of reorientation and adjustment.

In addition, community participants also noted that existing returnee strengths and resources should be leveraged to help strengthen resilience capacity, saying that an essential part of reintegration is helping returnees to connect with the 'normal' and 'everyday' routines of Australian life by focusing on the interests and skills that returnees may bring with them.

In the case of both children and adult women, respondents highlighted the relevance and desirability of community-based case management models to effectively assess and deliver culturally appropriate services that can help address the complex support and engagement needs that returnees such as Waleed, Sandra and Maryam are likely to require.

Roles for communities in supporting reintegration

Communities saw themselves playing a variety of roles in relation to supporting returnees. The most commonly identified role for communities lay in providing informal social support: for example, incorporating returnees into local social networks and reconnecting them with the everyday rhythms of life in local Australian communities, as well as more organised social support through local community organisations, including religious institutions. This type of support was seen as fundamental for the successful reintegration of returnees. Communities saw their ability to provide resources far more in relation to intangible social capital than directly in relation to material or financial resources. However, they also emphasised the important role of local community networks in helping facilitate returnees' access to local opportunities for things such as employment, volunteering, and re-engaging with prosocial support structures such as child care or youth groups.

Community capacity and resources for supporting reintegration

The resources that communities believed they needed to support returnees related primarily to training and education of community members around general awareness of issues relating to returnees from violent extremist conflict zones; strengthening local support structures and leadership; stronger skills and qualifications development for local Muslim community service providers to enable culturally appropriate support mechanisms, and better government resourcing of local community organisations to build community capacity for both informal and formal engagement with returnees. Interviewees also underlined the importance of integrating and mobilising *existing* resources in order to meet the challenge of reintegrating returnees by mapping community capacities and identifying gaps that could be addressed.

Challenges, risks and barriers for communities

Challenges, risks and barriers for communities in providing support included the issues related to fears and concerns about enhanced stigma, reputational damage and increased surveillance by law enforcement as a consequence of engaging with returnees who are seen as problems, risks or threats rather than vulnerable members of communities. These issues reveal the significant degree of anxiety that returnees can potentially evoke in communities, primarily related to concern about backlash communities might experience regarding their social reputation, as well as fear of increased negative or invasive law enforcement and, especially, negative or sensationalised media scrutiny leading to perceptions that Muslim communities are to blame for terrorism. These anxieties are significantly shaped by perceptions of broader local and international contexts that are experienced as generally hostile to Muslim communities in the West, again largely driven by media representations.

Community participants are consequently keenly aware of the consequences of taking any actions that may be seen as supportive of, or tolerant of being associated with, violent extremism. At the same time as communities are concerned about external threats to their reputation, they also harbour legitimate fears that returnees could bring harm to communities, either through spreading radical ideologies or through physical harm. At the same time they felt generally under-equipped in relation to relevant skills or resources that would help communities to manage these multiple challenges.

Training and education on returnee issues

There was a strong narrative amongst community participants that there would likely be no consensus within any given community, with some people likely to support and others to oppose any engagement with returnees no matter which community was selected. The general feeling was that it was most important to maximise capacity amongst those willing to help while trying to reassure those who are opposed in relation to realistic assessment of what the risks might actually be. In this context, there was a strong call for better training for communities in risk identification and management, including referral systems that reduced confusion or uncertainty about where to go if problems or concerns arose. Risks included the possibility of threats to community safety through returnees re-radicalising or influencing others to radicalise to violence, but communities were also aware of the risks of failure to act by doing nothing to aid returnee reintegration. Exposure to unwelcome or negative media attention was a highlighted risk that posed a major barrier to community participation, combined with concern about ostracism of those offering support by others in the community opposed to engaging in any way with returnees from violent extremist conflict zones.

Managing risks

Community participants' perspectives on how risks should be managed stressed the importance of a stable and consistent community interface for engaging returnees, one that could serve equally as a support pillar for returnees themselves but also as a conduit for iterative assessment and feedback to service providers and government agencies involved in the reintegration process. The data highlighted the importance to communities of feeling they were in a strong position to facilitate early intervention, either through developing increased skill and capacity in local contexts to do so directly or to access clearly defined referral systems that would respond to early warning signs if returnees struggled with adjustment. Equipping communities adequately to play this role through targeted training and resourcing was seen as essential.

While community respondents largely affirmed their view that law enforcement has a key role in managing risks and threats that escalate above a defined threshold, they wanted a clearer understanding of police or security thresholds and triggers, and the majority saw law enforcement involvement as a last resort.

A model for community support of reintegrating returnees

Community participants overwhelmingly supported a model for community-based support of child and women or family returnees based on returnee access to and regular engagement with a single point of contact who would coordinate with a range of service providers through a case management model to meet the complex social and practical service needs of returnees and at the same time broker community-based support opportunities and strategies that local communities are or could be in a position to provide.

In practice, this translated into strong advocacy by community members for what might be called a primary 'front of house' role for communities in providing a friendly and culturally informed 'face' for engaging with returnees during reintegration, supported by a 'back of house' role for government service providers and law enforcement who would provide essential monitoring, assessment and intervention mechanisms as required in the background. This was seen as a critical risk management strategy that could help reduce existing challenges around what participants described as an often fragmented, uncoordinated and very unevenly resourced community capacity landscape.

Community-government partnerships on reintegration

There were mixed views on the prospect of developing robust community-government partnerships to address the reintegration of returnees within local communities. A number of community members and organisations expressed considerable willingness to partner with law enforcement in managing the reintegration of returnees, with several drawing on their own direct experience of working collaboratively with law enforcement. However, there were also a significant proportion of respondents who expressed deep reservations about working with law enforcement bodies. Chief reasons for such reluctance included perceptions of a mutual lack of trust and inconsistent or contradictory behaviour and attitudes on the part of both communities *and* government.

Participants emphasised that a considerable amount of work would need to be done to establish trust between communities and law enforcement to break down mutual misconceptions and build the kind of transparency, accountability and equality of status that meaningful partnerships need in order to thrive and prosper. They wanted to see explicit rejection by government of hierarchal relationships in which community expertise, knowledge and contributions were seen to be undervalued or under-utilised.

Government and professional practitioner findings

For government and professional practitioner stakeholders (GS and PP respondents), many of the issues articulated by community participants also resonated with their own perspectives on challenges, needs, roles, capacities, resources, risks and models. Predictably, however, there were also some differences in emphasis and approach as government and professional participants considered the same issues around reintegrating child and women or family returnees.

Challenges for returnees

As did community participants, GS and PP respondents thought the main challenges for children and young people reintegrating from overseas conflict zones revolved around social isolation, lack of belonging, feeling 'different' from their peers and local environment, and the struggle to adjust to what counts as 'normal' in everyday local community life. However, government and professional stakeholders emphasised more clearly than did community participants the specific challenges around age-based and developmental vulnerabilities for children and young people like Waleed, pointing to considerations about the sensitive and transitional period of life that many children coming back from conflict zones are likely to grapple with at the same time they are dealing with traumatic experiences or exposures in their recent past. They were also

concerned with the potential for inappropriate background disclosure leading to stigma, bullying, isolation and lack of safety for children and young people; disengagement from prosocial networks, and feeling overwhelmed by the process of readjustment to Australian community life.

Specific challenges facing children who return without a parent – particularly a foreign fighter father who may have died or who remain overseas – were idealisation of the absent father and the vulnerabilities this created around the potential for re-radicalisation and efforts (if the father is still alive) to connect with him overseas.

For adult women such as Maryam or Sandra, the challenges identified were overwhelmingly related to social isolation, including concerns about returning to a hostile or threatening community environment; lack of family support or connection; being treated with fear, suspicion or mistrust by others, and being judged negatively for their decisions, behaviours and choices by some community members based on cultural and social value-sets, including the fear of reputational taint by association with someone linked to a radicalised partner and/or a violent extremist conflict zone.

Support needs

Support needs for returning children canvassed by GS and PP respondents highlighted the importance of positive role models and, in particular, mentoring and peer support, much more strongly than did community participants. However, both cohorts shared a common emphasis on the importance of social networks, engagement and inclusion to enable young people like Waleed to make a 'fresh start' in a new environment.

Psychological support such as counselling to address grief, trauma, loss, depression, anxiety or other consequences of exposure to trauma and violent conflict was also seen as critically important to enable young people to feel more positively about both the present and the future once they return. GS and PP participants were also clear about the importance of needs-based analysis and assessment being conducted early on in the reintegration process to ensure that children and young people are receiving the services and supports they need as soon as they arrive back in Australia.

For children and young people, local schools were seen as the most important sites of engagement, providing multiple opportunities to help re-set young people's ability to grow and develop socially, educationally and vocationally and to connect naturally with positive community role modelling and engagement.

Similar to community participants, also important for these stakeholders was ensuring that children and young people's resilience assets and capacities were not overlooked by connecting with them through their interests and prosocial capacities. They also shared with community participants a very strong commitment to the idea of holistic, whole of family support, emphasising that the ability to meet the critical needs of returning children and young people by providing a stable home environment can only be conducted by adult primary carers whose own support needs have been identified and are being addressed.

For adult women and family returnees, GS and PP participants focused primarily – as did community respondents – on issues related to social support and engagement in the local community (including religious support) and on psychological support for trauma, grief, loss, depression and other conditions related to living in a violent conflict zone. However, they were more explicit about support needs for adult returnees focusing on desistance and disengagement from violent radical ideologies and influences, seeing the potential for *'falling back in with the wrong crowd'* as a live risk. They also stressed that such support must be culturally appropriate in terms of language, religious and gendered support processes. Support for adult women and family members was also seen to be enhanced if due regard was given to ensuring

that the community environment in which returnees are located is a good cultural fit with their own cultural and religious backgrounds.

Roles for communities in supporting reintegration

Like community members, GS and PP participants thought that there would be mixed responses within any community toward the prospect of engaging with and supporting returnees. They were highly aware of challenges relating to community concerns around feeling under siege in relation to terrorism issues more generally, as well as to the issues raised by community participants concerning media scrutiny and reputation taint for families and communities.

However, they also thought, as did community members, that the prospects for community support of reintegrating returnees were very good in relation to community capacity to provide informal social support – both geographically, in local areas, and also culturally, in relation to social, cultural and religious networks and connections. A key role for GS and PP respondents was the capacity of communities to help normalise life back in Australia for those who had recently experienced violent conflict.

Community capacity and resources for supporting reintegration

A number of GS and PP stakeholders called for a needs analysis not just of returnees, but of community capacity, noting that where communities themselves felt under-resourced and ill-equipped in relation to their own needs, they were far less likely to be able to reach out to new arrivals with more intensive challenges. They wanted to see mapping of community resources, willingness and religious and cultural alignment prior to selecting specific areas in which returnees might relocate.

Similarly, systematic consultation with communities that could potentially receive returnees was seen as vital. This consultation would not only support the needs and capacity analyses referred to above, but also provide opportunities to raise general awareness and education about general returnee circumstances and needs, including dispelling myths and fears about the risks that returnees already assessed by government could conceivably pose. They also called for analysis of community willingness to partner with government and police on reintegration programs and support, including the need for monitoring and assessment of risks for returnees.

However, GS and PP participants were adamant that it was critical to balance the legitimate safety concerns of communities in relation to engaging with returnees with the need for privacy and security of returnees themselves. Under no circumstances should individual or family circumstances be used in any educational or awareness materials or programs designed for community consultations. There was recognition that while communities might be curious or already have some background information on specific individuals or families who had returned from conflict zones, the emphasis for communities must lie on helping returnees to reintegrate successfully in the present, rather than focusing on their past behaviour, experiences or choices.

On the community resources front, GS and PP respondents thought the same resources that help communities provide any kind of social support would apply in reintegration support contexts: are communities capable? Do they have human, economic and infrastructure capital to distribute and build on? Are they resilient? Can they navigate both 'horizontal' relationships with each other and 'vertical' relationships with government institutions and agencies? Mapping such capacities and conducting gap analyses was seen as a valuable exercise in this context.

Of significant concern for government and professional stakeholders was the issue of information-sharing as a potential resource within communities. There was a strong call for integrated knowledge about services

and support mechanisms that communities could benefit from, and this was seen as one kind of basis for potentially strong partnerships between communities and government. A further resource identified by GS and PP participants was a media package to help selected local advocates field any media scrutiny or requests in the event that media became aware of the presence of returnees in a given local community setting.

Challenges, risks and barriers for communities

In thinking about the challenges, risks and barriers faced by communities, GS and PP respondents covered very similar territory to community participants themselves. This included observations around polarised community responses and attitudes towards engaging with returnees; fear of backlash, gossip, ostracism or family taint from others in the community; lack of trust or suspicion of those attempting to reintegrate, and fear of enhanced scrutiny of individuals and communities by law enforcement and the media. However, they also highlighted potential challenges, risks and barriers faced by school capacity to respond and manage challenging or safeguarding behaviours and impacts; lack of trust in government, especially if supporting returnees is badged as a CVE *exercise 'with strings attached'*; unrealistic or unfounded fears and concerns about risk, and lack of knowledge about their own capacities and limits to effectively support reintegration. As did community participants, GS and PP respondents also highlighted community concerns about the risks posed by returnees in relation either to physical harms of violence, of re-radicalising, or of radicalising those around them.

