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Social Implications of Fearing Terrorism. A report on Australian responses to the images

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Social implications of fearing terrorism.

A report on Australian responses to the images
and discourses of terrorism and the other:
Establishing a metric of fear



Australian Government
Australian Research Council



An Australian Research Council Discovery Project

Incorporating the recommendations of a community workshop held at UNSW in November 2008

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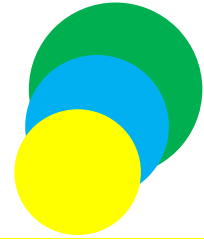
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www.explodingmediamyths.org.au/publications.html

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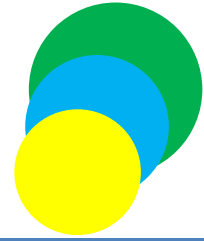
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Foreword



This research project began back in 2004 when Professor Mark Balnaves and I proposed, and eventually won, an Australian Research Council Discovery Project. It took its shape from the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ of the events of September 11 2001 in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania and soon moved into a ‘what does this mean for Australia?’ It gradually became clear, in the media and elsewhere, that the social and cultural landscape was shifting in dramatic and uncomfortable ways, especially for Australian Muslims. Over the following months and years there were a number of scholarly Australian studies concerning the manner in which our media represents Muslims. These studies were as fascinating as they were unsettling, and left little doubt that the separate shocks delivered by bombings in Bali, Madrid and London were further impacting the everyday lives of people who lived oceans and sometimes continents away from the site of the atrocities. Mark and I got to wondering about how Australians were responding to the commentary upon fear and terror that seemed to be consuming so much of the daily news. Did Australian Muslims understand this coverage in ways that differed from the meanings made by broader community Australians? We suspected that there was a difference in the perceptions of the two audiences, but no-one seemed to have done the research and thus there were no firm indications as to what form such differences might take.

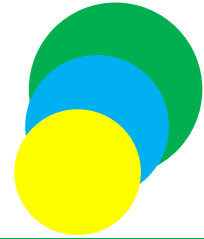
That research has now been done, and the results are reported here. There is also an account of a community forum held at the University of New South Wales on 20 November 2008 which, for the research team, offered a chance to feed back to the communities that had supported the work, to move the focus of enquiry from the west of Australia to the east, and to present and discuss the project’s findings. Some workshop participants suggested that a range of recommendations should be put forward, and set about crafting them. Those recommendations start this report.

It is just over five years since this project was funded and there is a huge range of people to whom Mark and I owe thanks. First and foremost, as the publication list makes clear, our thanks go to the PhD stipend holder who lived and breathed this project even before she knew it existed. Dr Anne Aly, as she is now, is a phenomenal researcher and a warm and generous colleague. Mrs Linda Jaunzems was unfailing in her thoughtful and thorough management of the daily nuts and bolts of finances, meetings, contracts and all other organisational minutiae. Various members of Perth’s many Muslim communities, and from the broader community, were generous in giving their time and their honest, and sometimes painful, insights in interviews and focus groups. The research would have been impossible without broad community support representing a diverse range of ethnic, cultural and religious groupings. We are very grateful to Professor Gerard Goggin, of the University of New South Wales’s Journalism and Media Research Centre, for offering an eastern states locale for the community forum. The four ‘scribes’: David Blight; Bridie Conellan; Elizabeth Moorhead and Lucasz Swiatek were recruited from the University of Sydney’s Journalism program and did a fabulous job of keeping a record of the day. Since then, Laura Nelson has worked as the project’s research assistant, weaving in the loose threads. Finally we thank the speakers, group leaders and participants in the Community Forum: they are listed individually at the end of this report.

Lelia Green

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Executive Summary



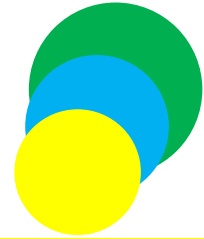
On 20 November 2008, 29 participants came together for the Exploding Media Myths: Misrepresenting Australia Forum at the University of NSW in Sydney. The Forum was designed to bring together keynote speakers, academics, policy makers, the media and community to discuss the findings of an Australian Research Council Discovery Project, *Australian Responses to the Images and Discourses of Terrorism and the Other: Establishing a Metric of Fear*. Over the course of the day, the participants discussed a range of themes relevant to the media and its representation of Australia and Australian values in the context of increased incidences of vilification against Australian Muslims; a policy focus on social inclusion, citizenship and adherence to Australian values, and heightened levels of fear and anxiety about the state of security and infringements on civil liberties in a post 9/11 world.

Discussion groups argued that there is:

- A perceived mismatch between pervasive media coverage of terrorism risk and the objective risk of terrorism in the context of other risks managed on an everyday basis;
- A legislative response out of proportion to the risk, which heightens a sense of fear rather than lessening it;
- A discussion about core Australian values which does not pay appropriate weight to civil liberties, free speech and the supporting of minorities;
- A media construction of Australian Muslims as objects of fear when the everyday experience of community members is fearfulness of the broader community, because of verbal and physical assaults and vilification;
- A lack of recognition that an accelerating climate of fear threatens a sense of social inclusion;
- The absence of strategies to reduce the fear levels sends a message that social cohesion is not important;
- A uni-dimensional, security- force- based approach to counterterrorism and a lack of focus on soft measures that work with the community to support and encourage positive expressions of dissent;
- Inadequate engagement with a range of fears: four of which were identified as fear of physical harm; political fear; fear of losing civil liberties; feeling insecure;
- No strong message that civil and political systems will cease using fear as a policy tool;
- No policy engagement with the different levels and kinds of fear experienced in different communities or, consequently, with developing and promoting strategies to address those fears;
- Concern that short term fears are used to justify long term assaults on established civil liberties and legislative frameworks without sunset clauses or commitment to review.

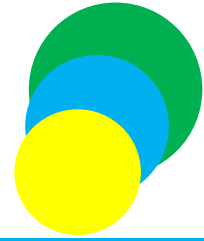
These groups suggested it would be useful to make a range of recommendations.

Recommendations



1. Regular reminders about the real everyday risk of terrorism compared with smoking, alcohol use, driving and other mortality risks;
2. Reframing of the legislative debate: have we gone too far for the level of threat identified?
3. Reiteration of Australian values that support civil liberties and the right to own and express minority and unpopular views; opening up debate and affirming minorities.
4. Public recognition of the effects of the climate of fear upon Australian Muslim communities and active steps to assuage that fear.
5. Active policy and practices to build and value social cohesion.
6. Monitoring and responding to community-based fear levels plus close investigation to discover the components of the fear response and the matters which need addressing.
7. Engagement with communities to explore and implement collaborative anti-terrorism measures.
8. An appreciation that there is a range of ways in which fear is manifested.
9. Interrogation of fear responses to dissect the various components of fear and address each of them appropriately.
10. A strong political commitment to avoiding the use and propagation of fear of minority groups to further a political agenda.
11. The inclusion of sunset clauses to bring restrictive civil liberties legislation and policies to review on a regular basis.

Should We Fear Fear Itself?



The terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001, we were told, changed the world forever. The attacks heralded a new era of ideological conflict, the “clash of civilisations” (Huntington, 1993), and ushered in a new state of consciousness, living with the ‘war on terror’. In his Address to Congress and the American people on 20 September 2001, US President George W. Bush, defined the attacks as a ‘new’ kind of war: one that extended beyond previously established margins of combat to the unchartered battlefields of ideological warfare:

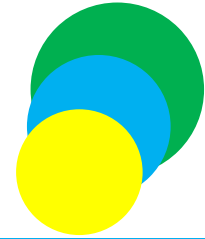
Americans have known wars – but for the past 136 years, they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war – but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks – but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day – and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack. (Bush, 2001)

Five years later, on the anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks, President Bush reaffirmed the ‘new’ boundaries of the ‘war on terror’, stating “The war against this enemy is more than a military conflict. It is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century, and the calling of our generation” (Bush, 2006).

In Australia, we were told to “be alert but not alarmed”. In June 2002 then-Prime Minister John Howard invoked Australia’s cultural kinship with the United States to position Australia, along with the rest of the ‘free’ world, as a target for terrorists: “The horrifying events in the United States last September drew Australia, and the rest of the world, into a new and largely unpredictable security environment” (*Counter-terrorism review*, 2002). In a ‘Post 9/11’ world, “Insecurity” we were told, “is the new normal” (Massumi, 2005, p. 31). As a result, insecurity is transformed from a situational emotional response (Cameron & McCormick, 1954) to a perpetual state of alertness; and terrorism is imagined as an unknown, but impending, doom.

Everyday situations (traveling to and from work) and objects (a back-pack, a credit card, a mobile phone) become subliminally associated with the threat of terrorism. The terrorist threat, articulated through images of the ordinary and banal, is situated in the everyday: normalizing the threat and re-constructing what would otherwise be considered exceptional measures as rational, prudent, even necessary (Huysmans, 2004). The increased security presence at airports, the persistent salience of the *National Security Information Campaign* urging Australians to report “possible signs of terrorism to the National Security Hotline,” even six years after it was first launched by the previous Government (*National Security Campaign*, 2002); and the progressive introduction of legislative amendments in the interests of national security, invoke the spectre of terrorism and amplify threat in the public imagination.

In public usage, the term terrorism takes on an expanded meaning and refers as much to a *state of terror* as an *act of terrorism*. Perhaps the most telling example of how the boundaries



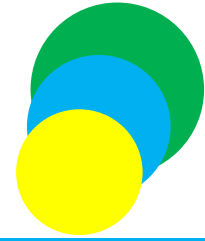
of meaning of terrorism and terror have become collapsed in public usage is the widely used term ‘war on terror’ in reference to what is essentially a ‘war on terrorism’. What is particularly interesting here is that *terror* describes a state of intense or extreme fear. The very use of *terror* over *terrorism* implies that fear, or *terror*, has become the most pervasive element of *terrorism*. Terrorism has successfully terrorised.

Since the tragic events of 11 September 2001, a new linguistic terminology has been coined that is exclusive to the contemporary discourse on terrorism. Phrases such as “the war on terror”, “Islamic terrorism”, “militant Islam”, “Islamist extremists”, “the coalition of the willing” and “the axis of evil” may have had their origins in the political rhetoric concerning the 11 September 2001 attacks, and the subsequent responses to the attacks, but they have become a staple in the media discourse on terrorism.

These new discourses of terrorism have emerged as a way of expressing how the world has changed and as a means through which to define a state of constant alert (Altheide, 2004). Terrorism has become the new metonym for our time where the ‘war on terror’ refers to a perpetual state of alertness as well as a range of strategic operations, border control policies, internal security measures and public awareness campaigns such as ‘be alert, not alarmed’. The ‘*atmosfear*’ of terror (Aly & Balnaves, 2005) has permeated the construction of the Western world as being constantly under the threat of terrorism.

According to a poll published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in April 2004, 68 percent of Australians believed that Australia was under threat of an imminent terrorist attack.

Since the September 11 attacks in the United States, the Australian government has progressively introduced a range of counter terrorism measures including over 30 legislative amendments to the Criminal Code, Crimes Legislation (2006), Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Legislation, Telecommunications Act (2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007) and Customs Legislation (2006). In addition it has introduced a number of new laws: the Anti-Terrorism Bill 2004, the Surveillance Devices Bill 2004, National Security Information (Criminal Proceedings) Bill 2005 and the Aviation Transport Security Bill 2003. More recent amendments to the Aviation Transport Security Bill in 2007 regulated liquids, aerosols and gels and allowed for appropriate frisk searches. The Anti- Terrorism Bill 2005 amended existing offences in the Criminal Code to clarify that it is not necessary to identify a particular terrorist act to prove that an offence has occurred. In response to the London terrorist bombings in 2005 the government also announced amendments to terrorism legislation that increased police powers to detain persons of interest suspected of sedition (*Internet resource guide: Australian terrorism law*, 2007). At the same time, experts maintain that Australia’s risk profile has remained unchanged and Australia is yet to experience a terrorist attack of the same proportion as 9/11, Bali (although Bali was constructed as a surrogate attack on Australia), Madrid or London.



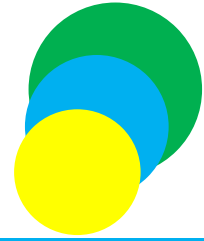
Engaging a range of counter terrorism strategies that are disproportionate to the actual risk of a terrorist attack defines terrorism as an object of fear that would direct public concern, and positions the public as potential victims of an ever present threat. The kinds of measures introduced by the Australian government in response to the London bombings, such as those regarding detaining and interrogating suspected terrorists, would once have seemed an unthinkable assault on civil liberties and unreasonably authoritarian. Yet in the ‘war on terror’, framed as a global battle between good and evil, policies and strategies that once seemed impossible suddenly become constructed as rational, if not prudent (Stern, 2004).

