Strategies dealing with radicalisation and extremism in QLD

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Introduction

- QLD Muslim community:
  - Population size (~ 45,000 much less than VIC & NSW)
  - Ethnics diversity (South African, Fijian, Bosnian, Indian/Pakistani, Arab)
  - Educational backgrounds
  - Professional occupations
  - Islamic organisations (CIQ, ICQ, IWAQ, IMAQ, MCF, Al-Nisa, AMARAH, UMB, Revival etc.)
  - Number of Mosques (19) + Musalas (~10)
QLD terrorism cases

• Dr Mohamad Hanif?

• Others? (reported suicide bombing)
Why no violent extremism or radicalisation in QLD?

• Perhaps lucky!

• Difficult to ascertain contributing factors

• But we can perhaps make the following assumptions:
Possible Factors

1. Pro-active measures post 9/11 & burning of Kuraby Mosque
2. Preventative measures
3. Interventionist measures
4. Empirical research
Possible positive contributing factors
Demography

- South African Muslims in Brisbane are wealthy business people, medical doctors and professionals.
- Prominent size of highly educated Muslims, especially medical doctors.
- Large Muslim communities in rural areas that have a long-standing presence in QLD, such as the Albanian Muslims of Mareeba in far North Queensland; the Rane Family, the Deen Family.
Pro-Active approach

- **Examples:**
  - Burning of the Kuraby Masjid
  - Community funded GIRU ($600,000):
    1. Graduates who understand both contexts
    2. Research into relevant contextual areas
    3. Public relations, etc.
  - Immediately following the Cronulla riots in Sydney 2005.
  - **Working** with groups with extreme views (via meetings, engagement, appointing the ‘right’ Imam to offer classes…example of Algerian Imams working with Bosnians).
Unified Media Voice

• Since 9/11, deliberate strategy to have appropriate persons to represent the community:
  – Achieved approval of community
  – Sought to calm tensions
  – Offer a voice of reason
  – Prevent radical representation
  – Media training
Community Workshops

• **De-radicalisation** workshop (ICQ funded by Attorney General’s office, assisted by NCEIS) – across QLD & targeting youth

• **Democracy** Workshops (ICQ, Crescents of Brisbane and AMARAH)

• **Leadership training** (all of above supported by major organisations)

• **Media training** for Imams and leaders
Engaging youth with QLD Police

- Action taken immediately after:
  1. The Cronulla riots
  2. The violent protests in Sydney against film
  3. Local PLO
Khutbas addressing sensitive topics

• United voice & constant education by Imams to address sensitive topics such as:

  1. Islam and democracy (after convert Ibrahim-Conlon appeared on Sixty Minutes and Today Tonight condemning democracy)
  2. Violent extremism and Islam (after the foiled terrorist events in VIC)
  3. Australian Muslim identity (see sample)
  4. The Arab Spring
  5. The plight of the Palestinians, etc.
CIQ’s approach

- Council of Imams of QLD responds collectively and with a united voice to important and sensitive issues:
  - The ‘Aqida Watch Website
  - Initiating meeting with Director of ASIO
  - Responding collectively to violent extremist ideology
  - Open to community participations at CIQ meetings
Academic research with active community involvement

• GIRU – supported and funded by community.
• Research in sensitive fields:
  
  i. **Leadership in Aust. Islamic Organisations and Radicalisation among Youth** (ARC application)
  
  ii. **The Debate on Violent Extremism: Voices of QLD Muslim Youth**
  
  iii. **IPV among Australian Muslim community** – **Completed PhD** (publication on IPV and Islam)
  
  iv. **Investigating violent radicalisation amongst Muslim adolescents: Prevalence and risk factors** (PhD)
  
  v. **Synthesis between Prophetic pedagogy and productive pedagogy** (for Islamic schools and madrassas) – **PhD**
  
  vi. Research paper ‘**Sacred Law in Secular Land: The Extent to which a Muslim is Obliged to Follow Sharia in Australia**’
No answers without evidence

• All projects include key members of community and give them ownership (meetings; discussions; consultation; feedback).

• Findings provide empirical evidence on extent of the problem allowing us to deal with it more effectively.
  – Working papers for Imams and social workers
Thank you