Policy challenges for government

GS and PP participants also focused specifically on some of the perceived policy challenges posed by reintegrating returnees in community settings. Chief amongst these was the importance of preparing for and implementing targeted consultation with communities prior to embedding returnees within a community.

A second major policy challenge focused on managing confidentiality, privacy and information-sharing around returnees, including policy settings for managing information leaks to media or sensitive information ending up in the wrong hands.

A third policy challenge revolved around developing clear structures and protocols that would enhance rather than impede integrated needs and risks assessment, service delivery and information-sharing. This was seen as a particular challenge in relation to getting the relationship right between State/Territory and Commonwealth tiers of government. It included a focus on developing robust policy settings to forestall the risks of returnees falling through the cracks when services remained uncoordinated or fragmented, causing people to be '*bounced around*' from one agency to another, compelling them to navigate a complex service landscape on their own for which they might be unprepared or ill-equipped.

A final policy challenge identified by GS and PP participants concerned the signalling approach to communities. This involved efforts to '*get the tone right*' in managing the flow and content of information to communities about reintegration processes in ways that balance prosocial community support and engagement mechanisms with realistic but not alarmist recognition and management of safety and security concerns.

Managing risks

GS and PP stakeholders distinguished between *risk assessment* and *threat assessment* in thinking about how to manage some of the risks posed by community support for those who are reintegrating. They were clear that threat assessment was essential, both prior to and during community reintegration processes, with

regular and agile iterative reassessment a consistent feature of the exercise. An important risk management strategy was helping communities understand, identify and accept the thresholds and triggers for when a law enforcement, rather than solely community support-based, response may be required, and when these may apply. Developing a cross-agency set of agreed risk indicators and thresholds that could be shared with and socialised by communities was seen as a key task.

A further risk management issue for GS and PP respondents was how best to structure and follow through on genuinely collaborative approaches across different partners and agencies based both in communities and in government. This was largely a question of bringing together different sets of expectations and understandings across communities and government, and attempting to synthesise them in order to help stabilise and clarify the thresholds for support, intervention and monitoring that will inevitably apply throughout the reintegration process.

Setting up a multidisciplinary panel within a case management model – involving relevant service providers, agencies, law enforcement and community representatives – was seen as the best strategy in pursuing this goal, and participants cited similar structures that are working well in programs such as Community Support Group (CSG) and Risk Assessment and Management Panel (RAMP) contexts as examples of how this could work.

Government-community partnerships on reintegration

There was fulsome comment from government and professional stakeholders on how best to conceptualise and establish community-government partnerships to foster community-based reintegration support for returnees. As did community participants, GS and PP respondents acknowledged that there will not be consensus on returnee engagement within communities. More important was to leverage capacity and willingness within communities where this exists, and respond respectfully and realistically to resistance or reluctance where it doesn't.

Participants thought that mapping trust relationships in local areas to assess how much needs to be done in advancing government-community cooperation on returnee issues would be a valuable exercise before embarking on specific partnership proposals. They were also supportive of community needs and interests around upskilling of local organisations and key personnel to build capacity on reintegration, saying that if the skills don't exist, then not addressing this will simply perpetuate the impression that government 'wants to stay totally in control'.

There was strong recognition of the value-add that community participation on reintegration brings in relation to culturally appropriate support and engagement for returnees. However, there were also some concerns that this could potentially jeopardise existing partnerships with mainstream service providers who might feel excluded, and this would require careful management and messaging going forward. Most vital for these respondents was ensuring that Information sharing and consistent, unified risks assessment protocols are well designed, well understood and well applied through such partnership arrangements.

GS and PP stakeholders thought that the best indicators of success for an effective government-community partnership on reintegration consisted of mutual acceptance by both government and community of each other's roles and involvement; clarity around roles and capacity; mutual recognition that each sector brings good intentions and good management goals to the table; clear and consistent information and the sharing of such information; genuine willingness to listen to each other and actively seek solutions and compromises where there are differences in outlook; and honesty, integrity and transparency in all aspects of the partner relationship.

A model for community support of reintegrating returnees

As we saw above, community approaches to developing a model for how community and government could work together in supporting the reintegration of returnees within Australian communities focused on the following elements: a community-based single point of contact operating within a case management model who would both coordinate and broker community-based support opportunities and strategies and also serve as a conduit between community and government in managing reintegration needs, challenges and concerns. In the community participants' model, there was a clear desire for a 'front of house' role for communities who would provide a necessary friendly, accessible and culturally informed 'face' for returnees and others in the community, supported by a 'back of house' role for government service providers and law enforcement who would conduct monitoring, assessment and intervention, including the clear identification of thresholds and triggers for law enforcement or security-based interventions based on an agreed and clear set of risk indicators and a risk management strategy that was shared and implemented by both community and government.

How did government and professional stakeholder perspectives on a model for community support of returnees compare to this proposal? The ideas advanced by GS and PP participants, independently of community perspectives were strikingly similar to those shared by community participants.

As was the case for communities, there was strong support for a single point of contact, case management model that integrated service providers. Cognate models that were suggested by GS and PP participants as examples that could be drawn on or tailored for reintegration support purposes included integrated family support, family violence safety and support hubs, the RAMP model of integrated, panel-based risk assessment and management, and the community-government partnerships developed through the Community Support Group (CSG) program in Victoria.

There was also strong support for multi-agency government-community panels employing a case-specific assessment and management approach that would sit behind community efforts to provide both informal social support and more targeted organisational forms of social and cultural support for returnees. There was broad commonality between government and community stakeholders on the distribution of roles and responsibilities between communities and government, with community being seen as responsible for providing informal social support and access to local organisations and community networks (including religious and age- and gender-appropriate support and engagement), and government and law enforcement being responsible for resourcing social and practical services (such as health, housing, Centrelink, employment, education and child and family support) and providing monitoring, risk assessment and, where required, law enforcement or security responses.

However, the main point of difference in the data between government and community stakeholders lay in who should lead and have oversight of the design and implementation of a community-based reintegration support model. Communities were adamant that such efforts should be community-led, with government and law enforcement well out of sight in the background, placing particular stress on the importance of credible community-based delivery and allaying concerns within communities that reintegration was being imposed on them by government fiat as part of a broader CVE agenda.

Conversely, government and professional participants largely expressed greater comfort with government-led processes around reintegration support that were nevertheless inclusive of and structured around community involvement and expertise. In the words of one professional practitioner, a best practice model for government and professional stakeholders would include: '*A single point of contact for continuity of care spanning different providers, that is, a case manager who understands complex case management and connections into other services and can broker and negotiate on [returnees'] behalf to gather the required*

support and services together -- especially in terms of helping get to the front of the cue for a number of these services, because timing is essential – you can't let this linger' (PP 2).

The final pilot Community Reintegration Support (CRS) model proposed below would involve an *equal* partnership between government and community to co-design and implement a methodology that balances the need for security with the need to ensure that community participation in reintegration is substantive and meaningful. Such a model would require collaborative engagement between community and government regarding their respective roles.

As illustrated in previous sections, there is already good consensus between government and community about what their respective contributions to reintegration could be. This consensus should be proactively leveraged and sustained in the design and piloting of the model. The tabletop consultation process detailed below and in the Methodology chapter above was intended as a first step in this process of consensus building around reintegration between community and government. Further iterations of the model's design and implementation should be teased out through formal evaluation of any pilot implementation to build on the results of the initial consultations undertaken as part of this project.

CHAPTER 5

A MODEL FOR COMMUNITY-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP ON REINTEGRATION SUPPORT

As described in the Methodology chapter above, a draft structure and process model for a community-government partnership on supporting the reintegration of returnees from conflict zones was developed. This draft model then underwent two further stages of refinement: first, through consultation with the project sponsors (Victoria Police and Australian Federal Police, with Australian Multicultural Foundation attending as the evaluator and community partner) and then through a more expansive tabletop exercise with a larger group of community and government representatives familiar with or involved in the research process. These consultations were conducted in August-September 2018.

Applying findings from the tabletop consultation meeting

As noted above, the primary focus of the tabletop meeting was to refine the proposed draft model based on the project data by posing three critical questions: *What needs to be done? Who needs to do it?* and *How will it be done?* at each stage of the reintegration process.

Stakeholders from both community and government agreed on the need to:

Establish a multidisciplinary CRS (Community Reintegration Support) Standing Panel comprising relevant government and peak community advisors on reintegration and returnee issues.

Stakeholders noted that there will be further details and decisions that need to be taken once the recommended Standing Community Reintegration Support (CRS) Panel is established.

In order to establish the Standing Panel, the tabletop meeting noted the following will need to be clarified:

Who will coordinate the Panel?

A critical issue in this regard is the respective role of community and government. As noted above, while there is general consensus that community role players need to play a front of house role in the reintegration process, there is less consensus regarding who ultimately directs the process and has oversight over the design and implementation of community reintegration. The interviews revealed there remain significant trust deficits between communities and law enforcement and considerable effort will be required by both actors to overcome these barriers. While community participants at the tabletop felt that community police should be the primary visible 'face' of policing with regard to reintegration, they also recognised the importance of working closely with law enforcement, particularly in relation to risk management and envisaged problematic situations 'going up the chain' to intelligence as needed. In principle, therefore, participants recommended that the Standing Panel should be *equally co-chaired* by government and community representatives and that both community and government should take equal responsibility for design and implementation.

How will information be shared?

During interviews with government stakeholders a number of individuals noted how effective work between agencies has been hampered by legislation and regulations that inhibit information sharing. Participants at the tabletop raised this issue again and one individual provided an example of a panel that they had participated in that had become dysfunctional as a result of the inability of organisations to share

information. Addressing these legislative and regulatory barriers to information sharing was therefore seen as a critical priority.

Other key activities for establishing the Standing Panel include the following:

- Terms of reference (for the Panel and the role-players in it)

- Definition of reporting lines

- Appointment of a reintegration coordinator from the Standing Panel

- Identification of communities where returnees could be placed

- Appointment of a community based Case Manager to coordinate services

- Mapping of available resources and services in identified communities

It was agreed that **the Standing Panel will be responsible for**:

- Conducting ongoing needs analysis for each returnee

- Conducting ongoing risk and threat assessments for each returnee

- Consulting with relevant community leaders re where returnees will be placed

- Identifying a single point of contact for returnees in this community

- Appointing a community based case manager

- Coordinating community and government support

- Providing targeted education and training for community leaders, community members and service providers.

- Assisting to address capacity gaps in identified community organisations participating in reintegration activities

- Developing a media and publicity management strategy

Establishing and implementing the Community Reintegration Support (CRS) Model: Findings from the tabletop exercise

Table 1 below details the actions, roles, responsibilities and methods for establishing and implementing the Community Reintegration Support Model. These elements are directly based on and informed by the findings from the tabletop exercise discussed above. Table 1 provides a comprehensive outline of the methodology for implementing collaborative support mechanisms and risk management strategies and procedures as determined by the tabletop outcomes, including the 'who' and the 'how' for each element of the model.

The following are the key action points to emerge from the 'what needs to be done' component of the tabletop exercise regarding the establishment and activities of the proposed CRS model. Although these items are listed sequentially here, in practice some action items may be pursued or implemented simultaneously as required or appropriate:

1. Establish multidisciplinary CRS (Community Reintegration Support) Standing Panel comprising relevant government and peak community advisors on reintegration and returnee issues

2. Establish reporting lines of CRS for decision-making purposes

3. Appoint Reintegration Coordinator from within Standing CRS Panel

4. Identify options for community placement of returnees

5. Conduct risk and threat assessments per each child/woman/family returnee case

6. Consult with relevant community leaders re placement and identify placement area

7. Map available resources and services in identified community

8. Identify single community-based point of contact (POC) for returnees as required (individual or family)

9. Put in place a media strategy (risk mitigation)

10. Appoint community-based Case Manager for coordination of services

11. Conduct needs analysis per returnee child/woman/family case

12. Coordinate community support

13. Coordinate government support

14. Establish community-government coordination of support mechanisms

15. Establish local community/police liaison in relevant placement areas to manage perceptions and explain protocols re law enforcement thresholds and responses

16. Equip community leaders with relevant information, education & resources

17. Equip general community with relevant information and education about returnees and the community

18. Equip identified service providers with relevant information and training

19. Establish or leverage existing mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and communication between government and community stakeholders around identifying and managing emerging risks

20. Develop community capacity to provide reintegration support by addressing resource and capacity gaps identified through community mapping exercises

Table 1: Government-community CRS partnership: Actions, roles and responsibilities