In times of crisis the reasoned negotiation of risk is marginalised. In the case of the ‘war on terror’, the use of discourses of national security and sovereignty were central to intensifying the fear of terrorism and hence marginalising the reasoned negotiation of the risk (Spence, 2005). The apparent incongruence between the publicly perceived threat of terrorism reflected in public opinion polls, and Australia’s actual risk profile, has led some scholars to conclude that the fear of terrorism is, in fact, a fear of nothing. Instead, the fear of terrorism becomes an anticipatory fear that hinges on chimera: the ability of the state to induce and influence collective opinion by magnifying the actual threat of terrorism (Robin, 2004). According to Robin’s argument (2004), the social fear of terrorism is an irrational fear of impending doom that relies on the ability of institutions, political and media, to magnify the threat of terrorism and promulgate anxiety and a sense of insecurity among the populace. Such an approach to fear suggests that the fear of terrorism in Australia may be a reaction to an unknown danger transmitted through society as a result of the focus placed on preventing terrorism. Robin’s views are based on the fact that Australia has not experienced a terrorist attack on Australian soil¹ and upon an assumption that social anxiety and fear in relation to terrorism are quite apart from the threat or likelihood of an actual terrorist attack.

Far from being a fear of nothing, however, the fear of terrorism can lead to a very real and rational fear that arises out of the *actual, lived experiences* of how terrorism has impacted on the everyday lives of people. To counter the arguments posited by purveyors of political fear is to suggest that the fear of terrorism is not just a fear of terrorists per se, or the perceived risk of being physically harmed in a terrorist attack. Rather, a conceptualisation of the fear of terrorism must take into account felt anxiety, worry, distress and concern about the social and political impacts of global terrorism and the local counter-terrorism response. These responses are not figments, nor are they uncertain, they are responses that have had, and continue to have, real consequences for the everyday lives of real people. Responses such as an increased security presence, heightened discrimination and vilification of Australian Muslims, social disharmony and the manipulation of community fear for political ends have very real impacts.

Additionally, the media and popular discourses on terrorism in Australia have tended to prompt a debate on the Islamic presence in Australia, portrayed as a clash of cultural values. This discourse has been assisted by comments from Federal politicians. In an address to the Sydney Institute on 23 February 2006, on the topic of Australian Citizenship, then Federal

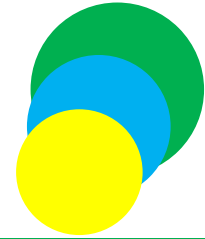
¹ The Bali Bombings in October 2002 in which 88 Australians died, were constructed in the media and political rhetoric as a defacto attack on Australia.



Treasurer Peter Costello, speaking to the audience about Australia's democratic tradition, stated that those who oppose democratic legislature and do not abide by Australia's laws should be refused Australian citizenship. He immediately followed this comment with a reference to terrorists and those who support them, and then proceeded to single out Muslims as those who have "strong objections" to the Australian values of "loyalty, democracy, tolerance, the rule of law..." (Costello, 2006). Shortly afterwards, the Federal Government announced its intention to introduce a formal citizenship test designed to test commitment to a set of ill-defined 'Australian values'. The construction of the war on terror as a global battle between 'the West and the rest' imbues the fear of terrorism with redemptive qualities of particular relevance to the mainstream community. Such a strategy enables and facilitates behavioural responses associated with a reaffirmation of 'western' identity and membership of a collective, while simultaneously denying membership of that collective to those perceived to be 'other'. This response has found expression in a perception of Islam and, by association, of Australian Muslims, as an alien, culturally incompatible and ominous other.

In a major survey in Australia immediately after the September 11 attacks, Dunn & Mahtani (2001) found that more than any other cultural or ethnic group, Muslims and people from the Middle East were thought to be unable to fit into Australia. Two-thirds of those surveyed believed that humanity could be sorted into natural categories of race, with the majority feeling that Australia was weakened by people of different ethnic origins. Fifty-four per cent of those surveyed, mainly women, said they would be concerned if a relative of theirs married a Muslim.

Australian Responses to the Images and Discourses of Terrorism and the Other: Establishing a Metric of Fear



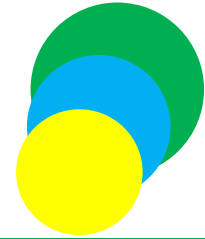
Australian responses to the images and discourses of terrorism and the other: establishing a metric of fear (2005-8) was a national, cross-methodological, investigation of public opinion formation, interpersonal communication and media messages. Funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant, and addressing the National Research Priority Safeguarding Australia, the project interrogated key media events and messages, as remembered and circulated by specific audiences, and analysed different constructions of terrorism and fear responses in contemporary Australian society.

The first level of inquiry involved an empirical study as part of a PhD research project. The purpose of this research was to examine how people were constructing and responding to the media discourse on terrorism, comparing responses from members of Western Australia's Muslim communities with those of the broader community. The study involved focus groups and individual in-depth interviews with Muslim Australians, and members of the broader community, in an examination of how Australian audiences were responding to the evolving media discourse on terrorism since the September 11 attacks on the United States. Ten focus groups were conducted with 90 participants from various ethnic backgrounds, religious and age groups. Of the ten focus groups, four were held exclusively with Australian Muslim participants in gender specific gatherings, including two youth groups; while one targeted senior citizens drawn from the wider community. Participants in the focus groups ranged in age from 17 to over 70, and were representative of 28 different ethnic groups and 14 different religious groups. On average, the focus groups attracted between 8-12 participants and lasted 90 minutes, though some lasted over 2 hours.

The focus groups discussed issues relating to the media discourse on terrorism, and public opinion relating to Australian Muslims. They included perceptions of the terrorist threat to Australia, the dominant messages in the media and how information and opinions about terrorism are circulated. Initial analysis of the focus groups provided themes for further investigation through a series of 60 in-depth individual interviews with equal numbers of Muslim respondents and respondents from the broader Australian community. The individual interviews used prompts to explore respondents' constructions of media messages and the influence of the media on their opinions and perceptions.

Thematic analysis techniques were used to analyse the focus group transcripts with the aid of the NVivo data analysis tool. The broad theoretical approach was phenomenological. Asensio (2000) describes the outcome of phenomenological research as "a set of categories of description which describe the variation in experiences of phenomena," in ways that allow researchers to deepen their understanding of the phenomena. This approach enabled an examination not only of the essential nature of fear but also of how Australians are experiencing the fear of terrorism in their everyday lives.

The findings of this study were used to inform the development of an innovative quantitative 'metric of fear' designed to measure how Australians are responding to the fear of terrorism. As the first of its kind, the **Metric of Fear** measures the extent to which Australians are restricting their usual behaviours, and adopting protective behaviours, in response to the fear of terrorism. The results of this research have wide-reaching implications in terms of the



effects and costs of heightened fear on a community, and the efficacy and outcome of counter-terrorism measures.

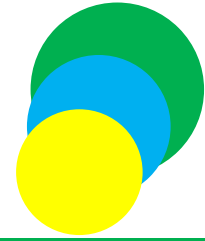
The findings of the *Australian responses to the images and discourses of terrorism and the other* project have raised some serious questions about how the media represents Australia and Australians. Participants in the research project expressed a tacit awareness that every image, every news segment and every interview we see or hear is mediated by news professionals, including professional journalists, advertisers and public relations practitioners.

In November 2008 29 participants, including some who create the stories, some who make policy, some who manage public opinion and some who have been affected by media reporting, gathered in Sydney to participate in a public debate about the power of the media and the fear of terrorism and its impact on our lives. The *Exploding Media Myths: Misrepresenting Australia Forum* offered the opportunity to discuss and debate the findings of the *Australian responses to the images and discourses of terrorism and the other* project, and to explore the impact of the media commentary on peoples' everyday lives.

The event was co-hosted by the research team at Edith Cowan University, Western Australia and the Journalism and Media Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney. The Forum included some keynote talks and addressed emergent themes from the research project through a series of eight focus workshops held over the day. The focus topics addressed in the workshops were:

- Citizenship and Australian Values
- Civil Liberties
- Education and Social Inclusion
- Fear
- Reporting
- Security
- Women
- Youth

The remainder of this report details the findings from the original research, considers the responses from the workshops held during the *Exploding Media Myths: Misrepresenting Australia Forum*, and synthesises these within the context of a continuing debate.



Research Findings: Audience Responses to the Australian Media Discourse on Terrorism

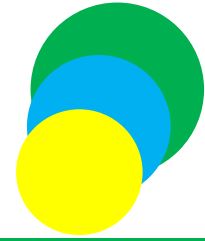
Background

The research project investigated how Australian Muslims and members of the broader community are constructing the media discourse on terrorism, and their perceptions of the terrorist threat to Australia. Ten focus groups and 60 individual interviews with Australian Muslims and members of the broader Australian community explored the nature and extent of the general fear of terrorism. Importantly, the focus groups and individual interviews revealed both the range of issues that dominate public discussion with regard to terrorism, the fear thereof, and the range of language used to express the psychological and emotional reactions to terrorism.

The focus group analysis illuminated a number of constructs for further exploration through the individual focused interviews. In particular the focus groups highlighted that the relationship between the media and the reader, which is both influenced by and influences readers' perceptions of the media, impacts on the meaning making process and ultimately upon audience constructions of fear using materials from the discourse on terrorism. This dynamic linking media and reader was implicit in the focus group participants' demonstrated awareness of media coverage and the impact of this awareness upon how they constructed media texts. The focus groups expressed a view that the media is a powerful purveyor of public opinion, while at the same time situating themselves outside of the mass audience upon which the media exerts the greatest influence. For the Muslim participants, there was an additional perception of the media as a powerful political tool that swayed public opinion against them. This was central to their notions of fear, and deeply implicated in their constructions of the discourse on terrorism. The individual in-depth interviews explored the relationship between reader and media more closely with the aim of establishing the extent to which this relationship impacts on constructions of the fear of terrorism.

The focus group discussions confirmed the hypothesis that Australian Muslims are constructing the discourse on terrorism differently from the broader community, and that the broader social and political context influences these constructions. For Muslim participants, personal and community experiences of vilification, discrimination or aggression and perceptions of the media's bias against Muslims played an important role in their constructions of fear. The fear experienced by Muslim audiences was likely to be associated with anxiety about a government and community backlash against Muslims in Australia in the event of a terrorist attack. For participants in the broader community focus groups, it was personal experiences, connections of people or place with the locale of global terrorist attacks, and the salience of everyday objects that resonate with media images of terrorist attacks, which were implicated in their constructions of fear.

The range of terminology used by participants to talk about the fear of terrorism ranged from language that explicitly expressed a psychological state of distress such as 'afraid', 'scared' and 'fearful of' to more subtle expressions of concern, anxiety or worry. The fear of terrorism,



as defined by the participants in this study then, is not just as an intense emotional and/or physical response aroused by particular events or in certain situations, such as the kind of fear one may experience in relation to a phobia, but also a general, more latent feeling of anxiety, concern or worry.

The research found that the nature of the fear of terrorism is inextricably tied to the perceived subject positions imposed on individuals and groups by the media and through the political discourse on terrorism. Accordingly, individuals and communities adopt behavioural and cognitive responses to the fear of terrorism depending on the ways they construct their subject positions in the discourse on terrorism: that is, depending on whether they see themselves positioned as the victims of terror or the objects of terror. Thus, Australian Muslims, implicated as the objects of fear in the discourse on terrorism, reflect different responses to the subject positions imposed on them through this discourse than do members of the broader Australian community who are positioned as potential targets of ‘Islamic’ terrorism. Across both groups of participants in the study, however, there emerged four distinct but related thematic categories of fear that describe the range of fears, anxieties and concerns that pervade the Australian public response in relation to the perceived threat of terrorism:

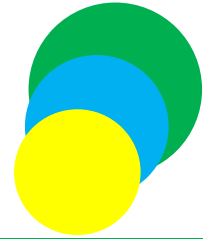
1. Fear of physical harm;
2. Political fear;
3. Fear of losing civil liberties; and
4. Feeling insecure

While these four thematic categories of fear are relevant to members both of Muslim communities and the broader Australian community, there are vast differences in the ways in which these fears are experienced by each group. For members of Muslim communities, for example, the fear of losing one’s civil liberties is closely associated with the fear of being targeted and implicated as a terrorist by police and intelligence agencies. This compares with the broader community response: their fear of losing civil liberties is associated with a perceived erosion of the values of liberal democracy.

Fear of physical harm

The fear of physical harm from a terrorist attack is directly related to the perceived threat of terrorism and the presence of certain stimuli in the individual’s proximate environment that induce a fear response. This kind of fear was expressed both explicitly—“When September 11 happened for me I was terrified! I wouldn’t leave the house I was freaking out over it”—and implicitly, through participants’ recollections about experiences in which they described behavioural responses in certain situations. These situations were constructed as threat situations drawing on the participants’ schematic knowledge of terrorist attacks developed through their interaction with media images of the attacks.

The London bombings in particular resonated with Australian audiences, partly because of Australia’s historical and cultural kinship with Britain, but also because of the images, and the particular circumstances, of the bombings. The official discourse on the bombings emphasised Australia’s links with Britain and drew explicitly on social and cultural similarities between the two countries amidst a wave of security clampdowns around

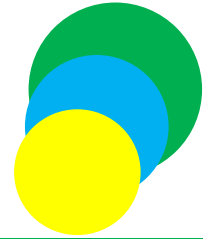


Australia. John Howard, the Prime Minister, stated that the attacks would resonate with Australians because there was “no city outside our own cities better known to generations of Australians than the city of London” (Metherell & Banham 2005).