What needs to be done?	Who needs to do it?	How will it be done?
Establish multidisciplinary CRS (Community Reintegration Support) Standing Panel comprising relevant government and peak community advisors on reintegration and returnee issues Examples of membership would include ICV, Board of Imams, AMF, CMY (where children/young people involved), VMC, Victoria Police, AFP, DHHS, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Housing, Centrelink, Community Resilience Unit, CSG (Community Support Group) reps, other relevant government or community agencies/organisations	Suggestions for coordination of convening the Standing Panel included the Australian Multicultural Foundation, Community Resilience Unit, Dept. of Premier and Cabinet and ICV	Draw on existing CVE government-community advisory or partnership structures to establish Set up terms of reference Establish data and information needs and sources to inform work of Standing CRS Panel – ensure information-sharing is relevant and comprehensive Ensure legislative barriers to information-sharing are addressed and overcome Panel to be co-chaired by government and community representatives Case-management processes to be employed for individual returnee cases
Establish reporting lines of CRS for decision-making purposes	Relevant decision-makers with power to authorise	Standing Panel to report to decision-makers
Appoint Reintegration Coordinator from within Standing CRS Panel	Standing CRS Panel	Terms of reference for Reintegration Coordinator role
Identify options for community placement	Standing CRS Panel	Develop database of community willingness/ preparedness based on assessment of potential/likely returnees and their backgrounds/contexts through consultation and existing data sources Consider whether returnees' original community or new community setting required
Conduct risk and threat assessments per each child/woman/family returnee case	Victoria Police, AFP, relevant government agencies	Existing RAMP (Risk Assessment and Management Panel) or other mechanism Risk and threat assessments should be regularly reviewed and reassessed during reintegration

Consult with relevant community leaders re placement	Reintegration Coordinator, Victoria Police, AFP	Consultation should occur well in advance of returnee arrival and placement – 6 months minimum where possible, however more rapid deployment may be required in certain cases Consultation should include clear risk assessment
Map available resources and services in identified community	Reintegration Coordinator working with community advisors in selected community and on Standing CRS Panel	Develop template for community resource mapping on reintegration support that can be populated for different communities Conduct both capacity and gap analyses Include resources linked to: • Social support • Religious support • Housing support • Health and wellbeing support • Employment support • Financial support • Volunteering support • Counselling support • Educational support • Youth support • Other support as determined
Identify single point of contact (POC) for returnees based in the community	Reintegration Coordinator and Standing CRS Panel	Single POC will be community-based and sourced through existing community services/organisations Training module for Single POCs to be developed
Put in place a media strategy	Standing CRS Panel	Media strategy package to be developed and delivered to community leaders Nominated media contacts within community and government to be trained and appointed – these roles should be limited to only 2-3 people per case

		Media strategy should ensure communities not blamed or held responsible for returnee issues
Appoint community-based Case Manager for coordination of services	Standing CRS Panel with significant input from community representatives	Case manager qualifications and role description to be developed Should be from within placement community where possible and definitely community-based Appropriate skills and qualifications are essential
Conduct needs analysis per returnee child/woman/family case	Case Manager with input from Standing CRS Panel and Single POC	Develop needs analysis protocol within case management processes Distinguish between immediate needs and ongoing needs Needs analysis should be regularly reviewed and updated
Coordinate community support	Case Manager and Single POC	Through consultation with relevant community leaders and organisations Case manager should be local within placement community Gaps in community support should be identified and addressed through resourcing by government

Coordinate government support	Reintegration Coordinator on Standing CRS Panel	Through consultation with relevant government agencies and decision-makers
Establish government/ community coordination	Reintegration Coordinator	Establish government and community liaisons per case through Standing CRS Panel
Establish local community/police liaison to manage perceptions and explain protocols re law enforcement thresholds and responses	Victoria Police and AFP	Clear information guidance on thresholds for law enforcement response and intervention during reintegration based on risk assessment indicators

Equip community leaders with relevant information, education & resources	Reintegration Coordinator and Single POC	Develop risk indicators, referral guidance, awareness training on returnee issues, social support guidance package – disseminate and socialise these resources with community leaders
Equip general community with relevant information and education	Reintegration Coordinator and Standing CRS Panel	General information and awareness package on policy settings for reintegrating returnees
Equip identified service providers with relevant information and training	Reintegration Coordinator and Single POC	Training package on returnee challenges, needs, support and risks to be developed for service providers Provide clear EMERGENCY RESPONSE protocols, including designated on-call contacts within VicPol/AFP – do not merely rely on NSH
Ongoing monitoring and communication around emerging risks	Victoria Police and AFP through Standing CRS Panel and Single POC/Case Manager	Develop reporting channel for community leaders and community members to refer concerns or information – draw on existing knowledge re reporting mechanisms and trials of reporting services in NSW Designate VicPol and/or AFP contact as liaison on risk reporting
Develop community capacity to provide reintegration support by addressing gaps identified in community mapping exercise in specific communities	Standing CRS Panel	Use gap analysis to identify training and qualification needs, upskilling at community level

The CRS Model: Vision, Outcomes, Impacts, Strategies

The diagram in Figure 3 below provides a visual overview of the vision, anticipated outcomes and strategies (both primary and secondary) of the community reintegration model. These anticipated outcomes and strategies will assist in developing an evaluation framework to monitor the implementation of the model in the future. The diagram also outlines the underlying issues, which the model is intended to address that can lead to radicalisation, including both their immediate effects and longer term impacts.

Figure 3: CRS model – Vision, Outcome, Impacts, Strategies

Vision

To meet the community support needs of children and families from conflict zones reintegrating into local communities while reducing the risks of violent extremist influence and action

Outcomes

- Improved sense of social connection and belonging
- Easy access to religiously and culturally appropriate support services
- Strengthened community inclusion, resilience and understanding of mitigating violent extremism risks
- Enhanced community-government trust through sustainable community-government reintegration partnership

Primary Intervention Strategies

- Enhance community acceptance/awareness (support and risk ID) - consultation and upskilling
- Leverage and fund existing and potential community support resources/expertise
- Provide mentoring and culturally meaningful social engagement/support
- Community-based 'one stop' point of contact

Secondary Intervention Strategies

- Single agency coordination/case management
- Joint government-community risk assessment panel
- Media and comms strategy
- Two-way information-sharing on emerging/changing needs and risks
- Identified thresholds for law enforcement intervention

Underlying Issues

- Social disconnection, lack of acceptance and belonging
- Community backlash, stigma
- Fragmentation of services, social participation and normalisation channels
- Negative media attention
- Intrusive law enforcement presence
- Risk of re-radicalisation

Immediate Effects

- Disengagement, social isolation
- Alienation, no sense of belonging, hostility
- Feeling 'different', low self-esteem
- Fear, frustration, anxiety, anger
- Heightened sense of risk, scrutiny re police and security agencies

Impacts

- Mental health issues (depression, anxiety, etc.)
- Increased vulnerability to violent extremist influences, re-radicalisation
- Trust deficit between communities and government
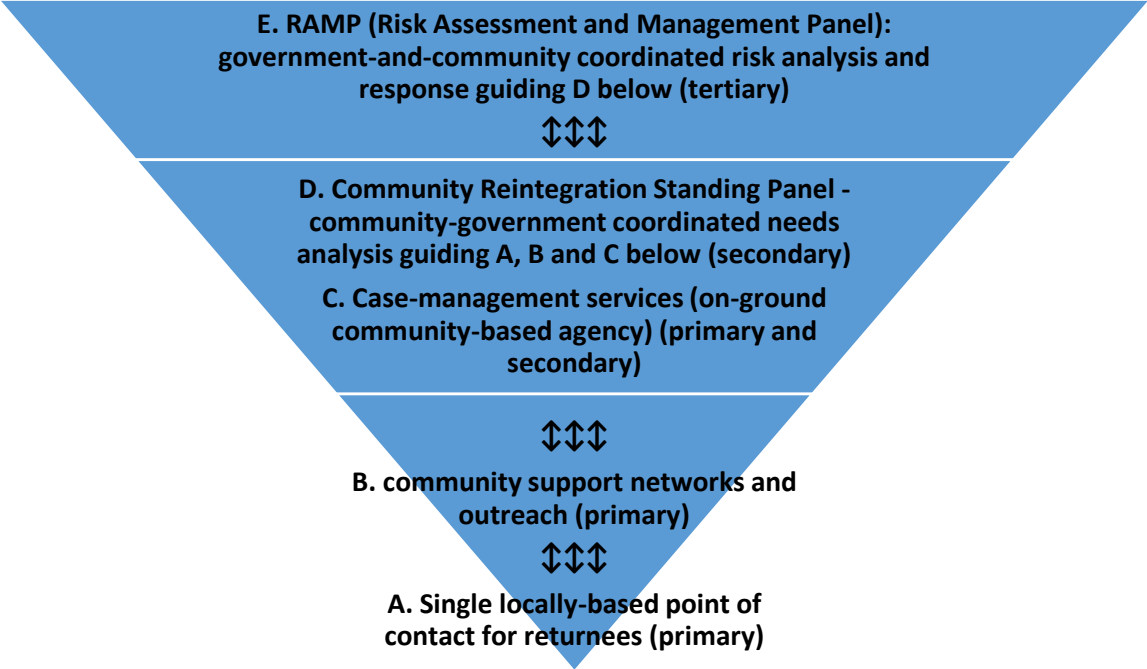- Retreat from community willingness to support and intervene

The CRS Model: Process Flows

Figure 4 below provides a second visual representation of the model developed on the basis of the research literature, participant interviews and project sponsor and tabletop consultations. Community-government partnerships are embedded at all the major decision points in the model. In the proposed process flow, cases will be filtered upwards from point A (a single locally based point of contact) to E (a government-community risk assessment panel). While cases will inevitably also flow from the community to the other components of the model, there will always need to be iterative interaction between each level as represented by the two-way flow of arrows between each of the model's tiers.

- **A:** At the 'pointy' end of the model is a single locally-based point for contact point for returnees and community. This reflects the consensus among all stakeholders that the primary public face of reintegration should be community based and that a single point of contact is crucial to prevent a fragmented response to returnee families that could undermine their reintegration and pose risks to returnees themselves as well as to the general public.

- **B:** The second level of the model is community support networks and outreach. The local point of contact will be responsible for ensuring that both returnees and community members are directed towards the appropriate community service providers. The arrows between tiers A and B indicate the ongoing interaction that will be required between the local point of contact and wider networks of community support.

- **C:** Individual case-management was identified by both community and government stakeholders as crucial for successful reintegration. This is also in line with international best practice as the needs of those returning from conflict zones are often complex and multi-faceted. In addition, while there are broad areas of support that it can be anticipated that returnees will require, it is essential that the particular mix of support is individually tailored. Individual case management allows for this.

- **D.** At the centre of the model is the Standing Community Reintegration Support Panel, which will be responsible for ongoing needs analysis and ensuring that all three levels below it are effectively responding to identified needs through a single point of contact, liaison with community support networks and individualised case management services. The Support Panel is also responsible for co-ordinating 'upwards' to a back-of-house Risk Assessment Panel that will collaboratively identify and manage risks.

- **E.** The Risk Assessment Panel will include representatives from government and community and will assess risk on an ongoing basis to decide on appropriate responses. Police community collaboration at this level will be crucial to develop responses that address security concerns while remaining cognisant of not undermining community-police relations. The Risk Assessment Panel will evaluate cases referred to it by the Standing Committee, via a case manager and then will feed this information back down the chain to the Standing Committee who will co-ordinate any responses required.

Figure 4: Community Reintegration Support (CRS) Model – Process Flows

E. RAMP (Risk Assessment and Management Panel): government-and-community coordinated risk analysis and response guiding D below (tertiary)

⇕⇕⇕

D. Community Reintegration Standing Panel - community-government coordinated needs analysis guiding A, B and C below (secondary)

C. Case-management services (on-ground community-based agency) (primary and secondary)

⇕⇕⇕

B. community support networks and outreach (primary)

⇕⇕⇕

A. Single locally-based point of contact for returnees (primary)

CONCLUSION

It was noted at the beginning of this study that returnee family members present both more complex and different challenges for reintegration and rehabilitation than active foreign fighters. Returnee family members, in particular children and women, may be both victims and perpetrators of violent extremist action. Consequently, the importance of developing a more nuanced understanding of the different types of challenges and needs faced and posed by those returning from violent extremist conflict zones has been highlighted in both scholarly literature and by bodies such as the UN.

However, there has been to date only limited academic or policy attention to this cohort of returnees, primarily as a result of the still emerging and evolving nature of the phenomenon. An even bigger gap in current knowledge and policy programming, both in Australia and internationally, is the role that local communities can play in the reintegration of returnee family members. Thus far there has been no assessment in the Australian context to gauge how willing or reluctant local communities may be to support reintegration efforts and to explore what role communities could play in the reintegration process, including the mechanisms through which communities could be empowered to play a leading role in reintegration efforts.

Nevertheless, there has been increasing recognition, locally and internationally, of the critical role of communities in both preventing and responding to radicalisation and an acknowledgement that community-driven, locally conceptualised interventions are the most likely to have a sustainable impact. This study therefore hypothesised that community involvement is essential to enhance the prospects of successful reintegration for child and family returnees, and to help reduce or mitigate a number of risks for both those returning and for communities themselves. The empirical research sought to gather data to explore this proposition and to develop a model for community based reintegration of returnee families that would reflect the information collected about the role that communities could play in reintegration in the Australian environment.

The following were the key research questions the study sought to address:

- What role does community support play in addressing the challenges of successfully reintegrating children, women and families returning from violent extremist conflict zones?

- What are the perceived risks, benefits, vulnerabilities and protections, from community perspectives, of supporting child and family returnees to reintegrate in local communities?

- How willing are communities to partner with government agencies in supporting child and family returnees, and what might enhance or inhibit these partnerships?