Arguably, however, it was the sense of the everyday associated with the London bombings that reverberated most with Australian audiences. Unlike the almost surreal filmic images of aeroplanes flying into the Twin Towers, the footage that defined the media coverage of the July 7 London terrorist bombings, came not from professional news crews but from commuters who captured pictures of the attacks on their camera phones. The low resolution and grainy shots underlined the veracity and immediacy of the coverage, and narrowed the divide between the public and the media; what Hoskins (2006) refers to as the “granular intimacy of the visual exposure” of the London bombings. The black and white images of the young suicide bombers caught boarding the underground on closed circuit television complemented the mobile phone images that captured the subsequent trauma and chaos. The resonant images of the London bombings were more easily identifiable to Australian audiences as emanating from the everyday, and were thus more easily transferable to their own experiences, becoming subsumed into subconscious constructions of the threat of terrorism. Small things became capable of producing an anxiety response:

“I did start to feel concerned about like riding on the trains and things like that. So yeah somewhere in my subconscious I’ve obviously taken on that, that feeling of fear that it’s going to happen within my own country as well, yeah. Definitely at times I started to think about where would be safe for me to live instead of in a city.”

The media and political messages about the threat of physical harm from a terrorist attack were latently subsumed into the cultural practices and discourses of audiences. These surfaced as anxiety, and were experienced as fear in certain situations which were linked to constructions of possible threat. The Australian government’s media campaign in December 2002, involving the national distribution of anti-terrorist packs to all Australian households, was one such situation that raised the sense of threat as experienced by the community.



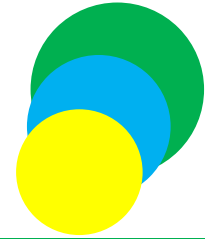
I didn't really take much notice of anything until John Howard sent out his, I can't remember what it was called—the terrorism pack, what to do if we were under attack—and I sort of thought 'wow! Maybe we are more at risk than I think we are'.

At first I didn't read it [the terrorist pack], but my eldest son he read it and he followed the instructions and he got himself stocks and everything at the front door and he rung me and the second son said, "look, we'd better do the same and we'd better have a plan of where we're going to go". So we decided we'd all go to the youngest son in N... and I was asked to ring M....

Well I rang M... he laughed himself silly and he said "Oh Mum, I thought you had more sense than that". And he said, "OK if it happens can you let me know when you're coming because we can pack up and go. We've got a three bedroom house and not enough room". So you know I ended up being rational, sort of thinking this is all quite stupid, and I threw Johnny Howard's pack in the bin and I got all this stuff that I'd bought and we ate it!

Participants in the study related similar stories about being fearful on public transport, on aeroplanes, in airports and when viewing media reports of terrorist attacks. The fear of being harmed in a terrorist attack is felt at certain times and in response to particular stimuli through which danger becomes objectified, immanent and unavoidable. These stimuli include reports of global terrorist acts, particularly those with which the participants may feel a personal connection of place or kinship², and situations in which participants observe elements of their environment that resonate with previous images of terrorism. The fear of an actual terrorist attack occurring on Australian soil may be described as a fleeting fear—one that enters, exits and re-enters the conscious in response to certain stimuli:

² Few participants from the broader community for example made reference to the impact upon them of the Madrid bombings in 2004. One participant from the Muslim communities suggested that Madrid does not feature as a significant terrorist attack as far as Australian audiences are concerned because the victims were culturally different and were not Anglo-Celtic. Further, the immediacy of eye-witness accounts can be lost in translation.

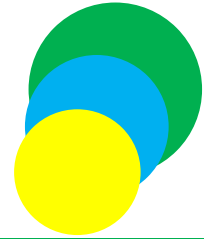


I have to say that I do feel, when I see footage of things like September 11, or the Bali Bombings or anything like that, that usually includes terrorism, I do feel very sick to think that those things happen and it does make me feel, you know, frightened. But by the same token then that's a fear that I feel at the time when I'm seeing these things. It's not something that I carry through my life.

Massumi (2005) describes this dynamic as “affective modulation”. In these circumstances the human response to the fear of terrorism can be modulated and transformed from an affective *response* to an affective *state* of anxiety. Further, the research indicated that this operates as a reinforcement and renewal of the collective identity perceived to be under attack. Aly and Balnaves (2005), in applying Massumi’s notion of affective modulation to the ‘war on terror’, noted that: “In the Australian context, after more than four years of collected traces of experiences of images of threat, responses to terrorism have become almost reflexive- even automated.”

Affective modulation relies on the regenerative capacity of fear, in Massumi’s (2005) terms its “ontogenetic powers” (p. 45), which creates an ever present threat and maintains fear as a way of life. In this way, affective modulation presents as a mechanism for politicising the fear of terrorism and sustaining a persistent state of anxiety and tension. Thus, a political decision to engage a range of counter terrorism strategies that are disproportionate to the actual risk of a terrorist attack defines terrorism as an object of fear in a manner that ignites public concern and positions the public as potential victims of an ever present threat.

Muslims tended to define their fear not as a fear of a terrorist attack itself but as a fear of the community backlash to such an attack, based on a perception that the current socio-political climate is one in which Muslims are targeted as the objects of fear. While most Muslim participants were not directly afraid of personal harm in a terrorist attack, there were high levels of fear in relation to possible retaliations resulting from a terrorist attack in Australia, and the implications of such an attack for Australian Muslims. This concern about vigilante retaliations was, by far, the most prevalent fear expressed in both the Muslim focus groups and the individual Muslim interviews. Participants used terminology such as ‘afraid’, ‘scared’ and ‘terrified’ to express their fears of possible retaliations and responses to a terrorist attack in Australia, and indicated that their fear was specifically the fear of harm to self, family and community- both physical and psychological. As the examples of Muslim fear are too numerous to present in their entirety, what follows is a short selection of examples from Muslim participants to demonstrate the nature and extent of their fear of harm in relation to their fear of a terrorism attack on Australian soil:

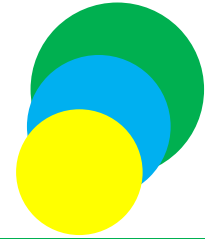


Heavens yes I'm utterly terrified. We had to change our name. I had to change my name because my children were ostracised, demonised. I was always left last when I went to doctor's surgeries or optometrists or wherever I happened to go. I was frightened because of my surname and then people when they saw me, that I was just an ordinary person would be taken aback, expecting to see a black lady or somebody a bit unusual, instead of just nobody in particular. And I thought my children will never be able to get job interviews with an Arabic surname stuck on the end. What frightens me is that my family are Muslim people, are living in this sea of hate and I have never felt that in my life before.

Well I've already heard of people being discriminated and verbally you know, on the streets being abused just when 9/11 happened as well as the London bombings, let alone the Bali bombings. So if something in Australia happens in our own land then I couldn't imagine how bad it could possibly be. I know the Australian people, public, they're cool but sometimes there is a limit to everything. I wouldn't want my fellow brothers and sisters... to be killed you know, because of what the government is doing. I don't see why the public has to suffer what the government tries to pursue.

Until now it's been since September 11-it happened in the United States and directly impact you know it has the impact on the Muslim community here in Australia. So imagine, imagine and God will nothing happen to this country, imagine if something happen in this country what's going to happen to us?

It worries me profoundly the, as a member of Muslim communities who has an interest in what's going on, academic interest as well personal, social interests. Of course it worries me.



Currently even without a terrorist, any terrorist activity occurring in Australia you still have a sense of animosity, marginalisation, segmentations, lack of acceptance, intolerance.

It is clear from the responses of Muslim participants that their fear of being physically harmed is primarily in relation to retaliative responses from the broader community, not solely in terms of an actual terrorist attack. It is also clear that this fear is based on actual experiences arising out of community responses to international terrorist events, impacting at either the personal or community level, or understood through the circulation of stories. For Muslim communities, the fear of physical harm is not based on an imagined threat but on the real, lived experiences of Australian Muslims with a shared identity. In contrast, fear among members of the broader community is not based on *actual* experience but hinges on an *imagined or anticipatory* experience, and hence is more akin to anxiety.

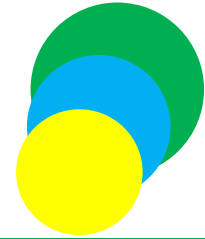
Political fear

From a theoretical perspective, political fear refers to the promotion and manipulation of fear in order to consolidate and maintain political control by instilling in the population a sense of dread of an unknown and not-so-far-experienced collective harm (Robin, 2004). The literature on the politics of fear suggests that for the fear of terrorism to be political certain preconditions must be present including fostering a belief in the notion of an omnipresent threat, and the objectification of that threat as non-political.

The findings from the focus groups and individual interviews suggest that a proportion of respondents believe that community fears about terrorism are manipulated to serve a political agenda. This is coupled with an awareness that a perceived political dimension to the manipulation of messages about terrorism impacts on social anxiety and fear in different ways.

The manipulation of fear for political purposes raised anxieties about the possible social consequences of a fear that deliberately targets and demonises a particular section of the community. Of most concern was the possibility that politically motivated fear would create and sustain social disharmony and fracture Australian society along lines of religious and/or cultural difference. Participants from ethnic backgrounds were especially concerned about the impact of political manipulation of fear upon their personal safety. Unlike the fear of a terrorist attack that, in Australia, is based on a perceived threat of terrorism as opposed to actual experience, a community-based fear of the political manipulation of the discourse on terrorism is grounded in personal experiences of being vilified or discriminated against in the aftermath of terrorist attacks.

While the theoretical conceptualisation of political fear is premised on a common understanding of terrorism as non-political (Robin 2004), this study suggests that the conceptualisation of terrorism as a political phenomenon can also be a source of anxiety.



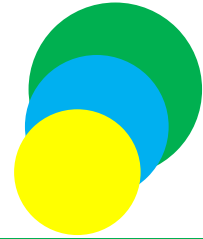
Thus, political fear does not necessarily entail a conceptualisation of terrorism as ideologically based, but may also operate in circumstances where people are aware and conscious of possible political dimensions of terrorism. While some participants expressed an understanding of terrorism as ideologically based and hence irrational and irreconcilable, other participants understood terrorism in a political context but still expressed fearfulness, anxiety and concern about the political dimensions of responses to terrorism. In these cases, the political response to terrorism—the ‘war on terror’ and the invasion of Iraq—was what struck fear:

There is also you know a sense for me, feeling that in a way we’re creating it just as much. Western civilisation, you know just by... now Bush is talking about potential violence in Korea, and you’re going ‘how many countries do we have to invade’ you know, on things like that?

Muslim participants demonstrated a high level of awareness of the possibility that political manipulation of the fear of terrorism served a broader agenda. These Muslim respondents constructed their understandings of the fear of terrorism as a politically modulated fear that implicated Muslims as the enemy and fuelled anti-Muslim sentiment among the broader community, garnering support for contentious policies and exercising a form of ‘control’ over the broader population. One said: “A person is a rational, intelligent educated person. People are stupid, ignorant and led by fear. You have to understand that. As soon as you have fear, you can control anything”.

I think it will eventually pass if we can all just live through it and then something else will turn up and somebody else will be the baddy and the Americans will, when they feel that they’ve sufficiently chastised and castigated us naughty little Muslims, they’ll get onto somebody else you know and then we’ll have a bit of peace for a bit perhaps. And that’s all I want is a peaceful life.

For Muslim participants the manipulation of fear for political purposes raised anxieties about the creation and sustenance of social schisms along religious and cultural lines. Political fear is therefore personalised for Australian Muslims who are identified as the objects of politically motivated fear. Political fear as it is experienced by Australian Muslims differs from the kind of political fear experienced by members of the broader community. It does however share similarities in that the locus of fear is to be found in social repercussions which



manifest in social disharmony and the fracturing of society along religious or cultural fault lines.

While the focus groups involving members from the broader Australian community expressed anxiety related to the propensity for counter- terrorism strategies to impinge on civil liberties, as well as the limited capacity of security measures to address the actual threat of terrorism; participants in the Muslim focus groups located their fear of a government response to terrorism in the racism, vilification and discrimination experienced by Muslim communities after the September 11 attacks. Muslims in the focus groups tended to discuss the Australian government's responses to terrorist attacks in New York, Bali, Madrid and London as generating and promulgating a fear of Muslims in Australia, positioning Australian Muslims as the objects of fear. For the Muslim participants, the government's response to terrorism was just one aspect of a climate of fear in which Australian Muslims are objectified and subjected to incidences of aggression and vilification.

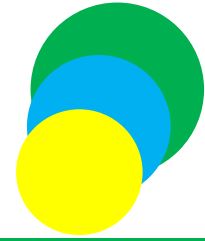
Fear of losing civil liberties

Every new law that we pass in regards to terrorism is an infringement on the civil liberties of Australians anyway.

The range of security strategies considered or introduced in the wake of the New York, Bali and London bombings include public debates around the introduction of a national identity card, sedition laws, increased powers to Federal and State police and closed circuit television in public places. Such innovations arouse widespread anxiety about the loss of certain freedoms and the erosion of democratic values.

There's a fine line to walk between how much power the government should have over individuals and how much freedom we should have as well. I think that the government views the terrorism attacks as a way to I think become a bit more Big Brotherish in this country. There's been laws passed in the name of terrorism that really when looked at properly will affect all Australians and I don't think Australians are actually seeing that. They're giving up some of their rights.