- What level of tolerance exists, from community standpoints, for the role of law enforcement in monitoring any potential national security risks posed by child and family returnees?

- What would a successful reintegration partnership model look like from community perspectives, and who should develop and implement these models?

In order to address the research questions and develop a conceptual and theoretical grounding for the data collection, the study began with a literature review of scholarly and 'grey' literature relevant to the project including existing material on foreign fighters, returnees, CVE policy and community resilience. The literature review focused on the knowledge that would support policy actors to evaluate the importance of community engagement and the methodologies which could

be applied to the challenge of managing the reintegration of returnees in the Australian context. It explored the role that community resilience and social and family networks can play in reintegration and the extent to which Australian policy and programming is aligned to this community based approach. It also looked in depth at the complex and distinct role that women and children play in violent extremism and their unique reintegration challenges, including the role that communities could play in these reintegration processes. The literature review found that there is a strong body of research evidence confirming the importance of meaningful partnerships between state and civil society to both prevent and respond to violent extremism, which can now be utilised to inform effective reintegration models and approaches.

The second stage of the research involved data collection through a series of semi-structured interview with both community and government stakeholders. The interviews revealed some of the complexities and challenges, as well as opportunities that exist for community participation in the reintegration of returnee families in the Australian environment as have been outlined in detail in this report. The interviews revealed considerable points of alignment between community and government perspectives on reintegration that were discussed at the project sponsor meeting and the tabletop consultation, including the challenges that both women and children may face such as trauma and social isolation. There was also considerable agreement about the responses that will be required, most significantly a community-based, case-management approach that facilitates a sense of belonging, which previous research has argued is critical for successful reintegration, and which this research confirmed is essential in the Australian context. At the same time the interviews also revealed a significant trust deficit between communities and law enforcement and identified the need to focus on building trusting, cooperative relations between these actors to facilitate reintegration. In addition, in line with previous research outlined in the literature review, the interviews revealed significant community concerns about the stigma associated with violent extremism, which could constitute a barrier to community involvement in reintegration efforts.

Overall, however, the data, findings and consultations from this project clearly demonstrated that there is a significant role for communities to play in supporting the successful reintegration of child, women and family returnees from conflict zones. Indeed, the data suggest that without such support at local community level, key reintegration needs around social support, connectedness and inclusion are likely to founder. Excluding or minimising community involvement in reintegration support risks potential hostility and suspicion that can create intractable barriers to successful integration, with attendant risks for returnees and communities in terms of re-radicalisation and community safety and security.

During the consultative engagement with community and government stakeholders to review a data-based model for community reintegration, broad consensus was reached about the significant role that communities must play in the reintegration process and a model for community reintegration, which embedded this principle, was accepted at this meeting.

However, as outlined above, there remain important tensions between community and government role-players regarding ultimate authority for the design and implementation of the reintegration model. Questions around information sharing between agencies also remain to be resolved. Responding to and overcoming such tensions will require more sustained engagement, good will and shared understanding of risks and processes between relevant parties, and, particularly with regard to information sharing, will likely require regulatory and possibly legislative changes that fall beyond the ambit of this research.

Nevertheless, the process was critical in developing a general consensus about the need for community-based reintegration between community and government and clearly identified the key outstanding gaps and points of contention that will need to be worked on going forward.

The study has identified considerable good will from all parties and a commitment to constructively engage around the most effective modalities for reintegrating returnee families. While our research evidences the significant heterogeneity of Muslim communities, demonstrating that there will never be total consensus within communities on the issue of whether and how to engage with returnees, there nevertheless exists substantial appetite and engagement by key community leaders, organisations and individuals who recognise both the benefits of supporting reintegration at community level and also the risks of not doing so.

As our findings show, communities have very substantial expertise and knowledge that can contribute both conceptually and materially to enhancing successful reintegration prospects and outcomes. Respecting and empowering community involvement in reintegration through co-design and co-delivery of reintegration processes and strategies is essential, as is allowing community organisations to lead, where possible, on such initiatives in light of the emphasis on local, contextual support needs for child, women and family returnees. In addition, communities also require support in the form of information, training, resources and mechanisms through which they can both leverage existing support capacities and develop new capacities to further enhance their ability to create transitions for returnees as they normalise their lives back in Australia. The community reintegration model provides a fresh opportunity to build stronger community-government partnerships in a new area of challenges for Australian policy and society.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Community Respondents (individual and focus groups)

Participants have selected either the 'Maryam' or the 'Waleed' scenario to work with.

1. What is your initial response to this scenario?

2. What are the main challenges that you see Maryam/Waleed facing in this scenario?

3. What are the main challenges you see Maryam's/Waleed's local community facing in this scenario?

4. Would you be happy to have Maryam and her family/Waleed and his family living in your community? As neighbours? At your workplace? At your children's school? If so, why? If not, why not?

5. How do you think others in your community would respond to Maryam/Waleed if they were living in your community's local area?

6. What would you identify as the main *support needs* that need to be met for Maryam/Waleed in the scenario? Why do you think these are the *main* needs that take priority?

7. How would you describe the support needs you've identified? Are they personal needs? Social needs? Structural needs? Material needs? (Interviewer prompts with examples of the different kinds of needs if necessary, e.g. friendship and emotional support, social connectedness and sense of belonging, access to education/employment, help with housing or food)

8. Who do you think should be providing for these support needs, and why?

9. What risks do you see Maryam/Waleed facing in this scenario? What might happen if they don't get the support you have identified them as needing?

10. What role might individual community members or community groups play in providing support for Maryam/Waleed and their families to reintegrate into their communities?

11. What resources would you/your community need in order to play a role in supporting people and families like Maryam's/Waleed's?

12. What might prevent you/your community providing this support, and why?

13. What risks, if any, do you feel you/your community might face in providing support for Maryam/Waleed and their families?

14. If Maryam/Waleed or their families present any risks or concerns to community safety, in your view, how do you think this risks should be managed?

15. If law enforcement agencies were to be involved in supporting Maryam/Waleed or their

families, how willing would you/your community be to partner with law enforcement in providing such support? Reasons for or against?

16. What are the key elements of a successful community-government partnership, in your view, for supporting returnees like Maryam/Waleed and their families?

17. What responsibilities, if any, should communities have in this partnership? What responsibilities, if any, should government have?

Interview schedule - Government Stakeholders (individual interviews only)

Participants have selected either the 'Maryam' or the 'Waleed' scenario to work with.

1. What is your initial response to this scenario?

2. What are the main *personal* challenges that you see Maryam/Waleed facing in this scenario?

3. What are the main *community* challenges you see Maryam's/Waleed's local community facing in this scenario?

4. What are the main *policy* challenges you see presented by Maryam's/Waleed's efforts to reintegrate into the local community?

5. How do you think communities you are familiar with in Victoria would respond to Maryam/Waleed if they were living in the area/s you have in mind?

6. What would you identify as the main *support needs* that need to be met for Maryam/Waleed in the scenario? Why do you think these are the *main* needs that take priority?

7. How would you describe the support needs you've identified? (Interviewer prompts: Are they personal needs? Social needs? Structural needs? Material needs? Other? e.g. friendship and emotional support, social connectedness and sense of belonging, access to education/employment, help with housing, mental health services, disengagement from radicalisation programs, etc.)

8. Who do you think should be providing for these support needs, and why?

9. What risks do you see Maryam/Waleed facing in this scenario? What might happen if they don't get the support you have identified them as needing?

10. What role might individual community members or community groups play in providing support for Maryam/Waleed and their families to reintegrate into their communities?

11. What resources do you think communities need in order to play a role in supporting people and families like Maryam's/Waleed's?

12. What might prevent communities providing this support, and why?

13. What risks, if any, do you feel communities might face in providing support for Maryam/Waleed and their families?

14. If Maryam/Waleed or their families present any risks or concerns to community safety, in your view, how do you think this risks should be managed?

15. How do you see communities and law enforcement working together in supporting

Maryam/Waleed and their familie's reintegration into the community?

16. What are the key elements of a successful community-government partnership, in your view, for supporting returnees like Maryam/Waleed and their families?

17. What responsibilities, if any, should communities have in this partnership? What responsibilities, if any, should government have?

APPENDIX 2

HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 1 – MARYAM, aged 28, Tasmania

Maryam is now 28 years old. She was born in the United Kingdom to parents who had migrated to the UK from Lebanon after the outbreak of civil war in that country. Maryam comes from a closely- knit family, and has two living parents, two sisters and one brother. In 2003, Maryam and her family migrated to Australia and settled in Tasmania, after having lived in the UK and Lebanon. Maryam's birth in the UK likely makes her eligible for Lebanese citizenship. In 2006, Maryam and her family were naturalized and became Australian citizens.

Maryam worked at an early learning centre for children attached to a local mosque, which she also attended for religious and community services. During the time she worked there, some Tasmanian- based foreign fighters also attended this mosque, prior to travelling offshore to participate in foreign conflict.

In early 2013, Maryam met her future husband Tom through the local mosque, and they married in the same year. Tom had radicalised to violence and had decided to participate in foreign conflict to support his beliefs. Maryam was ambivalent about his plans, but for the sake of the marriage and because she believed that it was her role to support her husband, she remained with him. Also in 2013, Maryam, along with her parents and her brother, left Australia to go to Lebanon for a holiday and to visit relatives there. Around the same time, Tom departed Australia for Lebanon under the pretext of meeting up with Maryam.

In late 2013, Maryam's brother returned to Australia on his own. He told relatives and friends in Tasmania that Maryam had stayed behind in Lebanon due to health concerns, and was being looked after by family in Lebanon. However, it soon emerged that Maryam and her husband Tom had in fact traveled into Syria in late 2013 for the purpose of joining the Islamic State conflict. In 2014, Tom was killed during fighting in Syria.

Maryam was now a widow with a child in Syria, having given birth to a daughter in 2014 before Tom died. She remained in Syria with her infant daughter. In late 2016, Maryam married again to Sam, an Australian who had been living overseas for five years, and became pregnant with her second child. Maryam now advised family members that she wanted to return to Australia, but was stuck in Islamic State-controlled areas.

One of Maryam's family members contacted the Australian Foreign Affairs Minister, seeking assistance to help Maryam, now pregnant with her second child, come back to Australia with her young daughter.

In mid-2017, pregnant Maryam and her daughter returned to Australia and resettled in her local community in Tasmania. Her first-born child with Tom appears to have a developmental delay. Maryam has indicated that her second husband, Sam, may also wish to return to Australia. Maryam has had extensive medical issues while overseas, including exposure to a contagious disease. Maryam recently gave birth to her second child, a boy, and is close with her sisters and their families. She currently lives in a different part of Tasmania to her sisters. She is hoping to live

closer to her sisters for support but is struggling to find affordable accommodation in the area where her sisters live.

As a neighbour, Sandra confides in **you** about her eldest child's developmental delays, her health concerns and her problems finding affordable accommodation closer to her sisters. She asks if you know where she can seek help with these issues.

HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIO 2 – WALEED, aged 14, Perth

Waleed is a 14 year old boy. His mother, Sandra, was born and grew up around Perth. In her late teens, Sandra converted to Islam after meeting her future husband Malik, a naturalised Australian citizen from Morocco. Following her marriage in 2002, Sandra held a job as a bookkeeper in a local Perth business and was well integrated within her local Muslim community, becoming active in different volunteering roles and initiatives run by her local community centre. **Waleed,** Sandra and Malik's only child, was born in 2003.

Malik has made trips back and forth every couple of years to his home village in Morocco. He has been investigated by authorities who suspected he travelled via Morocco to Islamic State-controlled territories to engage in violent conflict in Iraq. Sandra travelled with him twice, taking her eldest son Waleed with her for extended periods between 2011-13 and again between 2014-15, but in late 2015 returned back to Australia with Waleed but without Waleed's father.

When she returned to Australia, Sandra presented as a single mother who said she had separated from her husband Malik. While she has told friends and workmates that she and her husband separated in Morocco because they had a falling out, precipitating her return to Australia with their son, it is unclear whether she and Malik are still in contact, or indeed whether Waleed's father Malik is still alive.

In 2016 Sandra made a total of five international money transfers to four internationally based individuals, all of whom were identified by authorities as persons of interest to international counter- terrorism investigators. The funds transfers sent by Sandra went to Morocco, Iraq and Turkey. The reasons provided by Sandra for these international money transfers were listed as "family support" and "personal". Law enforcement agencies think it is likely that before her return to Australia Sandra provided direct in-country financial support to her husband. However, since the time she says they separated, Sandra has not provided any traceable financial support to her husband offshore using international money transfer channels. Since she came back to Australia in late 2015, Sandra's only known means of support are a combination of Centrelink payments from Newstart, Family Tax Benefit and Rental Assistance schemes totalling about $1,100 per fortnight.

Waleed lives with his mother Sandra in a quiet suburb in Perth, near her older sister. Sandra works odd hours as an account manager at a local hospital. There are concerns that she may continue to use her finances to send funds overseas. Waleed goes to a local public school, but does not have many friends at this school. He is not physically active in sport or recreation activities. He spends many hours online and is keen to visit his father, whom his mother tells him remains overseas. Waleed struggles to communicate verbally with his teachers and with his classmates. However, he likes to draw cartoon-style pictures and stories and is reasonably gifted as an illustrator. Some

of these pictures depict elements of brutal beatings and executions that he may have personally witnessed or been involved in overseas, or else has viewed online. Waleed shows no outward signs of violence or aggression towards others, instead presenting as a lonely and withdrawn teenage boy with few social connections or hobbies outside his online surfing and drawing activities.