The most commonly expressed fear in relation to the loss of civil liberties is the fear of silence and the loss of freedom of speech. Noelle-Neumann's (1974) Spiral of Silence assumes that the fear of isolation prevents individuals from expressing opinions that are perceived to conflict with the dominant public view. Several studies support the suggestion



that silence is a behavioural response to the fear of social isolation. Studies also indicate that a media discourse on terrorism that presents the world in terms of a diametrically opposed ‘us’ (the West- good) and ‘them’ (the terrorists- evil) deemed individuals and groups who expressed opinions that were incongruent with those of ‘us’ to be necessarily supportive of ‘them’. According to the spiral of silence theory, it follows that the fear of being labelled ‘un-Australian’ or being seen to be ‘supportive’ of terrorists would manifest in the silencing of minority opinions and in people choosing the appearance of being in consensus with dominant public opinion. While Australian Muslims may be especially vulnerable to the fear of social isolation and marginalisation, and hence may feel especially anxious or fearful about expressing opinions that challenge the majority, members of the broader community also expressed fear and concern about the suppression of opposition to the dominant discourses on terrorism.

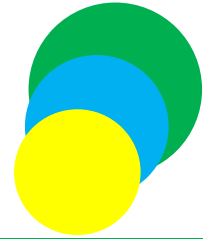
Responses from participants across the board suggest that a spiral of silence may well be operating within a context where discussants prefer to fear social isolation rather than feel labelled or implicated as supporting terrorists if they express dissenting opinions. Importantly, this fear is not restricted to minority groups or communities but may also be felt by people in the broader community who view their opinion, while valid, as being incongruent with the majority opinion and the official anti-terrorism (and sometimes anti-Muslim) discourses.

The loss of civil liberties featured as a pervasive concern among the Muslim participants insofar as this loss is perceived to be an outcome of increased security measures that specifically target Australian Muslims and heighten the fear of being falsely implicated as a terrorist. For Australian Muslims, the loss of civil liberties is related to arrest, detention and a general feeling of suspicion. For the broader community the loss of civil liberties is related to an erosion of democratic freedoms.

Australian Muslims’ concern about losing civil liberties means that they choose to be silent and are unwilling to discuss issues around terrorism for fear they are marked as a security risk. This was evident in the interviews in which Muslim participants either declined to be audio recorded or were visibly uncomfortable about being recorded, despite the reassurances of anonymity and the fact that the researcher was also Muslim. It was also observable in off-the-record comments by some Muslim participants which alluded to reports about fellow Australian Muslims being detained and questioned by authorities for articulating certain opinions. Thus the spiral of silence operates among Muslim communities: not so much in relation to the fear of social isolation, but to the fear of being implicated as terrorists if they express dissenting opinions. Members of the broader community also expressed apprehension about voicing dissent. However, for Australian Muslims the threat of being incarcerated and questioned as a result of voicing dissent is tied to their Muslim identity, their community experiences and the subject positions imposed on them in the discourse on terrorism which implicates them as the enemy.

Feeling insecure

A loss of security can be related to reduced feelings of safety in the everyday lives of individuals. One of the most salient themes discussed in the focus groups was a loss of security and a subsequent increasing sense of insecurity since the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States and the ensuing ‘war on terror’. Similarly, participants in the



individual interviews commonly referred to the September 11 attacks as ‘shattering’ their sense of security. This sense of insecurity was particularly related to the Bali bombings of October 2002, which were constructed in the media and political discourse as a direct attack on Australia. The bombings impacted significantly on the sense of security experienced by participants from the broader community. The Bali bombings signalled that Australia was no longer viewed as a passive partner in the ‘war on terror’, a perception which had to that point been a source of comfort and security. Australia was now perceived by international terrorist networks as ‘a real player’, making it a terrorist target and making Australians the potential victims of further terrorist attacks. The following exchange from a focus group with senior citizens demonstrates the enduring impact of the Bali bombings in promoting feelings of insecurity and the loss of a sense of personal safety:

—I think the terror and what happened it’s just part, it’s inside you isn’t it?

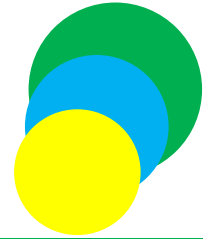
—And you’ll always feel sad won’t you? You know it’s just something terrible that happened that, and nothing you can do about it.

—I think we’ve just realised that there is such terror in the world and it’s at home.

Security measures introduced as part of the government’s response to terrorism drew mixed responses from the participants. Some viewed the increased security measures as a source of reassurance and increased confidence:

—the fact that there’s a chance of attempted terrorism being nipped in the bud as I think has happened, makes one feel safer.

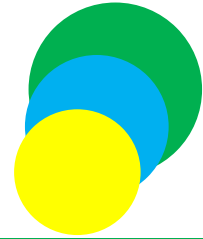
Others viewed the increased security measures as symptomatic of a security culture in which paranoia and suspicion were encouraged. In the following example, the participant expresses how the increased focus on security in her everyday surroundings impacts on her everyday life, suggesting that a security culture in which the threat of terrorism is ever present and salient has the effect of magnifying fear, rather than promoting reassurance. Here, a female participant in the individual interviews reports that her experiences with increased security on airlines prompted her to develop fears about a security state, and the related loss of freedoms, that actually overshadowed her fear of a terrorist attack:



I just recently went overseas and when I get to the airport the thing that sent chills down my spine, that our society has progressed to the stage where there was such high level security, and I was travelling at the time where you couldn't have any cosmetics or anything like that. That sent chills down my spine, and when I got onto the plane and things like that, where typically you might start to feel those types of threats of terrorism, I wasn't, I wasn't concerned in any way, shape or form. It was the shock and sadness that I felt about how far our society has progressed in terms of giving up all this freedom and living our lives in fear that scared me more than any threat of terrorism.

For Muslim participants, feelings of safety in their everyday lives are strongly affected by the current social climate in which Australian Muslims are arguably the victims of negative media and political discourses. The increased security culture is perceived to trigger heightened levels of aggression and intolerance among some members of the broader Australian community. Muslim participants commonly referred to their personal experience to describe a perceived shift in public responses to their presence. They interpreted this sense of increased suspicion as symptomatic of a focus on Australian Muslims as possible terrorists. These experiences and perceptions made Muslim participants feel less secure about their physical, emotional and psychological well-being, and more vulnerable to the impacts of social division.

Participants from the broader community felt less safe after the September 11 terrorist attacks because of an increased threat of terrorism often described in terms of a 'shattered sense of security'. For Muslim participants, this 'shattering' of security was closely tied to their Muslim identity and their position in society as 'other'. The following emotionally charged quote is from a participant who arrived in Australia as a refugee. It indicates the level of fear, worry and anxiety that many Australian Muslims are experiencing in a social and political climate which implicates them as the enemy, undermining their sense of security and safety. Here, the participant describes the perceived personal implications for herself and her community of a terrorist attack in Australia:

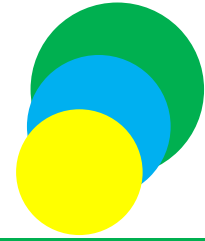


I think it [the impact of a terrorist attack] might be quite severe as well not just normal depression or stress or you know, I think it's going to be really a severe one. I don't how far it will go but I think it will go. . I wouldn't be surprised if it, I end up in hospital or something like that you know what I mean? Because I lived as a refugee Muslim all my life and yeah, being discriminated against. And when you know it's not your fault it's even harder and when you try to scream out and clear things out and get people to understand when it's happening and you don't seem to be making any difference or any impact or you know, you're no-one, it hurts. So yeah, I know it sounds like it's going to be severely shattering.

Conclusion

The Australian government's introduction of a range of security measures and strategies, including communication strategies that urge Australians to "watch out" for terrorism, have created a situation in which Australians feel less safe. The September 11 attacks and subsequent atrocities, particularly the Bali bombings, shattered the illusion of safety and raised public awareness of global terrorist activity. As a result of personal experiences, Australian Muslims seem particularly susceptible to feelings of fear and anxiety about being objects of concern and suspicion in an increased security environment.

Importantly, the fear of terrorism is not isolated nor strictly limited to the fear of terrorists *per se* but is more broadly associated with a perceived *state of terror*, a kind of new world order in which insecurity, suspicion and the manipulation of fear for political purposes have become the norm. Considering that one of the aims of terrorists, as defined by the Australian Defence Force, is to put "the public or any section of the public in fear" (Hancock, 2002) terrorists, assisted by the government, appear to have succeeded in their goal. The findings of this study regarding the fear pervading the population implicate political responses to terrorism as a significant factor in the development of community fears of terrorism. This dynamic has substantial ramifications for how governments need to respond to the threat of global terrorism.



Research Findings: The Metric of Fear

Background

Rape and vulnerability inventories were adapted to create a Fear Survey, consisting of 25 questions in a summative Likert scale, which was administered by telephone to 750 households nationally. In order to obtain a statistically useful sample of Australian Muslims, the survey was administered to 105 Muslim households, an over-representative number in comparison to the demographic data, which places Australian Muslims at just 1.5% of the total Australian population³. The Fear Survey included questions to test behavioural responses to the fear of terrorism and self-reported feelings of safety before and after the September 11 terrorist attacks, as well as questions on individual and community identity.

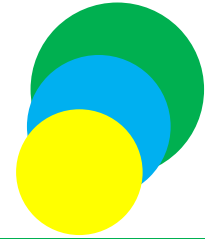
Respondents were asked to rate their answers according to a five point Likert scale in response to the following items:

- How safe did you feel before 11 September 2001
- How safe did you feel after 11 September 2001
- I think twice before going to a crowded shopping centre
- If I have to take the train, tram or bus I feel anxious
- How safe do you feel taking public transport?
- How safe do you feel traveling by airline?

Respondents were asked to answer 'yes' or 'no' to the following questions designed to test behavioural changes, responses to strategic points, experiences of terrorist attacks and community risk perceptions:

- If you saw an unattended bag at a bus or train stop or in any other public place, would you report it?
- If you saw an unattended bag at work, would you report it?
- Have you over the last 2 years traveled to any of these countries- US, England, Bali, Spain, Italy, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia?
- Do you intend to travel to any of these countries in the next year?
- Did you receive the 'Be alert' package?
- Did you keep your 'Be alert' package?
- Did you read it?
- Did you, or do you, know anyone who was killed or harmed in a terrorist attack?
- What was your relationship with that person?

³ ABS Data from the 2001 Census. Available from www.omi.wa.gov.au



-
- Do you know anyone who had a close friend who was killed or harmed in a terrorist attack?
 - Do you feel that you belong to a community that is viewed negatively by others?
 - Do you feel that the media portrays you or the community you belong to negatively?

The survey incorporated some questions on restrictive and protective behaviours that were used to gain a sense of how safe, or unsafe, people felt within their own neighbourhoods or communities, such as:

- I avoid going out alone
- I ask a friend to walk me to my car in public car parks
- I feel confident walking alone in my neighbourhood
- If I heard that someone had been assaulted in my neighbourhood, I wouldn't leave the house unless I really had to

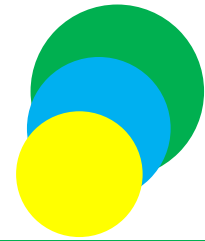
A number of questions that tested general levels of suspicion and wariness of others were also used:

- I am wary of people generally
- In general, I am suspicious of people
- In general, I am afraid of people
- When I am choosing a seat on the bus or train, I am conscious of who is sitting nearby

Findings

The results of the Fear of Terrorism Scale confirm a dramatic change in the reported feelings of safety before and after the September 11 terrorist attacks. 710 respondents (over 90%) reported feeling either very safe or fairly safe before the terrorist attacks.

In comparison only 487 (65%) stated that they feel either very safe or fairly safe after the terrorist attacks. Results also showed a negligible response to feeling 'very unsafe' prior to the terrorist attacks, 11 responses, increasing to 92 responses (8.1%) after the attacks. Statistical analysis of the results revealed certain characteristics about the prevalence and nature of the fear of terrorism in the Australian community. The findings confirm not only heightened levels of fear after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, but behavioural modifications in response to those feelings of fear. Consistent with patterns reflected in fear of crime surveys, gender, income and levels of education impacted on feelings of fear and safety in relation to the terrorist risk. Table 1 shows a significant statistical relationship between feelings of safety and gender. While the male and female sample sizes are slightly different, the chi square statistical operation analyses the relevant proportions in the cells. The table illustrates that 204 men and 224 women respondents reported feeling very safe before the 9/11 attacks. These numbers declined to 125 and 82 respectively after the attacks. In addition, the number of women who reported that they feel



very unsafe after the attacks increased from 3 to 69 compared to an increase from 8 to 23 for men. Table 2 shows a statistically significant difference between Muslim respondents' changing perceptions of safety and those of the broader community. The 'broader community' in this table is stratified by postcode data into 'higher' and 'lower' income brackets, as a way of trying to control for differences in relative wealth between the broader community and Australian Muslims, whose income is generally less than average. Statistical differences in fear responses remain.

Table 3 indicates that respondents with lower levels of education (Year 12 or equivalent and below) felt less safe than respondents with a tertiary qualification. 376 respondents with year 12 or below schooling reported feeling either 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' before the terrorist attacks compared with 340 respondents with a tertiary qualification. Reported feelings of safety decreased for both groups after the attacks with a more significant decrease of 143 for respondents with lower levels of education compared to 103 for tertiary qualified respondents. Respondents with lower levels of education were also more likely to report feeling 'very unsafe' after the terrorist attacks at almost double the rate of respondents with tertiary qualifications. While both categories reported a decrease in feelings of 'very safe' after the terrorist attacks, the shift in responses was more heavily skewed towards the lesser feelings of safety ('a bit safe' and 'very unsafe') for respondents with lower levels of education than for respondents with tertiary qualifications.

Table 1: Feelings of Safety before and after 9/11 (Represented in Brackets), by Sex

	<i>Very Safe</i>	<i>Fairly Safe</i>	<i>A Bit Safe</i>	<i>Very Unsafe</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
<i>Male</i>	204 (125)	108 (122)	10 (60)	8 (23)	1 (1)
<i>Female</i>	224 (82)	174 (158)	15 (109)	3 (69)	3 (1)

Chi Square p < 0.001

Note: The authors' have used the conventional confidence level of 0.05%

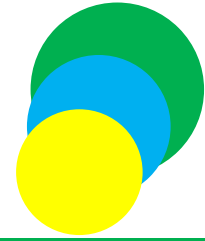


Table 2: Feelings of Safety before and after 9/11 (Represented in Brackets), stratified into broader community higher and lower income groups (by postcode) and Australian Muslim respondents

	<i>Very Safe</i>	<i>Fairly Safe</i>	<i>A Bit Safe</i>	<i>Very Unsafe</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
<i>Higher income (broader community)</i>	167 (74)	97 (113)	13 (64)	4 (30)	1 (1)
<i>Lower income (broader community)</i>	170 (94)	111 (114)	5 (54)	2 (8)	3 (1)
<i>Australian Muslim Community</i>	91 (39)	74 (53)	7 (51)	5 (34)	0 (0)

Chi Square p < 0.001

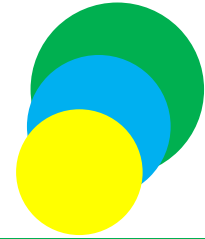
Table 3: Feelings of Safety before and after 9/11 (represented in brackets), by Education

	<i>Very Safe</i>	<i>Fairly Safe</i>	<i>A Bit Safe</i>	<i>Very Unsafe</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
<i>Year 12 or equivalent and below</i>	218 (108)	158 (116)	20 (96)	4 (60)	2 (1)
<i>Tertiary qualified Bachelor degree or above, Advanced diploma, Diploma or trade certificate</i>	210 (99)	130 (138)	5 (73)	7 (32)	2 (1)

Chi Square p < 0.001

Note: Not all participants necessarily responded to both questions

Table 4 presents reported feelings of safety prior to and after the September 11 terrorist attacks. On a five point scale ranging from very safe (a score of 0) to very unsafe (a score of 4) the mean for both the Muslim communities and the broader communities is substantially higher for after the September 11 attacks, indicating increased fear. The relatively higher means for Muslim respondents (both before and after 9/11) are supported by qualitative data in which Australian Muslims expressed high levels of fear of the possible repercussions of a terrorist attack and the impact on themselves, their families and the Muslim communities in Australia. While members of the broader Australian community expressed fear and concern about the threat of a terrorist attack on Australia, particularly the threat of “homegrown terrorism”, members of Muslim communities were more concerned about the possible repercussions of and the backlash following a terrorist attack.



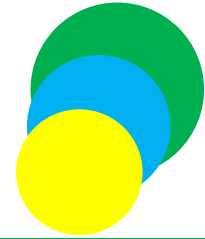
I am scared. Scared in a sense that if it did happen, what the hell is going to happen to us?

Sheikh Faizal Gaffoor quoted in the West Australian Newspaper, 11 November 2005.

Table 4: Feelings of safety before and after 9/11 on a four- point scale (higher mean scores indicate higher levels of fear and lower levels of perceived safety)

	<i>Class</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>
<i>Safe before 9/11</i>	Broader Community	569	1.46
	Australian Muslims	177	1.58
<i>Safe after 9/11</i>	Broader Community	571	2.12
	Australian Muslims	177	2.45

The elevated levels of fear in the Muslim population in comparison to the broader community may, in part, be due to perceptions among Muslim communities that they are viewed negatively and portrayed negatively in the popular media. In response to the question ‘Do you feel that you belong to a community that is viewed negatively by others?’ 59% of Muslims responded in the positive compared to only 17% of respondents from the broader community. In response to the question ‘Do you feel that the media portrays you or the community you belong to negatively?’ 67% of the Muslims surveyed responded in the positive compared to only 19% of the broader community. The Chi-Square test for these associations is significant ($p < .001$), and can be generalised beyond the survey group to the rest of the population. The perceived media bias against Muslims and Arabs is perhaps the most salient issue of concern for Australian Muslims and has been the subject of debate and discussion at numerous forums. The kind of fear expressed by Muslims is perhaps not surprising in light of the evolving media and political discourse on terrorism which constructs Australian Muslims not only as a terrorist threat but also a threat to so-called ‘Australian values’: although there is little detail available as to what exactly those values are and how exactly the presence of Muslims in Australia constitutes a threat to them. Muslim participants expressed the perception that they were being targeted by both the media and by politicians, and that the media frequently identified Muslims as terrorists or potential terrorists.



The results of the Survey demonstrate a correlation between community perceptions and feelings of safety. Table 5 shows that respondents who considered themselves members of communities that were perceived negatively by the media also felt less safe after the terrorist attacks. This correlation is supported by qualitative research, including the findings of the focus groups, as well as current literature on the impact of a perceived negative media image upon Australian Muslims. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, in the wake of the September 11 attacks, confirmed that, “The biggest impact of prejudice on Arab and Muslim Australians is the substantial increase in fear” (HREOC, 2004, p. 77). The Australian Arabic Council reported a massive rise in reports of discrimination and vilification of Arab Australians in the month after the terrorist attacks (p.43).

Table 5: Feelings of Safety before and after (represented in brackets) 9/11, by Perceived Negative Media Portrayal of the Community in which Respondent belongs

	<i>Very Safe</i>	<i>Fairly Safe</i>	<i>A Bit Safe</i>	<i>Very Unsafe</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
<i>Perceived negative media</i>	117 (51)	95 (79)	12 (63)	4 (35)	0 (0)
<i>Perceived neutral/positive media</i>	311 (156)	187 (201)	13 (106)	7 (57)	4 (2)
Total	207	280	169	92	4 (2)

Chi Square p < 0.026

The Fear of Terrorism Survey confirmed that over 70% of respondents would adopt some form of protective behaviour in response to the terrorist threat. The most frequently cited change in behaviour was an increase in suspicion of others and heightened sensitivity to the presence of abnormal or out of place objects such as unattended baggage in public places.

The sub-scales, shown in Table 6, emerged from the analysis of the responses to the 25 questions relating to fear: fear of being alone, wariness of others, fear in one’s neighbourhood or in the immediate proximity of home, and fear in public places. These sub-scales represent dimensions associated with the two main constructs of interest in this study⁴, namely restrictive and protective behaviours.

⁴ Of the original scale, five questions were deleted from sub-scale analysis as they either had poor factor loadings or loaded onto more than one factor.

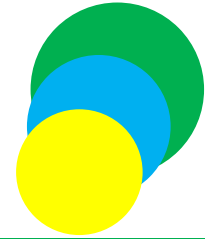
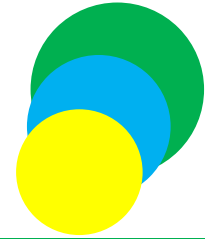


Table 6: Fear sub-scales

<i>FEAR Sub-Scales</i>	<i>Component</i>			
	1	2	3	4
<u>Factor 1 - Fear of Being Alone ($\alpha = .79$)</u>				
B4. I ask friends to walk me to my car in public car parks.	0.80			
B14. If I had to walk to my car, I would make sure I was accompanied by someone I trusted	0.75			
B7. When I am walking alone I think about where I would run to if in trouble.	0.64			
B10. If I was waiting for an elevator and it arrived with one person alone inside, I would wait for the next one.	0.57			
B3. I avoid going out alone.	0.57			
<u>Factor 2 - Wariness of Others ($\alpha = .79$)</u>				
B13. In general, I am suspicious of people.		0.80		
B11. I am wary of people generally.		0.76		
B17. In general, I am afraid of people.		0.62		
B12. If I have to walk outside I take precautions.		0.60		
B9. I am especially careful of wearing clothes that do not draw attention to me.		0.49		
<u>Factor 3 - Fear in Immediate Proximity of Home ($\alpha = .74$)</u>				
B21. How safe do you feel being out alone in your neighbourhood?			0.76	
B16. How safe do you feel in your own house when you are by yourself?			0.72	
B6. In general how safe do you feel?			0.69	
B8. I feel confident walking alone in my neighbourhood			0.58	
<u>Factor 4 - Fear in Public Places ($\alpha = .63$)</u>				
B1. I think twice before going to a crowded shopping centre.				0.77
B2. If I have to take the train, tram or bus I feel anxious.				0.74
B22. How safe do you feel travelling by airline?				0.56

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

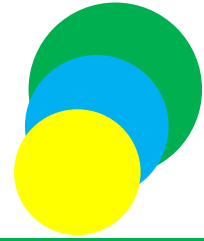


The fear scale provides an indicative measure of fear at both the individual and community level. The scale ranges from 0 to 4, where a mean score of 2.0 or over indicates that the level of community fear is significant enough to warrant behavioural modifications that are either restrictive or assertive. A mean score of 3.0+ is indicative of extreme levels of community fear. The kinds of behaviours that may be expected with this level of fear include social and economic isolation induced by the fear of being the victim of a terrorist attack. It is to be expected that such extreme restrictive and protective behaviours would have a significantly adverse impact on the social and economic health and well-being of a community.

Consistent with patterns reflected in fear of crime surveys, there were statistically significant differences in the feelings of fear and safety against demographic variables such as gender, income and education level. The sample of Muslim respondents contributing to the fear survey also demonstrated significantly higher levels of fear in comparison to respondents from the broader community, as indicated in Table 7. Responses from the Muslim population showed higher means across all four fear sub-scales, indicating responses across the spectrum of protective and restrictive behaviours. The qualitative exploration in interviews and focus groups suggests that, unlike the broader community, members of Australia’s Muslim communities are adopting such behaviours in response to the perceived *impact* (both personal and community) of terrorist attacks that have already occurred elsewhere in the world, as opposed to the perceived *risk* of a terrorist attack occurring in Australia.

Table 7: The Four Fear Sub-scale Means differentiating between Broader Community and Muslim Respondents

	<i>Class</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>
<i>Fear of being alone</i>	Broader Community	505	1.6966
	Muslims	155	2.0929
<i>Wariness of others</i>	Broader Community	551	1.6163
	Muslims	171	2.1205
<i>Fear in immediate proximity of home</i>	Broader Community	564	1.5554
	Muslims	173	2.0332
<i>Fear in public places</i>	Broader Community	456	1.7617
	Muslims	157	2.1571



Conclusion

Researchers have for some time used fear of crime and rape scales in order to gauge perceived safety among individuals and communities, and to inform appropriate policy responses. The Metric of Fear can be used to better understand restrictive and protective behaviours of individuals, and groups of individuals, who are afraid within their neighbourhoods, within their communities or within their society.

The findings of this study have revealed the presence of heightened levels of fear, particularly among Australian Muslim communities. These trends require regular monitoring as increased levels of community fear can impact adversely on health and wellbeing and by extension involve substantial social and economic cost to Australia. The Metric of Fear can be used to inform communication strategies around the threat of terrorism and gauge the impact of such initiatives as the National Security Information Campaign. At another level, the Metric may have some useful applications to risk assessment and contingency planning by offering researchers a tool for predicting behavioural modifications in response to heightened perceptions of threat.

Exploding Media Myths: Misrepresenting Australia?



Introduction

Against a backdrop of global uncertainty and rapid social and economic change, some Australians perceive themselves as bombarded by a continuous stream of information via newspapers, radio, television and the internet. Most of the commercial media dealing with news and current affairs is produced by news professionals: journalists, advertisers and public relations practitioners. The impact and effects of this mediated information on the public psyche were explored in the Exploding Media Myths: Misrepresenting Australia? Forum which was held on 20 November 2008 at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. The Forum involved 29 invited and self-nominated attendees and brought together those who create the stories, those who make policy, those who manage public opinion and those who have been affected by media reporting; engaging together in a public debate about the power of the media and its impact on our lives. Presentations and informed deliberative groups, representing a diversity of opinion, explored various aspects of post 9/11 Australia and its implications for community relations amongst different religious and socio-cultural groups.

Themes addressed included:

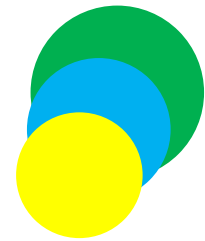
- Citizenship and Australian Values
- Civil Liberties
- Education and Social Inclusion
- Fear
- Reporting
- Security
- Women
- Youth

Forum Host



Professor Lelia Green is Professor of Communications in Edith Cowan University's School of Communications and Arts. She was the first Chief Investigator on the ARC Discovery Project which gave rise to this research, and opened and closed the day's proceedings.

The workshop began with keynote addresses from Professor John Tulloch, *Surviving terrorism: negotiating the media*, and Dr Anne Aly, *Something to fear*. It then developed into a series of facilitated workshops introduced through 'provocations' by invited speakers. All forum attendees participated in these workshops although the parallel sessions meant that each person could only contribute to four of the eight workshops. The forum was concluded with a discussion hosted by the project's joint Chief Investigators Professors Mark Balnaves and Lelia Green who drew the strands of the day together, discussing recommendations and thanking attendees for their participation.