You are concerned for Waleed's wellbeing and would like to support him, but you are worried about his parents' influence on him, and whether he poses any risk of radicalising to violence because of this. You are also worried about the impact that helping Waleed might have if it meant that his relationship with Sandra might become fractured or if they needed to be separated.

APPENDIX 3

CODING DOCUMENT

A. COMMUNITY INTERVIEW CODES

<mark>Coding for Q1: grounded thematic coding</mark>

THEN:

<mark>Q2: CR Reintegration challenges</mark> - <mark>Yellow</mark>

- **Challenges for those reintegrating – children** (Q2) –<mark>Yellow 1</mark>
    o Experience of trauma – <mark>[Yellow 1A]</mark>
    o Emotional challenges – <mark>[Yellow 1B]</mark>
    o Social challenges – <mark>[Yellow 1C]</mark>
    o Lack of family support –[<mark>Yellow 1D</mark>]

- **Challenges for those reintegrating – women/families** (Q2) – <mark>Yellow 2</mark>
    o Lack of social support, social isolation – [<mark>Yellow 2A</mark>]
    o Lack of family support – [<mark>Yellow 2B</mark>]
    o Lack of access to required social and economic resources – [<mark>Yellow 2C</mark>]
    o Experience of trauma in conflict zone – <mark>[Yellow 2D]</mark>
    o Complex/multiple challenges – <mark>[Yellow 2E]</mark>
    o Mental health issues – <mark>[Yellow 2F]</mark>
    o Community stigma/lack of acceptance **–** <mark>[Yellow 2G]</mark>
    o Negotiating identity/relationships as a returnee **–** [<mark>Yellow 2H</mark>]
    o Location of reintegration – near or away from familiars – [<mark>Yellow 2J</mark>]

Challenges for community in reintegrating returnees (Q3) – <mark>Yellow 3</mark>

- Community acceptance – <mark>[Yellow 3A]</mark>

<mark>CR Reintegration support needs and structures</mark>

- <mark></mark>**Support needs – returning children** – **PERSONAL, SOCIAL, STRUCTURAL** (Q 6, 7) – <mark>Green 1</mark>
    o Mentor and/or peer support, role models – [<mark>Green 1A</mark>]
    o Capitalising on/redirecting children's existing assets, likes and skills – [<mark>Green 1B</mark>]
    o Social support – networks, engagement, inclusion, efficacy, 'a fresh start' <mark>[Green 1C]</mark>
    o Psychological support/counselling – grief, trauma, loss, depression, anxiety, PSTD, etc. <mark>[Green 1D]</mark>
    o Health support (illness, disease, conditions contracted overseas) – <mark>[Green 1E]</mark>
    o Harnessing existing resilience assets, e.g. returnee's prosocial capacities, interests – <mark>[Green 1F]</mark>
    o Child and family support linked: Stability in family environment and resources **–** <mark>[Green 1G]</mark>
    o School-based support, educational/vocational opportunity and engagement **–** <mark>[Green 1H]</mark>

- **Support needs – returning women/families – PERSONAL, SOCIAL, STRUCTURAL** (Q 6, 7) **– Green 2**
    - Family support – **Green 2A**
    - Economic support **– Green 2B**
    - Social support – networks, engagement, inclusion, efficacy **[Green 2C]**
    - Psychological support/counselling – grief, trauma, loss, PSTD, depression, anxiety, etc. **[Green 2D]**
    - Disengagement/desistence support – **[Green 2E]**
    - Childcare support to facilitate parental reintegration – **[Green 2F]**
    - Culturally appropriate support – bicultural, linguistic, religious – **[Green 2G]**

- **Who should provide which kind of support**? **– FOR CHILDREN, FOR FAMILIES** (Q 8) **– Green 3**
    - Government-led: Single point of contact/case manager model spanning different/integrated providers – [**Green 3A**]
    - Combined community/government: Structural challenges re service availability, economies of scale, demand for model – [**Green 3B**]
    - Combined community/government: Integrated family support system, similar to family violence safety support hubs in Victoria – [**Green 3C**]
    - Combined community-government: Integrated model combining community-based school and service support and government-based risk monitoring/management – [**Green 3D**]
    - Community/government-led: Need-specific assessment and gov't/community services and expertise such as trauma support, therapeutic models for exposure to conflict zones – [**Green 3E**]
    - Family-led FOR CHILDREN: immediate and/or extended family support if available re socialisation, support – [**Green 3F**]
    - Community-led, locally led program-based support for young people returning from conflict zones – [**Green 3G**]

CR Role of communities in providing/extending support for reintegration

- **Levels of acceptance/comfort for engaging with returnees** (Q4, Q5) – **Blue 1**

- **Role of communities in providing/extending practical and social support** (Q10) **Blue 2**
    - Communities need to be more accountable, resourceful and forthcoming in supporting returnees to reintegrate – [**Blue 2A**]

- **What resources are needed by communities to provide this support?** (Q11) Blue 3

- **Barriers for communities in providing support** (Q12) – **Blue 4**

CR Perceptions of risk

- **Risks for returning children** (Q9) – **Grey 1**
    - Risks of parents' behaviour impacting psychologically/materially on kids, including flight risk [**Grey 1A**]

- o Risk of idealising and/or problems created by absent parent [father] **[Grey 1B]**
- o Risk of being isolated/bullied/stigmatised at school/in community, attack on sense of belonging **[Grey 1C]**
- o Online/offline exposure to harmful influences, crosshairs of LE/security agencies – **[Grey 1D]**
- o Disengagement from healthy/prosocial networks and activities **[Grey 1E]**
- o Delayed/chronic mental health risks, including self-harm – **[Grey 1F]**
- o Traumatic separation from/deteriorating relationship with parent/s/caretakers after return – **[Grey 1G]**
- o Anti-social family bonding: 'us' against 'them' attitude towards services and support – **[Grey 1H]**
- o Readjustment and/or developmental challenges – **[Grey 1J]**
- o Vulnerability to re-radicalisation/failed disengagement (the wrong relationships/crowd) – **[Grey 1K]**

- **Risks for returning women/families** (Q9) – Grey 2
    - o Returning to hostile/constrained/threatening environment **– [Grey 2A]**
    - o Social isolation with ensuing mental health challenges, e.g. depression, anxiety – **[Grey 2B]**
    - o Limited or no family support— **[Grey 2C]**
    - o Financial struggles/limited resources – **[Grey 2D]**
    - o Vulnerability to re-radicalisation/failed disengagement (the wrong relationships/crowd) – **[Grey 2E]**

- **Risks for communities in engaging/providing support** (Q13) – Grey 3
    - o Unwillingness to associate with returnees because of surveillance fears – **[Grey 3A]**
    - o Negative impact on families of returnees (e.g. community rejection of broader family network) – **[Grey 3B]**

- Managing perceived risks (Q14) – **Grey 4**
- Need for threat assessment prior to/during community integration program **– [Grey 4A]**
- Difficulties of managing different thresholds for intervention, support and monitoring across police and other government agencies – **[Grey 4B]**

CR Developing partnerships between communities and government to support reintegration

- **Willingness by communities to partner** (Q15) – Pink 1

- **What would successful partnerships on reintegration look like?** (Q16) Pink 2

- **Responsibilities of community and government in partnerships** (Q17) – Pink 3
    - o Economic and services support for reintegrating families –**[Pink 3A]**

B. GOVERNMENT/PROFESSIONAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW CODES

Coding for Q1: grounded thematic coding

THEN:

GSPP Reintegration challenges

- **Personal challenges for children:** [Yellow 1]
    - o Social isolation, feeling different, lack of belonging – [Yellow 1A]
    - o Mental health concerns – [Yellow 1B]
    - o Age-based/developmental vulnerability – [Yellow 1C]
    - o Influence on children of still-radicalised parent/s **– [Yellow 1D]**
    - o Catching up on educational standards/opportunities – [Yellow 1E]
    - o Lack of local community acceptance – [Yellow 1F]

- **Personal challenges for women/families** - [Yellow 2]
    - o Social isolation – [Yellow 2A]
    - o Lack of family support – [Yellow 2B]
    - o Lack of knowledge/inability to navigate service and support landscape – [Yellow 2C]
    - o Lack of community acceptance – [Yellow 2D]

- **Community challenges in engaging with/supporting returnees (Q3)** – [Yellow 3]

    - o **Yellow 3A is now Blue 1C**
    - o Lack of consensus/polarised community responses – some want to support and protect, others avoid and reject [Yellow 3B]
    - o Lack of trust/confidence in knowing what to do, how to help – [Yellow 3C]
    - o Returnee is, or becomes, aggressive, antisocial – [Yellow 3D]
    - o Potentially different responses to converts versus life-long Muslims – [Yellow 3E]
    - o For local schools: Concerns re capacity, knowledge to manage challenging/safeguarding behaviours and impacts – [Yellow 3F]
    - o Fear of enhanced community/individual scrutiny by government if supporting local returnees – [Yellow 3G]
    - o Providing a normalising local environment in which young returnees can connect free of stigma or scrutiny – [Yellow 3H]

- **Policy challenges for reintegrating returnees in the community (Q4)** – [Yellow 4]
    - o Ensuring communities where reintegration occurs are consulted beforehand regarding potential sectarian or tribal conflicts/inappropriateness – [Yellow 4A]
    - o Confidentiality for families – privacy issues, potential need for cover story, avoiding media leaks – [Yellow 4B]
    - o Avoiding suggestions that one community response is 'right' and the other 'wrong' – respecting diverse standpoints and responses, working with these differences – [Yellow 4C]
    - o Not knowing how much community is already aware of specific people/general returnee challenges and issues – [Yellow 4D]

- o Integrating approach to reintegration: governance issues, responsibility distribution across local/state/commonwealth, developing consistent, systematic government approach to avoid people falling through cracks– [Yellow 4E]
  - o Balancing therapeutic/rehabilitative approaches with security concerns and how this is signalled to communities – [Yellow 4F]
  - o Meaningful and accurate risk assessment for schools, service providers, community safety, returnee individuals and families – [Yellow 4G]

GSPP Reintegration support needs and structures

- **Support needs – returning children – PERSONAL, SOCIAL, STRUCTURAL** (Q 6, 7) – Green 1
  - o Mentor and/or peer support, role models – [Green 1A]
  - o Capitalising on/redirecting children's existing assets, likes and skills – [Green 1B]
  - o Social support – networks, engagement, inclusion, efficacy, 'a fresh start' [Green 1C]
  - o Psychological support/counselling – grief, trauma, loss, depression, anxiety, PSTD, etc. [Green 1D]
  - o Health support (illness, disease, conditions contracted overseas) – [Green 1E]
  - o Harnessing existing resilience assets, e.g. returnee's prosocial capacities, interests – [Green 1F]
  - o Child and family support linked: Stability in family environment and resources – [Green 1G]
  - o School-based support, educational/vocational opportunity and engagement – [Green 1H]

- **Support needs – returning women/families – PERSONAL, SOCIAL, STRUCTURAL** (Q 6, 7) – Green 2
  - o Family support – Green 2A
  - o Economic support – Green 2B
  - o Social support – networks, engagement, inclusion, efficacy [Green 2C]
  - o Psychological support/counselling – grief, trauma, loss, PSTD, depression, anxiety, etc. [Green 2D]
  - o Disengagement/desistence support – [Green 2E]
  - o Childcare and education support to facilitate parental reintegration – [Green 2F]
  - o Culturally appropriate support – bicultural, linguistic, religious – [Green 2G]
  - o Health support – [Green 2H]

- **Who should provide which kind of support**? – **FOR CHILDREN, FOR FAMILIES** (Q 8) – Green 3
  - o Government-led: Single point of contact/case manager model spanning different/integrated providers – [Green 3A]
  - o Combined community/government: Structural challenges re service availability, economies of scale, demand for model – [Green 3B]
  - o Combined community/government: Integrated family support system, similar to family violence safety support hubs in Victoria – [Green 3C]

- o Combined community-government: Integrated model combining community-based school and service support and government-based risk monitoring/management – [Green 3D]
- o Community/government-led: Need-specific assessment and gov't/community services and expertise such as trauma support, therapeutic models for exposure to conflict zones – [Green 3E]
- o Family-led FOR CHILDREN: immediate and/or extended family support if available re socialisation, support – [Green 3F]
- o Community-led, locally led program-based support for young people returning from conflict zones – [Green 3G]

GSPP Role of communities in providing/extending support for reintegration

- **Perceived levels of acceptance/comfort for communities engaging with returnees (Q5) –** [Blue 1]
    - o High: At least some communities would respond with compassion and welcome – but dependent on which community we are talking about [Blue 1A]
    - o Mixed: Response within specific communities dependent on perceived risk/threat level – [Blue 1B]
    - o Low: Feeling under siege on terrorism issues, vulnerable to community or media-driven gossip, reputation taint, less likely to support returnees – [Blue 1C]
    - o Low: Rejection/ostracisation out of fear or sense of betrayal [Blue 1D]