Keynote Speakers

Professor John Tulloch

"Surviving terrorism: Negotiating the media"



Professor John Tulloch was Research Professor in Sociology and Communications at Brunel University, West London at the time of his address and is now Conjoint Professor at the University of Newcastle, NSW in the School of Design, Communication and IT. He is the author of numerous academic books and articles in the fields of Risk, Media and Audiences.

Tulloch is an Australian citizen and has lived in Australia for over 25 years. He is also a survivor of the July 7, 2005 London bombings and his picture was flashed around the world as he emerged, injured, from the Edgware Road Underground Station. A past Head of School for Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies at Cardiff University in Wales, Tulloch went on to be Director of the Centre for Cultural Research into Risk at Charles Sturt University, NSW, prior to taking up his position at Brunel. Consequently, he was uniquely placed to address his chosen keynote topic. His book, *One Day in July: Experiencing 7/7* was published by Little, Brown in 2006.

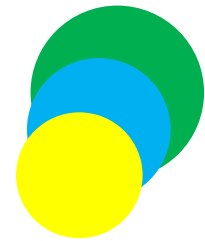
Summary

The image of John Tulloch, bloodied and traumatized, emerging after the bombing by Mohammad Sidique Khan of the train he was travelling on, is a potent example not only of the power and impact of

images but also of their potential for manipulation. Amid the already strongly anti-Muslim sentiment in London post 7/7, the image of Tulloch covered in blood was used by the media to present him merely as a victim and was appropriated into the rhetoric of support for the political agenda of Tony Blair. Although in actuality Tulloch was opposed to the government's approach to the 'war on terror', and to the war in Iraq, his image was widely used to promote Blair's Anti-terrorism Act and to foster anti-Muslim sentiment. This unauthorized, un-corroborated and erroneous use of his image to further a cause he did not support, and his relegation by the media to the simplistic role of victim, sparked a desire in Tulloch to refute the misrepresentations made and to present the reality of his own multiple identities or subjectivities; and also to explore those of the bomber, Khan.

Tulloch chose *The Guardian* to counter the inaccurate viewpoints attributed to him by many sections of the media, and to voice his true opinions, simultaneously beginning a revision of his position from one-dimensional victim to that of a man with multiple subjectivities, including as a respected academic with the attendant increase in authority this conferred.

The unusual circumstance of being a media and risk academic intimately involved in a terror attack, created a situation whereby the process of recuperation for Tulloch involved a mediated physical, psychological and intellectual negotiation of both subjective experience and academic theory and knowledge. A series of articles and interviews afforded Tulloch the opportunity to move beyond the disempowered victim of early media portrayals and present the more complex reality of multiple subjectivities for both himself and Khan, albeit with varying

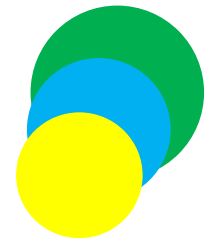


degrees of success depending on production and agenda constraints of various media sources. By addressing the simplistic media constructs of victim and bomber, which denied both men multiple complex identities through the portrayal by stereotype, the enforced binaries of ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’, were removed. Tulloch incorporated various aspects of Mohammad Sidique Khan’s life into his commentary, such as his role as a teacher’s aide and his involvement in the community, as a means of expanding understanding beyond Khan’s intent to kill and maim; countering media versions and promoting the understanding of wider issues as a key to resolving problems such as terrorism. He deems the most important tool in combating inaccurate, incomplete or false representations promulgated by the media to be entering into dialogue in ways which recognise a multiplicity of identities.

By replacing the notion of binaries with more complex multi-faceted representations, Tulloch revealed the range and depth of motivations underlying issues of concern and distress for many Muslims, including Khan. Simplistic categorizations, such as ‘moderate’ Muslims and ‘radical’ Muslims fail to reflect or represent the complicated interaction of multiple subjectivities which people inhabit, thus inflaming societal tensions rather than encouraging accord. Tulloch revealed, for instance, that many Muslims in London actually agreed with Khan’s views, but they did not agree with his actions. Through presenting Khan as a composite of identities, Tulloch attempted to humanize him and dispel the myth of the fanatical, crazed killer. By foregrounding his academic background, Tulloch not only distanced himself from merely being the stereotypical victim but indicated how matters such as foreign policy issues, not

domestic issues, were pivotal factors behind the bombing.

Tulloch’s experience, of being captured in an image that was almost immediately bestowed with iconic 7/7 status, and as a result being subjected to media misrepresentation and manipulation for political and news agenda purposes, was explored and expanded upon in various interviews and formats, both nationally and internationally. Some of these media sequences were shared with forum participants and dealt not only with the subjectivity of experiencing a terror attack but also with the academic concepts of media theory and risk as applied to the media coverage of the bombings, the terrorists, anti-terrorism laws and anti-Muslim sentiment. Although Tulloch had input, sometimes substantial input, into the production of different segments, the variables of production, editing and news agendas still affected the final product and the degree to which his viewpoints were accurately reflected. Profoundly affected both physically and psychologically by the terrorist bombing, yet still a strong opponent of the war in Iraq, Tulloch, while still fearful himself, believes the Western world is culpable in creating the fear of terrorism which they then use to perpetuate Muslim stereotypes. Countering these misrepresentations and myths through engaging with and presenting the notion of multiple subjectivities is a step towards involving the community more fully and openly in dialogue and debate. The combination of highly subjective emotionalism, as someone who has experienced terrorism, with the professional authority and impact of an academic in the field, has afforded Tulloch a unique duality of a personal perspective and the opportunity to present an alternative to the dominant myth.



Dr Anne Aly

“Something to Fear”



Dr Aly is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Computer and Security Science and the Security Research Centre, Edith Cowan University. She has previously occupied

senior policy positions in government. Anne completed her PhD in Media and Cultural Studies entitled *Australian audience responses to the discourse of terrorism in the Australian popular media: The fear of terrorism between and among Australian Muslims and the broader community*. Anne's PhD research forms part of the broader ARC funded study on the fear of terrorism reported here. She has since contributed academic work in the areas of terrorism, counterterrorism, fear, media studies, and social isolation and radicalisation. Published articles include the historical representation of Muslim women in the media; racism, fear and Australian identity; the fear of terrorism; Australian Muslim identity; conceptualizations of ethnicity in research; citizenship; secularism and religious minorities, and political fear.

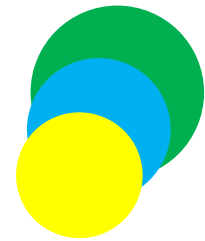
Dr Aly is also current President of Dar al Shifah Islamic Inc., a volunteer organization that offers services to the community and to government.

Summary

Recent research conducted by Aly has focused on Australian responses to the discourse of fear, terrorism and the ‘other’. The contemporary focus on terrorism began with the tragic events of September 11, 2001, which was significant in heralding a so-called new era of ideological warfare that would change the

world forever. Terrorism, in this new context, is constructed as an unknown and impending doom where everyday objects, such as mobile phones, can become subliminally associated with murder, mayhem and fear. The threat of terrorism becomes normalized as something that *will* happen and is articulated in casual images of the ordinary and banal which are subsumed into the everyday atmosphere of fear. In this environment what would once have been considered exceptional measures are reconstructed as being rational, reasonable and necessary.

The notion of threat is amplified by the spectre of security measures, and the Australian response to the threat of terrorism is both institutional and political, and includes over 41 legislative amendments post 9/11. The societal impact of these counter-terrorism measures is largely unexamined in public discourse, yet the positioning of the community as potential victims of an ever present threat has seen policies once thought to be impossible, and an assault on civil liberties, framed as rational and even essential. The usage and meaning of the word terrorism has since become expanded in the media to include an act of terrorism, the war on terrorism and a state of fear. A war on the state of fear has ensued and the language used institutionally and politically exacerbates and perpetuates an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty despite experts maintaining that Australia's low risk status has remained unchanged. Due to this low risk profile, some scholars argue that the fear of terrorism is in fact a fear of nothing, an anticipatory and irrational fear magnified and promulgated by discourses of danger utilized by institutions such as the media. However, Aly's research has revealed that the fear of terrorism is a very real fear arising out of actual everyday



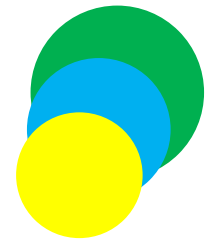
experiences of how the threat of terrorism impacts on people's lives. It is not just limited to the fear of terrorists per se, or the fear of being harmed in a terrorist attack, but includes anxiety about the social and political impacts, such as discrimination, arising out of global and local responses to terrorism. Security measures and legislation, and the atmosphere of fear, have real consequences and impact on the lives of everyday people.

Aly's research investigated how Australian Muslims and the wider community are constructing and reacting to the images and discourse of terrorism, and explored the nature and effect of fear at an individual and community level. The research involved both qualitative and quantitative methods and contributed to a national study funded by the Australian Research Council. Initial research consisted of 10 focus groups, 60 structured in-depth interviews and extensive analysis of the resulting data which subsequently informed the development of a survey administered to 750 households nationally. Findings of the study revealed heightened levels of fear across all segments of the community but also highlighted various discrepancies between Muslim and non-Muslim reactions and fears. Whereas those in the general community are more worried about the terrorist *threat*, Australian Muslims are more concerned about the *impact* of an attack and feared government and public reactions and backlash more acutely than the act of terrorism itself. Interestingly, Australian Muslims were found to believe the likelihood of a terrorist attack in Australia was unlikely or highly unlikely while the wider community rated the likelihood as likely or highly likely.

The media are significantly implicated in these dynamics. They are seen to be powerful purveyors of public opinion and they promulgate an atmosphere of fear which is perceived as biased against Muslims. People's perceptions of terrorism are mediated, yet although there is a general awareness of media tactics in the framing of terrorism and many respondents surveyed positioned themselves outside the mass audience which they believed to be influenced unquestioningly by media agendas, the effect of such discourses is undeniable. Muslim participants generally constructed the media as a powerful political tool that swayed public opinion against them and this was central to their notions of fear. Within the discourse of terrorism, those in the broader community are positioned as victims of fear, while those in the Muslim community are positioned as objects of fear. The nature of the fear felt is linked to the positioning as subject or object but across both groups of participants there emerged four distinct categories of fear:

- * fear of physical harm
- * political fear
- * fear of losing civil liberties
- * feeling insecure

Aly's research revealed vast differences in the way various groups experienced fear. For Australian Muslims, for example, the fear of losing civil liberties is directly linked to a fear of being targeted as a terrorist, while for the broader community it was more commonly associated with the erosion of liberal democracy and a loss of freedom of speech. The fear of directly experiencing a terrorist attack, both explicitly and implicitly expressed through threat situations and the images and discourses of terrorism, creates a sense of

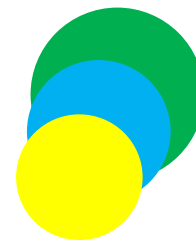


fear which is assumed into the cultural practices of even usually rational people. The terrorist attacks in London particularly resonated with the Australian public due to the intimacy and tangible immediacy created by the grainy commuter footage, as opposed to the surreal quality of the filmic record of the 9/11 attacks.

The radical shift in a sense of insecurity since 9/11 has had a profound effect on all sections of society inducing a shattered sense of community and individual security. The spectre of the increasing security measures amplifies the sense of insecurity. The impact of the fear of terrorism upon Australian communities was shown by this research to be severe, beyond the scale of stress or normal depression. Political fear, and the social consequences of perceived political manipulation of the fear message, was judged to be problematic by both Muslims and non-Muslims. For Muslims, though, the fear was caused largely by a concern about reactionary responses to political policy. Australia's participation in the Iraq war, for many respondents, represented political manipulation and the creation of fear to further a political agenda. There was an overall recognition of how the misconstruction of terrorism as an issue, in conjunction with media and political misrepresentation, could be causing social disharmony. The positioning of Muslim individuals and groups in society as 'other' exacerbated insecurity and disharmony. Muslim participants in this research viewed the stresses of their current situation as a stage that would just have to be endured.

Media coverage of terrorism, as this currently happens, perpetuates fear, heightens insecurity and aggravates societal tensions, vilification and

discrimination. The continuing salience of security measures reinforces the public sense of threat and fear and induces behavioural responses in the presence of certain stimuli that resonate with media images of terrorism, such as abandoned luggage and crowded buses. Far from being a fear of nothing, the fear of terrorism resonates and impacts in the actual lived experiences of everyday life and has profound and far-reaching consequences in terms of social unity, civil liberties and general community wellbeing.



Theme: Security

Theme Presenter: Andrew Lynch



Andrew Lynch is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales and the Director of the Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law. He is also the

Director of the Centre's Terrorism and Law Project. Andrew's research has concentrated on judicial decision-making in the High Court of Australia and the intersection of public law and legal responses to terrorism.

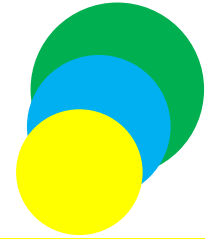
Summary

The media can have both negative and positive impacts on the issue of security. As an immediate and accessible point of reference for Australians in the fearful days following major terrorist incidents such as 9/11 and the Bali and London bombings, and in the uncertain new normality that has ensued, the media have disseminated important information and elucidated complex policy issues and legislation that impact people's lives. They have also provided widespread explanations of why and how government precautions regarding security have had varying outcomes. The media have functioned proactively by contributing positively to laws that have been passed through stirring public interest and engagement in relevant issues, for example, the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2005. They can function to safeguard democracy, not merely to exacerbate fear, as evidenced by the media contribution to the unfolding of the Haneef affair. The issue of reporting

and new legislation, and subsequent trials, is challenging in some respects at present as the outcomes of trials have widely varying degrees of salience in the media, leading to more of a trickle effect of information spread and frequently sparse explanation of the verdict process.