- **Role of communities in providing/extending support (Q10) –**[**Blue 2**]
    - o Informal roles centred on social connection and belonging within the community for returnees – spatial and/or cultural community belonging – [Blue 2A]
    - o Normalising the experience of being back in Australia – [Blue 2B]

- **What resources/capacities are needed by communities to provide this support**? **(Q11) –**[**Blue 3**]
    - o Consultation and preparation before returnees are embedded within communities is crucial – identifying willingness, resources and gaps prior to returns – [Blue 3A]
    - o Sense of religious/ethnic alignment/community cohesion and willingness to work with government oversight – [Blue 3B]
    - o **Should communities be told about radicalised background/exposure of returnees?**
        - ▪ Where community support is low or uncertain but other good reasons for placing returnees there, **consider cover story or general non-disclosure** to avoid rumour, gossip, avoidance, rejection, betrayal of child/family confidentiality – [Blue 3C]
        - ▪ **Cover stories/non-disclosure are not helpful** in forming friendships and meaningful relationships, people will find out anyway – learning who to trust, having a good narrative that is still honest, and when/how much to disclose is better – [Blue 3D]
    - o Communities need a variety of resources to provide everyday social and structural support – [Blue 3E]

- General awareness-raising resources, not specifically targeted around returnees – DO NOT MAKE ABOUT SPECIFIC CHILDREN OR FAMILIES – [Blue 3F]
- Upskilling of local providers to ensure appropriate quality and layers of required support – [Blue 3G]
- Information-sharing at community and/or agency levels – integrated knowledge and service/support base a condition of successful returnee integration – [Blue 3H]
- Resources to cope with media – appointing 1 or 2 advocates to be trained in fielding media scrutiny and inquiries rather than lots of different spokespeople within a community – [Blue 3J]

- **Barriers for communities in providing support (Q12)** – [Blue 4]
  - Communities struggling in general are going to struggle in particular with reintegrating returnees – scarce resources, toxicity, etc. – [Blue 4A]
  - Fear of negative impacts on kids, community reputation – [Blue 4B]
  - Lack of knowledge about how best to support, ignorance re managing both realistic and unrealistic fears and concerns, what resources can be mobilised formally and informally – [Blue 4C]
  - Negative media coverage, other adverse publicity/scrutiny – [Blue 4D]
  - Unacceptable/unpalatable strings attached to funding support from gov't for community role in reintegration – badging as CVE will undermine [Blue 4E]
  - Insufficient effort to prepare the ground re community willingness to accept and assist – [Blue 4F] **LINK ALSO TO BLUE 1, COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE**

GSPP Perceptions of risk

- **Risks for returning children (Q9)** – Grey 1
  - Risks of parents' behaviour/influence impacting psychologically/materially on kids, including flight risk [Grey 1A]
  - Risk of idealising and/or problems created by absent parent [father] [Grey 1B]
  - Risk of being isolated/bullied/stigmatised at school/in community, attack on sense of belonging [Grey 1C]
  - Online/offline exposure to harmful influences, crosshairs of LE/security agencies – [Grey 1D]
  - Disengagement from healthy/prosocial networks and activities [Grey 1E]
  - Delayed/chronic mental health risks, including self-harm – [Grey 1F]
  - Traumatic separation from/deteriorating relationship with parent/s/caretakers after return – [Grey 1G]
  - Anti-social family bonding: 'us' against 'them' attitude towards services and support – [Grey 1H]
  - Readjustment and/or developmental challenges – [Grey 1J]
  - Vulnerability to re-radicalisation/failed disengagement (the wrong relationships/crowd) – [Grey 1K]
  - Misdiagnosis of statements or activities linked to violent radicalisation (taken out of context) –[Grey 1L]

- **Risks for returning women/families** (Q9) – Grey 2
  - Returning to hostile/constrained/threatening environment – [Grey 2A]

- o Social isolation with ensuing mental health challenges, e.g. depression, anxiety – **[Grey 2B]**
- o Limited or no family support— **[Grey 2C]**
- o Financial struggles/limited resources – **[Grey 2D]**
- o Vulnerability to re-radicalisation/failed disengagement (the wrong relationships/crowd) – **[Grey 2E]**

- **Risks for communities in engaging/providing support** (Q13) – **Grey 3**
    - o Risk that those providing welcome/support will suffer backlash by others in community – surveillance fears, reputation taint, etc. – **[Grey 3A]**
    - o Negative impact on families of returnees (e.g. community rejection of broader family network) – **[Grey 3B]**
    - o Unwillingness to associate with returnees because of perceived stigma, distress at their actions/ideology – **[Grey 3C]**
    - o Concerns that others in community will be radicalised by returnees, fear of radicalised violence - thresholds and reassurances– **[Grey 3D]**

- **Managing perceived risks** (Q14) – **Grey 4**
    - o Need for **communicating back to communities re** threat assessment prior to/during community integration program, plus helping community understand and identify thresholds for when gets kicked to LE-led response **– [Grey 4A]**
    - o Challenges of managing collaborative approach across different thresholds for intervention, support and monitoring across police, government agencies versus community expectations – **[Grey 4B]**
    - o Coping with prospect of separated families and challenges posed – **[Grey 4C]**
    - o Balancing privacy/sensitivity of returnees re community need to know for sense of safety – **[Grey 4D]**
    - o Duty of care same as for other risks and forms of violence – **[Grey 4E]**
    - o Iterative reassessment and rapid-info sharing across agencies needed if/as risk profile changes – **[Grey 4F]**
    - o Shift to criminal investigation/threshold if signs of risk warrant – **[Grey 4G]**
    - o Ensuring robust procedures/knowledge base to appropriately identify and triage the risk level – will dictate direction taken in reassessment – **[Grey 4H]**
    - o Community intervention first, avoid criminalising where possible **– [Grey 4J]**

GSPP Developing partnerships between communities and government to support reintegration

- **Willingness by communities to partner (Q15) [Pink 1]**
    - o Depends on model put in place – how can community orgs be integrated, won't be consensus either across or within different communities –[Pink 1A]
    - o Mapping exercise to establish relevant communities resources and willingness would help – **[Pink 1B]**

- **What would successful partnerships on reintegration look like?** (Q16) – **Pink 2**
    - o **Police-led coordination model** – local/specialist community police and CVE Unit and specific community-based points of contact/involvement – **[Pink 2A]**

- o **Government-centred panel model** – police and other agencies play leading roles across both security and positive engagement, **integrated family services and support such as RAMP model** – [Pink 2B]
- o **Case coordination model - SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT, COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDER,** for child/family-facing interactions and support – [Pink 2C]
- o **Community-centred panel model** such as a CSG (community support group model) – upskilled community leaders, reference group input to panel, with police and agency support sitting behind this – [Pink 2D]
- o Culturally appropriate engagement and perception management with community orgs and agencies – can be challenge to existing service provider relationships with government – **recommendation here re prioritising upskilling and resourcing of Muslim service providers for reintegration model** – [Pink 2E]
- o Information-sharing and consistent/unified risk assessment protocols and procedures are critical – [Pink 2F] – see also **Grey 4B**, **Blue 3H**
- o **Partnership model** where community and government needs are both heard and balanced – **willingness to listen to each other and work from shared basis** – [Pink 2G]
- o **Indicators of success:** Community acceptance of government good intentions and management; clear information; genuine willingness to listen to each other; honesty, integrity, transparency – [Pink 2H]
- o **Safety and support hub model –** linked to family violence response and could be adapted – *[Pink 2J]*
- o Bespoke model – tailored for each individual returning child/family – [Pink 2K]
- o Common guidelines, principles, boundaries across jurisdictions **–** [Pink 2L]

- Responsibilities of community and government in reintegration partnerships (Q17) – Pink 3

  - o No support role for law enforcement, conflict of interest – [Pink 3A]

  - o Distributed/shared responsibility across sectors of community and government – [Pink 3B]

  - o Law enforcement must have responsibility for safety and security – [Pink 3C]

Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q5 Q6 Q7 Q8 Q9 Q10 Q11 Q12 Q13 Q14 Q15 Q16 Q17

EXAMPLE OF CODED DOCUMENT

Q.2. COMMUNITY: What are the main challenges that you see Maryam/Waleed facing in this scenario?

Maryam

CR1: She is going to be more responsive to support from their own community. First line of contact after the screening process by security agencies, should be community support as first line of contact. This is very effective, there are cases out there where women have come back and sought support from the community; they need it and seek it [CR1 Blue 2].

A lot of them struggle with their own family, often blamed, they put the child at risk, difficult for their parents to overcome especially if a woman is a convert, going to feel like Islam led her wrong, might be anti-Muslim sentiments. Will have trouble understanding what motivated her, seen as a very poor choice. You can't summarise it in that way, there's a lot of emotion involved, there are relationships, manipulation, there is a process she goes through before leaving. Maybe wouldn't turn to parents for support if she was a convert because she would know that their views would be different. **[CR1 Yellow 2B]**

CR 6: If I put on a very – not a CVE hat but our COMAC days – we'd say she is a vulnerable person, we need to support her and help her settle back in to life here in Oz. If you don't meet the Maslow hierarchy basic needs, she won't be able to reintegrate. You want to break the circuit of the cycle of poverty that otherwise would send her child into the same cycle. Link her with services, provide her with accommodation and some financial assistances **[CR6 Yellow 2C]**.

You need some level of support from people who we feel comfortable with. It's mentioned she's really close to her sisters and family, and that's a positive in terms of managing stress, which she is – she has grief and loss, trauma background, she's pregnant, facing health issues. Having her sisters is really important,**[CR6 Green 2A]** as well as the services she needs for health, her children. This would balance out some of the risk factors for her.

CR 8: Economic is always a factor in this. There are – you can't solve the reintegration without solving the economic question. Part of integration in modern society involves economics. Everything costs money. You're not living in the village anymore, where you don't need much money. In modern society, you turn on the tap and there's a water bill. **[CR8 Green 2B]**

There's two ways. [Economic support] is not a problem for the government or for the community on their own. It needs to be a partnership between government and community – I mean between the institutions of government, the public service which is there to facilitate and cater for the needs of the people they serve **[CR8 Pink 3A]**.

What happens is that government tries to make it a problem for the community and the community say what you mean. It needs both in a partnership to work together to solve it. Government needs to offer welfare support, but the community needs to come in with some financial support via zakat. (2.5% of disposal income to others in need, a major pillar of Islam) **[CR8 – Pink 3A]**.

A community is not totally dependent on any one regime, so there is a self-sustaining economy. But in Australia, a lot of the zakat goes overseas, and doesn't stay here. We give interest free loan schemes NILS. But it's only a tiny fraction the money that we raise, b/c the community thinks are there poor people here?

So what needs to happen is community attitudes need to shift. To say I'll be accountable, I have a moral and religious obligation to help my fellow man and I'll come to the party. It needs to be done through a professional outfit, who can operate on a professional platform. It needs to be managed. So this agency should just be focusing on the needs of the local Muslim community.

Maryam could be supported in this way by the community to find the affordable accommodation she needs to ACCESS support through being near her sisters. We could also contribute to private health care that would expedite addressing her health concerns [CR8 Blue 2A].

It's about community attitudes and capacities, meaning resources. If the community were to build their own capacities to be more resourceful, and the government were to see this as a channel or vehicle to say, I as a government don't have direct grassroots connections, but this set of people do. So how about I support this group of people to help them help themselves. It's a partnership. [But] people don't trust the government in counter-terrorism. They don't trust the politicians and they don't distinguish between politicians and the institutions of government [CR8 Pink 1] .

CR 9: The main challenge is community acceptance. I've worked with the Pendennis boys. I was their social worker through the CISP program. The biggest challenge was through the Muslim community, who said don't bring them here, don't bring them to the mosque. The boys were shocked that they were not accepted back by society because they thought they'd suffered for Islam, been prosecuted for Islam and that they were heroes and should be celebrated. The mosque thought they were troublesome – worried about their influence on others, and also didn't want to attract attention of authorities and their suspicions.

For Maryam, that then makes the task of reintegration quite difficult. The mainstream might view Maryam as suspicious, and the Muslim community would see her as a risk in terms of guilt by association and unwanted attention from the authorities. [CR9 Yellow 3A]

CR11: Hard to say whether it will be the physical issues, or psychological issues, having been overseas, parenting issues, social side of having been through that. Trauma of having been through that. Probably trauma would be the bigger issue. Having been in a conflict zone and losing husband might be biggest issue [CR11 Yellow 2D].

She could face social isolation as people may be afraid to associate with her. May manifest for example in other moms not wanting her to participate in a mother's group, even though totally unrelated [CR11 Yellow 2A].

CR15: I think they're basic life issues for her. Decent life for her children. She sounds like someone who could put others before herself – the loyalty to her first husband. Put the marriage ahead of her own concerns. Doesn't appear that she was motivated by the same beliefs. I think she's about providing a decent life for her children and adjusting to life in Tasmania. Feeling unsure and uncertain about her future, about the status of her second husband. It's probably causing her some grief. If he's fully radicalised as a FF then that wouldn't be good for her or the family. But if he's not radicalised, then he's familiar with Australia and if he's just a normal person with no extreme or radicalised views then having him supporting his wife and family is clearly a better outcome [CR15 Yellow 2A, 2C].