One of the more problematic aspects of recent media coverage however concerns the foregrounding of safety issues to the detriment of civil liberties. The important issue of balancing security and civil rights is not adequately explored in media forums. These two issues are interconnected but are not explored or debated as such. Enabling the engagement of a wide range of voices in the community, in order to facilitate a meaningful discussion on these issues, needs to be addressed, thereby reducing the potential for alienation in both foreign policy and domestic issues.

Security measures, although undeniably necessary to some degree, can also create insecurity, alienation and disaffection within the community and these effects and the resultant consequences need to be considered by policy makers. Public debate over the Haneef and Hicks cases relates back to questions of whether all new security laws are necessary and whether they will ensure our safety.



Theme: Reporting

Theme Presenter: Julie Posetti



Julie Posetti is a former ABC senior political journalist who now lectures on Journalism at the University of

Canberra. Julie's areas of research include diversity and racism, bias and political interference in the ABC and the representation of Muslim women and the political drivers that motivate it.

Photo: Jason Tozer

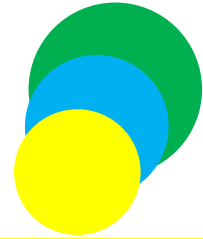
Summary

Reporters play a pivotal role as the main functionaries of the public sphere, responsible to a large degree for setting agendas for public interest. One of the key issues with regard to the media is the widespread use of stereotypes in reporting, seemingly without taking heed of the consequences, or responsibility for the effects generated. The position of reporters as daily curators of information necessitates an awareness and responsibility for the misrepresentations that are created, and their subsequent influence on community attitudes and perceptions. The media has both the potential to facilitate the exploding of myths and exposure of misrepresentations but also to revert to stereotypes which has implications at a personal level, in terms of construction of identity, as well as at a societal level. The realities of the newsroom and the complexity of agendas should also be recognized though when researching the effects of media reporting.

Reporting on Muslim women generally operates in the realm of stereotypes. Representations of these women are

typically as the terrorist, the seductress or the victim. These media constructs have a major effect on how Muslim women see themselves as Australians and how they see the 'other', in addition to effects on self-esteem and self-confidence. Such a propagated image encourages individual empowerment by women choosing to ignore the mass media, but conversely also produces fear with regards to Muslim women, as a consequence of the discourse on terrorism.

These issues cannot solely be blamed on reporting however as most reporting is driven by problematic public policy and shortcomings are thus inter-related. The talkback radio research project 'Reporting Diversity', by Posetti and Hewitt, addressed the problems associated with reporting on race issues but subsequently implicated ineffective public policy as a critical factor in such reporting. While there are various myths around talkback radio that frame it as predominantly a bastion of racism and 'shock jocks', there is also potential for positive social cohesion and interactivity between racial minorities through this medium.



Theme: **Citizenship and
Australian Values**

Theme Presenter: **Peter van Onselen**



Dr Peter van Onselen is an Associate Professor in Politics and Government at Edith Cowan University. He is the co-author of the best selling biography *John Winston Howard*, rated by *The*

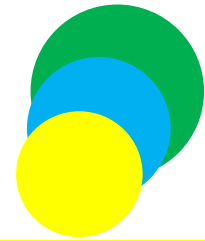
Wall Street Journal as the best biography of 2007. Professor van Onselen is a regular contributor to newspaper opinion pages and a commentator on state and federal politics for both television and radio.

Summary

The notion of Australian values and citizenship has become subsumed into the political agenda and become a tool by which audiences are manipulated for political advantage. While it is difficult to positively define what Australian values are, politicians and the media seek to exploit the notion of ‘mainstream values’, which are portrayed by whatever means are deemed expedient. Additionally, the climate of fear that has been created is utilized for political gain through the use of the concepts of values and citizenship and attendant threats to the Australian ‘way of life’. The only Australian value that seems constant however is the idea of democracy. Amongst the media and political rhetoric and hyperbole, however, the value of actual citizenship, civic responsibility and engagement is being diminished. Alongside the increasingly perfunctory nature of politics, there is a feeling of dislocation towards the media and a decline in actual engagement in citizenry.

Indicative of the problems associated with the lack of public engagement in citizenry

and civic responsibility, is the response to the Electoral Commission’s practice of making private information from voting forms accessible to political parties, enabling them to build profiles of voting intentions and issues of interest. The public is unaware or uncaring of this infringement on their privacy and also do not have access to their own information held federally. With government legislation increasingly taking away privacy rights, the chief concern is that individuals are not as concerned as they should be.



Theme: Youth

Theme Presenter: Cameron McAuliffe



Dr Cameron McAuliffe is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney. His research focuses on identity, cultural diversity and transnationalism, with a

particular interest in the intersections of national and religious identities. A unifying theme in his research is how these factors impact on the politics of difference.

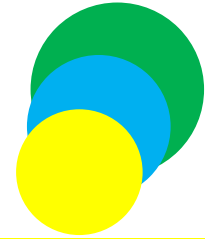
Summary

Representations of young people in contemporary society are frequently negative and perpetuate anxiety and fear. Media constructions of 'youth' help to inform the production and reproduction of 'youth cultures' separated from 'us', the audience, by the 'generation gap'. Youths are often presented in the media as inexplicable or irrational actors that do not conform to social expectations and norms in the same way as adults. Images of angry or rebellious young people in news footage, such as that associated with the Cronulla Riots, are common. As violent gangs members, as tech-savvy social networkers, or as members of 'gen Y' or 'generation next', young people have become the basis of an intimidating construct based on multiple layers of representation where cultural attributes have been passed on and mean different things in different contexts. Young people are further essentialised by attempts to uncover the 'true nature' of youth cultures. Youth becomes shorthand for what, in actuality, is a differentiated and multiply constituted group of people. This

problematic issue of categorization, by the media and society in general, influences wider perceptions of young people and has repercussions for young people in terms of self-esteem, identity construction and mental health.

There are many areas of debate around the concept of youth including when it begins and ends, what it is, and the nature of the transition from youth to adulthood. The construct of youth often incorporates factors relating to race and gender that are imbued with an over-riding sense of anxiety. There is a perception, promulgated through the media, of disaffected youth that challenges normative expectations about the transition to adulthood. There is evidence of material responses to these representations, with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders emerging in the United Kingdom and Australia's own 'Stop and Search Laws' implemented primarily against young people.

Through choice of words and the selective use of specific but relevant terms, youth can be presented as being children that need protecting as well as adults that need regulating. There is a need for balance and alternative ways of looking at the construction of youth, particularly in order to address the anxiety and difficulties associated with current representations.



Theme: Fear

Theme Presenter: Mark Balnaves



Mark Balnaves was Professor of New Media at Edith Cowan University at the time of the forum and is now Professor and Curtin Senior Research Fellow in New Media at Curtin

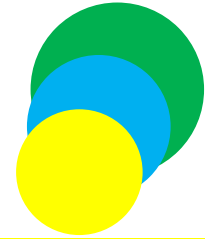
University. He has co-authored and co-edited works on the diffusion of media in the *Penguin Atlas of Media and Information*, on research methods in the Sage publication *Introduction to Quantitative Methods* and on audiences and media ratings in the University of Queensland Press book *Mobilising the Audience*. His co-authored *Media theories and approaches: A global perspective* (2008), with Palgrave Macmillan, provides an overview of trends in media studies. His research interests are audience research, impact of new media, adoption and diffusion of media and information commons.

Summary

Fear impacts society in many ways and the experience and effects differ amongst various groups within a community, influenced by factors such as gender, religion, age and level of education. Recent research by Aly and Balnaves examined the nature and effect of the fear of terrorism operating within the Australian community and was used to inform the development of a measurement scale, the metric of fear. This metric reveals the extent of fear felt by various groups and behavioural changes made as a consequence of fear. The implications for society of this heightened sense of fear are manifold.

In terms of examining fear, two major constructs of fear were considered. One concerns preventative or restrictive behaviours in which individuals will take measures to avoid places and situations perceived as dangerous, such as avoiding public transport after the London bombings. The other construct of fear relates to protective or assertive behaviours in which individuals will undertake protective measures in places and situations perceived as dangerous, such as reporting an unattended bag at train station. The fear scale revealed behavioural modifications in response to the threat of terrorism and elevated levels of fear throughout the entire community but particularly among certain groups such as females and Muslims.

There appears to be a return of 'race' as an issue in the media and in Australian communities. In a major survey undertaken by Dunn and Mahtani in 2001, Muslims and people from the Middle East, more than any other cultural or ethnic group, were thought to be unable to fit into Australia. These findings challenge the traditional Australian notion of egalitarianism.



Theme: **Civil Liberties**

Theme Presenter: **Anne Aly**



Dr Aly is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Computer and Security Science and the Security Research Centre, Edith Cowan University.

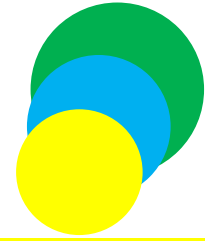
Summary

The new security measures implemented in response to the threat of terrorism are impacting on civil liberties. While there is a whole range of laws defining civil liberties, what mechanisms and laws are there to actually protect them? There needs to be greater community engagement around issues such as how to find the balance in a civil democracy, what safeguards need to be in place to protect civil liberties and what needs to be done to ensure citizens are protected from possible repercussions of security measures.

Despite being a signatory to the United Nation's pact against racial discrimination, there are many instances where the protective factor, even when conferred by official policy, is negligible. Attempts to incorporate protections for religious freedom into the Racial Discrimination Act, for example, have been dismissed. Amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act can actually prevent a case from being heard on various grounds despite the severity of the threat. Consequently, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission can reject even legitimate complaints if, for example, the respondent refuses to offer a response to the complainant. In effect, while the onus for bringing a complaint is on the complainant, the onus for actually pursuing a complaint

is shifted to the respondent. The official rhetoric produces a belief that protections exist against the erosion of civil liberties while the reality is still very unclear.

There is a need for research which explores the moral panic around particular groups, the social contexts in which these panics operate, and how these factors may impact on sections of society through the imposition of a 'forced silence'. Media and colloquial jargon, such as 'un-Australian', requires clarification and an examination of the impact of such terms on individual and group identity.



Theme: Women and Media

Theme Presenter: Omeima Sukkarieh



Omeima Sukkarieh is now Manager of Auburn Community Development Network (ACDN) after having worked with the Australian Human Rights Commission for many years. She is also

a Cross-Cultural Community Consultant with her own consultancy specializing in human rights, community engagement and addressing racism.

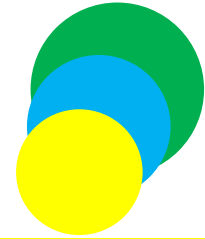
Summary

The foremost issue relating to women and the media is the issue of misrepresentation. The prevailing attitude appears to be that if accurate reporting is not possible then negative or inaccurate reporting is deemed acceptable. This dynamic affects not only Muslim and migrant women but women in general. Women are frequently categorized and boxed in by the media and therefore lack an authentic voice, as they are spoken about, not spoken to or with.

Despite these problems, there has been progress in the Australian media, with some positive representations of Muslim women, for example, on popular television shows such as a recent episode of *All Saints*. Such portrayals assist in breaking down stereotypes in the wider community although there is still resistance to widening the range of what is perceived as an acceptable representation for particular groups, even though this would accommodate the reality of women in society. This concept of simple or one-dimensional representation is evidenced by the fact that Muslim women who choose not to wear the *hijab* are deemed to be

unsuitable spokespersons for their culture and religion.

There is a need for more active participation in media discourse for women, as individuals and as groups. A diversity of voices is required and a re-engagement of women in large-scale mainstream discussions. For Muslim women, this necessitates engaging in discussions that affect them, not as the subject or object of fear, but as proponents of what they hold to be important, such as democracy and family values. The alternative media are an important avenue for ensuring participation and empowerment of women as access to the mass media can be an issue, particularly amongst Muslim and migrant women who frequently turn to community radio or external news sources like *Al Jazeera* for knowledge.



Theme: **Education and Social Inclusion**

Theme Presenter: **Nahid Afrose Kabir**



At the time of the forum, Dr Nahid Kabir was a Research Fellow at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. She holds a PhD in History and an MA

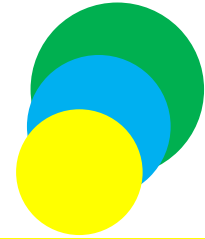
in Historical Studies from The University of Queensland, Australia. Dr Kabir is the author of *Muslims in Australia: Immigration, Race Relations and Cultural History*. Currently (2009-2010) Dr Kabir is a visiting fellow at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, USA.

Summary

In order to bring about social inclusion it is first necessary to address social exclusion and to deal with the factors that cause or exacerbate it. The effects of the media through marginalization, inaccurate reporting and the power of the image to shape and contort public opinion, can have a profound negative impact on various groups in the community. These effects, in conjunction with a lack of cultural understanding, can contribute to bullying and name-calling in schools which have many detrimental outcomes. Other factors which impact on social exclusion are: poor health, domestic violence, segregation, unemployment, lack of language skills, political comments and school and family expectations.