She's got sisters who also live in Tassie, and that's a good thing, but they are in different state. **Some social isolation** if she can't see them, and also the health challenges. Complex challenges, and multiple [**CR15 2A, 2E**]

CR16: First is isolation. That she may not feel part of community and society and may not have support if she's not close to her sisters **CR16 2A**].

Concern for her mental health and what she's seen, being a widow, having young ones to care for [**CR16 2F**]

Social isolation is the main thing as well as not being understood. Challenging enough being Muslim, then a Muslim woman in today's society **CR16 2A**]. Tasmania is a small society and there are a lot of refugees placed in Tasmania – it's not easy for them there.

I don't know if she's obvious in terms of visible Muslim identity like hijab, etc. but I can't even imagine she could talk to her GP about her issues without raising alarm in the local community.

CR19: Stigma about coming back into the community. If she's coming back to live in a similar area as the community she left, then everyone will know that she left with Tom, he got killed as an FF, there will be some social distance from certain parts of the community, to the point that she could be ostracised or verbally assaulted. Two different kinds of community [responses] in that – 1 wants nothing to do with her, b/c they'll be shrivelled if they support her. Another part may have supported her leaving and will call her a traitor for returning, seeing her as boycotting the cause. The portion of the community who sees her as a traitor to the cause will see it as a betrayal of her values around marriage, and this could impact her. In cultured gender script marriage is very important. Marriage is an ideological milestone – in the Koran it says marriage will fill half of your deen – that's way more than join some war. So, I've done what I needed to do to follow my husband to the other side of the world, she'll feel betrayed. Another part of the community will see it that she obeyed, went overseas, and kept the family together and they will be able to separate his actions (the husbands) from her value [**CR19 Yellow 2G**]

There's also about her pre overseas community participation. If she's a contributor, community minded, working in an early learning centre, if she comes back in and isn't able to participate again she's got to find other ways to feel significant and activate her need for the community around her. Her main challenges will be around renegotiating her identity and her relationships with the community around her, what it means to be an Australian Muslim with UK Lebanese heritage [**CR 19 Yellow 2H**].

The context of the community in Tasmania – there needs to be a state based response not a national response. Negotiating your place in Tasmania is vastly different than Sydney or Melbourne. In Sydney you can hide in obscurity, less so in Melbourne, not in Tassie not at all. Even though they're vastly diverse culturally, they're so tiny as a group they all know each other.

It's sometimes better to put people where they are completely unknown. For other offenders, its about getting away from people who they know who are bad influences. The same goes in this context. It' a fresh start, no cloud about who knows about my story. This is a big thing for kids; picked up in the CVE space – you have this label over your head and no one will associate with you. The loneliness can then be horrible [**CR19 Yellow 2J**].

I wouldn't let my kid associate with someone in these circumstances b/c of worries about surveillance [**CR19 Grey 3A**].

The ramifications for the family: alienation of the family, because of the perception of surveillance, people will stop associating with them, they won't go to their houses on Eid b/c they think their houses will be bugged. People will pull away **[CR19 Grey 3B]**.

CR20: Come back to what? This is what we haven't established. She's also looking for a new experience. She has issues with her in-laws here – there's a whole bitter backstory there with her in-laws. She's aggrieved. That's not the only – she's unhappy with the way this country is going. If she had a choice she'd probably – I'm just guessing, but if she could go to Tanzania or Algeria or Africa where she could do something, she studies natural medicine, wants to be a teacher. She wants to make a positive difference. She wanted to start an orphanage with her husband. There is no evidence I've seen that shows that he was definitely a foreign fighter with IS in Syria. What [her husband, a FF] told me was that they were going over there for humanitarian reasons. They are out there giving food parcels, these people. They both got disillusioned with – she followed him after he died. The trigger that took her there after he died was – she didn't believe he died. She'd just given birth to her second child, her husband's dead, her in-laws are pressuring her, and she wanted to escape. Here's a door that's open to her. She wanted answers to the questions she had. She said dad, I want to tell my son about his father, why he came here, what he did and where he died. Sometimes people look for something to hang on to, especially. The stigma of criminalising based on where they've been and for the kids, what their mum and dad have done. Remember divorce 40 years ago? It's an unwritten thing. It has social consequences to it. And it's unnecessary. Where's the data that they are a security threat, the hard core data? From a financial perspective, throwing someone in prison costs hundreds of thousands – surely that's just crazy. Crazy. Her children being taken away from her, or the threat of that – that's just torture **[CR20 Grey 2A]**.

George Orwell went to Spain as a journo, and went back over as a fighter in the Spanish Civil War. Speculating is just guessing, but that's what [Issam] told me and I have no evidence to believe any different.

He was shot – the death certificate said he was shot in the head in 2014. At the time he died there was factional changes. People who were previously aligned together are now not working together anymore. I remember he said to me then, you should see what was going on over here, the treachery with everyone – it's not what you read, it's not what you see. Disillusioned? Yes, but you need to understand historically – what you think our governments do in our name.

The government is untrustworthy. It does not have a track record of sincerity in dealing with the issues. Making these services managed by the community and still stigmatising people under CVE just adds another layer of stigma. These are by and large Australian children, born here, raised here, educated here and with families here. They try and handpass this on just to the community and say this your problem, deal with it **[CR20 Pink 1]**.

You'll find that most of the people who have gone have been born here and have not gone to Islamic schools.

APPENDIX 5

HEADLINE FINDINGS

Community

REINTEGRATION CHALLENGES

Children

- The key personal challenges identified by community respondents in the reintegration of children include:
    - o emotional challenges as a result of the experience of trauma
    - o the negative impact of social isolation, particularly for adolescents
    - o Potential negative influence of radicalised family members and a lack of positive adult role models.

Women

- The key challenges for reintegrating women identified by interviewees were:
    - o social isolation and lack of social and family support
    - o stigma and lack of acceptance by communities
    - o mental health and socio-economic difficulties.

Challenges for community in reintegrating returnees

While Muslim communities are not homogenous regarding their views on returnees, the interviews indicate a significant range of perceived challenges for communities in reintegrating returnees. Reasons provided for a potential lack of acceptance include:

- Stigma of association with terrorism
- Fear of police surveillance
- Fear of damage to community reputation
- Fear of media exposure
- Fear of harm from returnees
- Rejection of ISIS/Daesh values

REINTEGRATION SUPPORT NEEDS AND STRUCTURES

Children

The most significant support needs for children were identified as:

- o psychological help to address the trauma of involvement in war
- o community support and engagement in prosocial community youth activities
- o mentoring, including religious mentoring.

Women

- A large number of interviewees identified:
    - o mental health support for women returnees
    - o a case management approach to help women address the complex challenges that they would face and link them effectively with services

Other support needs were:

- o community support

Who should provide what kind of support?
- A significant number of community respondents felt that Muslim community service organisations should be the primary actors in providing services for reintegration.
- A large number stated that the primary role of government is to support community services to provide this support through funding and resources.

Role of communities in providing/extending support for reintegration
- There isn't a homogenous view regarding the role of communities in reintegration and communities' level of support and acceptance of returnees.
- Approximately half of respondents stated unequivocally that they would be happy to support returnees
- An equal number expressed conditional support related to whether returnees had genuinely rejected radical ideologies.

Role of communities in providing/extending practical and social support
- A significant number of respondents identified the role of communities as providing informal and community support including youth support and mentoring.
- Several interviewees emphasised that community organisations should be the first point of contact for returnees.
- Another role for communities that many interviewees identified was case management support.
- Other roles included religious support, and to a lesser extent, financial support.

What resources are needed by communities to provide this support?
A large proportion of interviewees identified the key resources needed as:
  - an increase in the number of community based skilled professionals, such as psychologists
  - resources to support community based service provision.
Other key resource needs were:
  - information about existing professional services
  - education for communities about how to respond to returnees.

Barriers for communities in providing support
Key barriers identified by interviewees were:
  - fear and stigma related to associating with individuals who had been linked to terrorism
  - fear of government reprisal and police surveillance
  - fear of reputational damage or exposure
  - fear of the returnee still being involved in terrorism
  - rejection of ISIS ideology.

PERCEPTIONS OF RISK
Risks for returning children
Key risks identified for children were:
  - the influence of radicalised parents
  - idealisation by children of parents still involved in ISIS

o exposure to harmful influences online.

Risks for returning women

Major risks for women were seen as being:
- o social stigma and isolation and alienation from families.
- o declining mental and physical health.

Re-radicalisation and radicalisation of others were seen as lesser risks.

Risks for communities in engaging/providing support

The most significant risk for communities was seen as
- o risk of police surveillance
- o risk of media exposure.

There was a tension between the risk of unknowingly providing support for terrorism vs the risk of re-radicalisation of returnees if they were not reintegrated.

Managing perceived risks

- By far the majority of respondents felt that the best way of managing risks was through community engagement and intervention with returnees in order to address any concerning ideas or behaviours.
- Most *did* see a role for law enforcement but as a last resort after other means had been exhausted or certain thresholds crossed.
- Another important method for managing risks was community based case management.

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT REINTEGRATION

Willingness to partner

- An overwhelming number of interviewees saw communities lack of trust in the police as a major barrier to partnership.
- The majority of participants felt that police could play a supportive role in a community liaison type role or as part of case management.

What would successful partnerships on reintegration look like?

- A large number of respondents felt that the first step in a successful partnership would be to establish trust between police and communities.
- The majority saw the community playing a leadership role in such a partnership, particularly in relation to community facing service delivery.

Responsibilities of community and government in partnerships

- Respondents saw the primary responsibility of government as providing economic support for community service provision.
- They saw the community as responsible for informal reintegration as well as professional services for returnees.

Government

Section 1 - Challenges

A. MAIN CHALLENGES FACING CHILD RETURNEES
1. Social isolation, lack of belonging, feeling 'different', challenges of normalizing
2. Age-based/developmental vulnerability

B. MAIN CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN/FAMILIES RETURNING
1. Social isolation
2. Lack of knowledge/inability to navigate service and support landscape

C. MAIN CHALLENGES FACING COMMUNITIES IN SUPPORTING RETURNEES
1. Lack of consensus within communities, polarised community responses – some want to support and protect, others avoid and reject
2. Lack of trust in those returning – do they really want to reintegrate
3. For schools: capacity and knowledge to adequately manage and respond to challenging/safeguarding behaviors and impacts
4. Fear of enhanced scrutiny of individuals and communities by government if engage with returnees

D. MAIN POLICY CHALLENGES FOR REINTEGRATING RETURNEES IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES
1. Consultation PRIOR to embedding returnees is critical – but how should this consultation happen, with whom and with what outcomes
2. Confidentiality for returning families and extended family members – privacy issues, media leaks, risks of wrong information in wrong hands (see also section on RISK)
3. Successful integration of returnees requires successful integration of government services: governance, distribution of responsibility across local/state/commonwealth, avoiding people falling through cracks or getting bounced around between agencies, services and points of contact
4. Signaling approach and intent to communities: getting the tone right in balancing reintegration/therapeutic approaches with security concerns

Section 2 – Support needs

A. SUPPORT NEEDS FOR RETURNING CHILDREN
1. Mentor and/or peer support, positive role models
2. Social support – networks, engagement, inclusion, a 'fresh start'
3. Psychological support – counseling to address grief, trauma loss, depression, anxiety, PTSD, etc. – needs-based analysis
4. Ensuring harness existing resilience assets, pro social capacities and interests of child and adolescent returnees
5. Holistic family support – stabilizing the whole family environment and resource base, not just the young person's
6. School-based support – Educational and vocational opportunities and engagement

B. SUPPORT NEEDS FOR RETURNING WOMEN/FAMILIES
1. Psychological support – grief, trauma, loss, depression, anxiety, PTSD, etc.
2. Disengagement/desistence support
3. Culturally appropriate support – bicultural, linguistic, religious, gendered

C. WHO SHOULD PROVIDE WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT?

1. Single point of contact/case management model, integrated service providers, government-led
2. Combined community/government partnership – integrated family support similar to family violence safety and support hub
3. RAMP model – government/community integrated services based on risk assessment
4. Community/government partnership similar to CSG – community led, government supported

MOST FAVOURED MODEL BY GOVERNMENT AND PRACTITIONER RESPONDENTS WAS:
- COMBINED COMMUNITY-GOVERNMENT INTEGRATED MODEL IN WHICH:
    o SERVICES AND BOTH FORMAL/INFORMAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGS
    o RISK MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT PROVIDED BY GOVERNMENT
    o SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT FOR RETURNEES – COMMUNITY BASED
    o COORDINATION ACROSS SUPPORT AND MONITORING LEVELS MANAGED BY ONE AGENCY

Section 3 – Role of communities in providing reintegration support
A. **PERCEIVED LEVELS OF COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE OF RETURNEES**
    1. High – at least some communities would respond with compassion and welcome – but always depends which communities we're talking about – can't assume homogeneity
    2. Low – communities feel under siege on terrorism issues more generally, vulnerable to negative media interest and coverage/scrutiny, vulnerable to reputation taint and gossip, less likely to support

B. **WHAT KINDS OF SUPPORT CAN/SHOULD COMMUNITIES OFFER?**
    1. Informal roles centered on social connection and belonging (both spatial and cultural)
    2. Helping normalise the experience of returning to and living in Australian communities

C. **WHAT RESOURCES AND CAPACITIES DO COMMUNITIES NEED TO PROVIDE SUCH SUPPORT?**
Key take away point here is the need to assess not just returnees, but also communities in terms of capacity to support reintegration
    1. Consultation and preparation with communities before returnees are embedded is crucial
    2. Need to map community resources, willingness and religious/cultural alignment prior to selecting areas for return
    3. Assessing willingness of communities (or at least some within communities) to work with government on reintegration program and support, oversight

D. **HOW MUCH SHOULD COMMUNITIES BE TOLD ABOUT RETURNING CHIILDREN/WOMEN/FAMILIES?**
    1. Don't tell – consider cover story or narrative for returnees to help avoid rumor, gossip, rejection – see also privacy and info sharing data further on
    2. Cover stories are not a good basis for meaningful relationship – more important is teaching returnees who to trust and how much to disclose without lying
    3. Balancing safety concerns of community with privacy legislation and security needs is tricky and needs careful working through regarding information-sharing

E. WHAT RESOURCES DO COMMUNITIES NEED TO OFFER GOOD REINTEGRATION SUPPORT?
1. Same resources as they do to provide any kind of social support – are they capable, do they have financial and human capital to distribute and build on, are they resilient, can they navigate both horizontal and vertical resources and relationships
2. General awareness raising resources – BUT NOT ABOUT SPECIFIC CHILDREN OR FAMILIES
3. Information sharing – integrated knowledge and service/support enables successful reintegration and communities need to be part of this matrix
4. Resources to cope with media interest – not a general training package, but working with communities to choose one or two local advocates/liaisons who can handle all media inquiries

F. BARRIERS FOR COMMUNITIES IN PROVIDING REINTEGRATION SUPPORT
1. Communities that struggle in general are going to struggle in particular with returnees – toxicity, scarce resources, etc.
2. Lack of knowledge about how best to offer support
3. Managing both realistic and unrealistic fears and concerns
4. Negative media coverage or adverse publicity/criticism that lowers community morale or creates sense of threat
5. Perception that this is a CVE initiative with strings attached

Section 4 – Risks
A. RISKS FOR RETURNING CHILDREN
1. Risk of parent/s' behaviour/influence adversely affecting child returnees, including psychological risks and material risks such as flight risks
2. Absence of father – huge – idealizing him, trying to find/follow/join him
3. Risk of identity/background disclosure leading to stigma, bullying, social isolation and lack of safety
4. Disengagement from healthy/prosocial networks
5. Delayed or emergent mental health risks
6. Readjustment and/or developmental challenges linked to trauma and feeling overwhelmed

B. RISKS FOR RETURNING WOMEN/FAMILIES
1. Returning to hostile or threatening environment
2. Social isolation
3. Mental health challenges
4. Vulnerability to re-radicalization or failed disengagement as result of above – falling back in with 'wrong crowd'

C. RISKS FOR COMMUNITIES
1. Backlash from others in community opposed to support for reintegration
2. Fears of surveillance and LE intrusion in community life
3. Reputation taint
4. Potential for others in community to be radicalized by returnees; fears of radicalized violence locally (what are the thresholds and reassurances that can be given)

D. MANAGING PERCEIVED RISKS
1. Threat assessment is a must – both prior to and during community reintegration program

2. Helping community understand and identity thresholds for when a LE response may be necessary
3. Challenges of managing a genuine collaborative approach across agencies and partners in community/government when differing thresholds of intervention, support and monitoring may apply – community vs gov't expectations
4. Duty of care re threat of radicalized violence same as that for other forms of violence in the community
5. Rapid and iterative reassessment capacity and informational-sharing vital if/as risk profile for returnee/s changes
6. Adequate and well informed triaging should not be left to communities on their own
7. Agreed risk indicators that will trigger LE investigation and ensuring communities understand what these are and when they may apply

Section 5 – Government-community reintegration partnerships
1. There will not be consensus within or across communities – more a question of leveraging capacity within communities where it can be found and simultaneously working to respond to concerns and resistance where it can't
2. Mapping trust relationships in local areas to see how much needs to be built in advancing government-community cooperation on returnee issues
3. Multi-agency, case-management-based, government-community panels likely to be the best model sitting behind returnee-facing services and support
4. SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT FOR RETURNEES who liaises and coordinates services and sightlines is essential – but who this should be is contested
5. Upskilling of local community organisations and key personnel is needed and should be resourced – saying skills don't exist and not addressing will simply perpetuate impression that government wants to stay totally in control
6. Culturally appropriate engagement and 'perception management' (optics) can be a challenge to existing service provider organisation relationships with government (e.g. putting noses of Anglican and Salvos out of joint)
7. Information sharing and consistent, unified risk assessment protocols are critical and need socializing at community level
8. Partnership model between government and communities where the needs and concerns of each are listened to and heard by each other is vital – working from a shared basis the way forward
9. Indicators of success for an effective reintegration model:
    a. Community acceptance of appropriate government involvement
    b. Government acceptance of appropriate community involvement
    c. Good intentions and good management agreed between all parties
    d. Clear and consistent information
    e. Genuine willingness to listen to each other and seek solutions and compromises
    f. Honesty, integrity and transparency

APPENDIX 6

ALIGNMENT BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT HEADLINE FINDINGS

Section 1: Reintegration challenges

A. MAIN CHALLENGES FACING CHILD RETURNEES

Community	Government
Negative impact of social isolation, particularly for adolescents	Social isolation, lack of belonging, feeling 'different', challenges of normalizing

B. MAIN CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN/FAMILIES RETURNING

Community	Government
Social isolation and lack of social and family support	Social isolation

C. MAIN CHALLENGES FACING COMMUNITIES IN SUPPORTING RETURNEES

Community	Government
Fear of police surveillance	Fear of enhanced scrutiny of individuals and communities by government if engage with returnees
Rejection of ISIS/Daesh values	Lack of trust in those returning – do they really want to reintegrate

Section 2: Reintegration support needs and structures

A. SUPPORT NEEDS FOR RETURNING CHILDREN

Community	Government
Mentoring, including religious mentoring	Mentor and/or peer support, positive role models
Psychological help to address the trauma of involvement in war	Psychological support – counselling to address grief, trauma loss, depression, anxiety, PTSD, etc.

B. SUPPORT NEEDS FOR RETURNING WOMEN/FAMILIES

Community	Government
Mental health support for women returnees	Psychological support – grief, trauma, loss, depression, anxiety, PTSD

C. WHO SHOULD PROVIDE WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT?

Community	Government
Muslim community service organisations should be the primary actors in providing services for reintegration.	Community/government partnership similar to CSG – community led, government supported

Section 3: Role of communities in providing/extending support for reintegration

Community	Government
There isn't a homogenous view regarding the role of communities in reintegration and communities' level of support and acceptance of returnees.	High – at least some communities would respond with compassion and welcome Low – communities feel under siege on terrorism issues

A. ROLE OF COMMUNITIES IN PROVIDING/EXTENDING PRACTICAL AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

Community	Government
Providing informal and community support including youth support and mentoring.	Informal roles centered on social connection and belonging (both spatial and cultural)

B. WHAT RESOURCES ARE NEEDED BY COMMUNITIES TO PROVIDE THIS SUPPORT?

Community	Government
Education for communities about how to respond to returnees	General awareness raising resources
Information about existing professional services	Information sharing – integrated knowledge and service/support

C. KEY BARRIERS FOR COMMUNITIES IN PROVIDING REINTEGRATION SUPPORT

Community	Government
Fear of reputational damage or media exposure	Negative media coverage or adverse publicity/criticism

APPENDIX 7

TABLETOP EXERCISE

SCENARIO SHEET 1 (IMMEDIATELY AFTER ARRIVAL)

WALEED, aged 14, Melbourne

SCENARIO 1: Waleed is a 14 year old boy. His mother, Sandra, was born and grew up in an outer Melbourne suburb. In her late teens, Sandra converted to Islam after meeting her future husband Malik, a naturalised Australian citizen from Morocco. Following her marriage in 2002, Sandra held a job as a bookkeeper in a local Melbourne business and was well integrated within her local Muslim community, becoming active in different volunteering roles and initiatives run by her local community centre. **Waleed,** Sandra and Malik's only child, was born in 2003.

Malik has made trips back and forth every couple of years to his home village in Morocco. He has been investigated by authorities who suspected he travelled via Morocco to Islamic State-controlled territories to engage in violent conflict in Iraq. Sandra travelled with him twice, taking her eldest son Waleed with her for extended periods between 2011-13 and again between 2014-15, but in late 2015 returned back to Australia with Waleed but without Waleed's father.

When she returned to Australia, Sandra presented as a single mother who said she had separated from her husband Malik. While she has told friends and workmates that she and her husband separated in Morocco because they had a falling out, precipitating her return to Australia with their son, it is unclear whether she and Malik are still in contact, or indeed whether Waleed's father Malik is still alive.

Questions

What needs to be done?	Who needs to do it?	How will it be done?
1. Identify which community Waleed and Sandra go to		
2. Consult with relevant community leaders re placement		
3. Map available resources and services in identified community		
4. Put in place a media strategy		

5. Identify single point of contact for returnees		
6. Identify case manager		
7. Coordinate community support		
8. Coordinate government support		
9. Establish government/ community coordination		
10. Equip community leaders with relevant information and education		
11. Equip general community with relevant information and education		
12. Equip pertinent service providers with relevant information		
13. Ongoing monitoring and communication around emerging risks		
14. Others ??		

SCENARIO SHEET 2 (WHEN REINTEGRATION NEEDS AND RISKS CHANGE)

SCENARIO 2: In 2016 Sandra made a total of five international money transfers to four internationally based individuals, all of whom were identified by authorities as persons of interest to international counter-terrorism investigators. The funds transfers sent by Sandra went to Morocco, Iraq and Turkey. The reasons provided by Sandra for these international money transfers were listed as "family support" and "personal". Law enforcement agencies think it is likely that before her return to Australia Sandra provided direct in-country financial support to her husband. However, since the time she says they separated, Sandra has not provided any traceable financial support to her husband offshore using international money transfer channels. Since she came back to Australia in late 2015, Sandra's only known means of support are a combination of Centrelink payments from Newstart, Family Tax Benefit and Rental Assistance schemes totalling about $1,100 per fortnight.

Two weeks after the arrangements in Scenario 1 have been put in place, Waleed's mother, Sandra, is identified as potentially being involved in supporting financial transfer operations to conflict zones to via Morocco. Her local online and offline contact with known violent extremist influencers has increased. Monitoring and intervention of Sandra's activities increases. However, her activities have not yet met a criminal threshold for investigation or arrest.

Questions

What needs to be done?	Who needs to do it?	How will it be done?
15. Identify which community Waleed and Sandra go to		
16. Consult with relevant community leaders re placement		
17. Map available resources and services in identified community		
18. Put in place a media strategy		
19. Identify single point of contact for returnees		
20. Identify case manager		
21. Coordinate community support		
22. Coordinate government support		
23. Establish government/ community coordination		
24. Equip community leaders with relevant		

information and education		
25. Equip general community with relevant information and education		
26. Equip pertinent service providers with relevant information		
27. Ongoing monitoring and communication around emerging risks		
28. Others ??		

SCENARIO SHEET 3

SCENARIO 3: Waleed lives with his mother Sandra in a quiet suburb in Melbourne, near her older sister. Sandra works odd hours as an account manager at a local hospital. There are concerns that she may continue to use her finances to send funds overseas. Waleed goes to a local public school, but does not have many friends at this school. He is not physically active in sport or recreation activities. He spends many hours online and is keen to visit his father, whom his mother tells him remains overseas. Waleed struggles to communicate verbally with his teachers and with his classmates. However, he likes to draw cartoon-style pictures and stories and is reasonably gifted as an illustrator. Some of these pictures depict elements of brutal beatings and executions that he may have personally witnessed or been involved in overseas, or else has viewed online. Waleed shows no outward signs of violence or aggression towards others, instead presenting as a lonely and withdrawn teenage boy with few social connections or hobbies outside his online surfing and drawing activities.

Two months after Sandra's online and offline activities have been flagged for heightened risk, her activity increases dramatically to the threshold for criminal investigation. There is a prospect that she may be arrested and charged. Waleed has been living with Sandra at home in their local suburb, attending school and doing well in an extracurricular art class and the local youth centre. His home life is now at risk of being destabilised with his main carer (his mother) potentially facing criminal charges.

Questions

What needs to be done?	Who needs to do it?	How will it be done?
29. Identify which community Waleed and Sandra go to		
30. Consult with relevant community leaders re placement		

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31. Map available resources and services in identified community		
32. Put in place a media strategy		
33. Identify single point of contact for returnees		
34. Identify case manager		
35. Coordinate community support		
36. Coordinate government support		
37. Establish government/ community coordination		
38. Equip community leaders with relevant information and education		
39. Equip general community with relevant information and education		
40. Equip pertinent service providers with relevant information		
41. Ongoing monitoring and communication around emerging risks		
42. Others ??		