Factors which will facilitate social inclusion include quality education, dialogue with local communities,

counselling in schools, engagement with family and community members, communication and debate, and appreciating diversity through cultural programming, media studies and discussions.

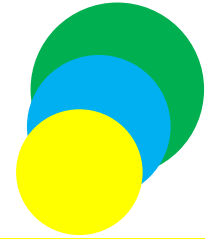


Summary

The spectre of terrorism and fear has had a dramatic impact on Australian society, creating or exacerbating issues that have the capacity to fundamentally diminish the democratic, egalitarian and multicultural notions underpinning modern Australia. Current practices in media coverage and reporting, and new security legislation, have led to greater marginalization of some minority communities and contributed to a heightened sense of fear, social disengagement and some civic disinterest in community.

Despite an improving level of media literacy amongst Australians, who are aware of a lack of visibility regarding the ways in which mass media news is structured, and are in many ways a critical audience, the media continue to set the public agenda. Additionally, for many, there is a level of information overload that precludes the active critique of media content and leads to a widespread influence of reporting on the public psyche. Arguably, there are many shortcomings with regards to the media and misrepresentation, lack of alternative voices within the mainstream media and a comparative lack of an informed, objective and diverse coverage. There are structural barriers, such as time constraints and media ownership issues, which impact on the quality, accuracy and depth of reporting. Time constraints are particularly problematic in news reporting and contribute to a perception of stereotypical and at times simplistic coverage which fails to deal with the complexities of different situations. Additionally, there appears to be some journalistic indifference to the impact of one-dimensional reporting, and to the indiscriminate use of images, which carry far greater significance and a weight of associations beyond the physical content of what is actually depicted. These issues have contributed to a sense that much current reporting lacks depth and context, failing to indicate how issues develop over time, which can diminish media quality and help generate negative misrepresentations. Economic imperatives have impacted on the space available for comment, and for alternative voices and wider access to the mass media. Further, the more challenging economic environment facing the press can go hand in hand with a continuing commercial encroachment on journalistic and editorial independence. It appears that the pervasive use of stereotyping, and the influence of public relations and governmental spin on agenda-setting, may have impacted negatively on social cohesion and increased the sense of marginalization experienced by some communities. Discrimination can be linked to media-propagated stereotypes, with those affected often unable to redress the balance due to a lack of access to the media to present a counterpoint argument. A deficiency of pluralism in terms of voices represented in the mass media, and a lack of training concerning how to deal with the media and reporters, leads in some communities to a lack of the capacity to influence the news agenda.

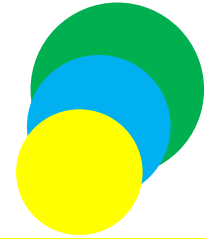
The media's role as the Fourth Estate has been to some extent compromised by the increasingly blurred line between journalism and infotainment, and there is also a diminished level of public intellectualism involvement in the media. There is often a lack of self-reflexivity within the mass media which is exacerbated by an uneven distribution of power, lack of cultural diversity among media employees and unbalanced access and input into the media. The increasing permeation of spin and PR into the arena of journalism, partly as a



result of reduced numbers of journalists, reflects the increasing use of press releases and intermediaries as an alternative to establishing contacts and undertaking more extensive field research. It also impacts upon creativity and original stories in news journalism. There is a clear imperative to foster the notion of advocacy or pro-active journalism in order to facilitate dialogue, debate and discussion on current issues in society, rather than rely on the narrow realm dictated by news diaries, PR and governmental agenda setting.

The cohesion of Australian society is detrimentally affected by stereotyping, negative coverage and incidental or deliberate misrepresentation of susceptible groups, particularly minority groups such as Muslims, but also women and youth. By denying a plurality of experiences and viewpoints, there is a resultant increase in alienation and disaffection among diverse audience members which can contribute to the seeking out of alternative modes of news services, offering a greater opportunity for self-identification. This may occur positively through turning to alternative and participatory independent media sources which offer a point of identification, but may also involve more negative repercussions. Simplistic media coverage which does not address the complex reality of issues, such as those of ethnic minorities, can be attributed to a lack of education and research, time and institutional constraints, and a deficiency of understanding of cultural nuances which contributes to divisionary pressures in society. Specific ethnic minorities are only invited to speak about certain issues, and as a result all people within that ethnicity are linked to those specific issues. The problematic and endemic use of over-labeling in the areas of ethnicity and religion, and the repetitious linking of such groups to crime and threats to security, results in a blanketing effect whereby all members of that community can be deemed by some audience members to pose a risk. The media offers terms and categories for diverse populations and a range of specific circumstances which audience members can often use and apply to others. This dynamic, in conjunction with negative representations, can be problematic, especially for youth who are beginning to re-construct their identities and, in some cases, return to more fundamentalist orientations since the nuances of their sense of self are denied. Conversely, there are also concerns that the negative framing of many aspects of Islam in the Australian media may be causing Muslim youth to turn away from their religion. Both extremes of response have undesirable consequences for the community. Youth in general often see themselves as subject to negative media misrepresentation and, as a consequence, experience alienation and marginalization to varying degrees. The acute need for a sense of belonging is an issue for some, particularly minority groups, and yet this sense of belonging can be made problematic and denied by much public discourse. Women, especially Muslim women, are also under-represented in the media workforce and perceive themselves as lacking an avenue to address negative media constructs or to constructively influence public and news agendas.

While security is an undeniable aspect of contemporary life, the increased salience of security measures and reports on terrorism have heightened levels of fear and anxiety in the general community and caused behavioural changes in response. Security fears and surveillance measures, while necessary in some situations, can also increase tensions between different groups. The government discourse concerning security differs from the discourses which many marginalized people construct in their daily lives, and does not address all modes of experience. There is a substantial lack of knowledge within the community with regard to the 41 new acts of legislation that have been enacted since 9/11 and these new powers have a

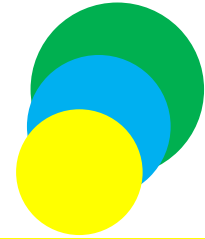


considerable impact on society and everyday life. A comparative dearth of quality investigative journalism in the area of security has meant an absence of public enquiry and a lack of reporting of humanizing experience, resulting in public detachment. Arguably, this has allowed for the removal of certain civil liberties without the public even realizing that this is happening, or appearing to care. The absence of debate or awareness of alternatives and the incremental nature of this erosion of civil liberties have, in some cases, led to general apathy among the Australian public about personal freedoms and other issues of significance. There is a general lack of informed discussion about the impact of new security measures and laws, although discussion around the need for an Australian Bill of Rights or equivalent legislative commitment may yet address this concern and help ensure the protection of nationally-valued liberties. In the meantime, a general inability to protect civil liberties and stand up for the Australian way of life, has allowed the passage of legislation that impinges on established human rights.

The level of fear in Australian communities appears to have increased considerably since before 9/11, and the divisive ramifications of this shift in everyday trust and confidence are exacerbated by the widespread use of fear-based stereotypes in reporting, and in sometimes sensationalized or inflammatory media coverage. Perceptions of possible political manipulation and agenda setting, in conjunction with the media's promulgation of fear, have given rise to a situation which has negative implications for social, health and economic indicators, both in the community in general and, specifically, for ethnic communities. The spectre of a security crisis dominates society to such a degree that even economic issues related to the current global financial crisis are couched in terms of protecting Australia's financial security. The many different paradigms implicated in the knowledge, experience and understanding of fear feed off each other.

The pervasive fear of terrorism that underlies much of the altered landscape of contemporary Australia has very real and undeniable effects, yet in many respects is irrational in terms of its being a disproportionate response to a statistically low risk. Research has confirmed not only attitudinal shifts but also behavioural change in people's responses to terrorist attacks and also to the governmental rhetoric and media coverage of security issues. Instead of enhancing the public's perception of safety as a result of further security measures, there has actually been an increase in fearfulness due to the salience of security and terrorism coverage in the media, and the institutional focus upon uncertainty and risk. Everyday items and situations have become inscribed in the social terminology of terrorism, rendering them as objects of fear.

The notions of citizenship and Australian values, while frequently bandied about by the media and politicians, are open to interpretation, apart from a generally accepted 'core concept' of democracy. The co-opting of these terms for political expediency and gain may have led to a diminishment of engagement with politics and the government. Growing cynicism about these two aspects of civic life is increasingly being reflected in a flight away from the mass media to alternative media, particularly in terms of young people's engagement with news and current affairs. Elevated levels of fear in the community, and official responses to the discourse on security such as the introduction of a Citizenship Test, have led to the emergence of a very narrow, closed definition of cultural citizenship, diminishing or negating other aspects of citizenship such as adherence to the rule of law and democratic values. The concepts of multiculturalism and egalitarianism are also devalued as a consequence. The



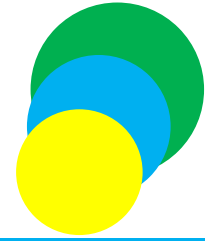
appropriation and deployment of specific Australian symbols, such as the Southern Cross tattoos identified with the Cronulla riots, are a visual representation of the exclusionary nature of such narrow forms of citizenship in the hands of some people, including some that are given space by the media and in political debate. An anecdote relayed during the forum, which concerned a government minister of a previous administration who felt that customs officers should display ‘educated bigotry’ as a ‘necessary and understandable’ part of their job, exemplifies a possible increase in discriminatory nationalism which can be inflamed by media misrepresentations and stereotyping.

With regard to education, there is arguably a need to reform the national history curriculum in order to provide a sound background in Australian issues and contexts, including histories of migration, exclusion and the struggle for civil liberties. Many families who speak languages other than English also seek a re-focus on the teaching of literacy and grammar to counteract perceived shortcomings in the current system and aid acceptance and opportunity for their children. Exclusionary elements that operate in schools, such as bullying, need to be addressed in order for social inclusion to be achieved. There are also issues at university level as competition for scarce resources within universities can create difficulties, inhibiting the university’s operation as a coherent enterprise and, instead, constructing it as a system of separate entities.

Conclusion

As noted by the forum, Australia has been fortunate with regard to the international threat presented by global terrorism. While terrorism has touched Australian lives, through past criminal activities and bombings on home soil, and through the tragic events of 9/11 and the London, Madrid and Bali bombings, in many respects the fear of terrorism in Australia is disproportionate to the actual risk. The graphically evocative and dramatic unfolding of the events of 9/11, and subsequent terrorist attacks in Bali, Madrid and London, have imprinted and impacted on the public psyche and on many facets of everyday life. While the price of safety and security is vigilance, security responses by the government need to be examined in order to minimize negative effects on the community, and on the ideals of a democratic and egalitarian society. Issues surrounding the media coverage of security measures, new legislation, Australian values and citizenship and the like, require nuanced and humanising coverage if people are to comprehend their impact. With any issue of law and security there is never a simple binary choice between essential and non-essential, and the ramifications of any new measures should be considered in terms of maintaining and building social cohesion, especially in light of the nature and threat of terrorism which is insidious and difficult to predict and prevent. Addressing issues of marginalization and alienation at their source, as they begin, is a necessary adjunct to measures designed to compel security through monitoring and surveillance.

Workshop Outcomes



1. Education

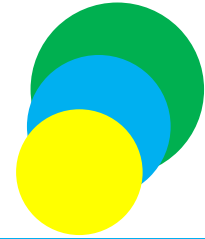
Improve education of students in schools – a thorough grounding in Australian history would provide context and understanding of many issues and lessen the repetition of past mistakes while increasing the ability to critique media representations and coverage. The general introduction of media studies courses would enable the deconstruction of reporting and enhance the understanding of the pressures which underlie not just reporting but news agenda setting, thereby reducing the negative effects of problematic media representations of youth, ethnicity and religion. Cultural, ethnic and religious respect would be enhanced by community-based programs which focus on sport, art, food and drama to bridge cultural gaps and explain differences in a non-threatening and inclusive environment.

2. Community Engagement

The many new laws and legislative changes that have been enacted post 9/11, and their implications for civil liberties and society in general, have been unexamined and unexplained to a significant degree. This has contributed to apathy and a lack of public discussion, understanding and involvement. Comprehensive coverage of security policy and legislation, regularly updated, would enable the media to be a far more effective transmission point of crucial information and would assist in stimulating discussion and debate amongst the public as to the ramifications and societal costs of new or proposed legislation. Informed and open discourse could be enhanced by nuanced reporting of the human implications of policy decisions and security strategies. Such coverage could reawaken interest and re-engage communities in civic debate.

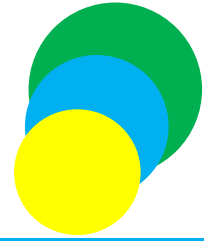
3. Media and Reporting

- a) Address the quality of mainstream media coverage and reporting through cross cultural education and training of journalists to enhance culturally sensitive reporting. Establishing relationships of trust and confidence between the media and different communities would be costly but beneficial in providing deeper and more nuanced stories. Encouraging self-reflexivity within the media and an awareness of the ramifications of misrepresentation could reduce stereotyping and support more accurate and pluralized reporting. Promoting a more judicious use of images could decrease the promulgation of inaccurate and prejudicial connotations associated with inappropriate and unexamined image selection. Fostering advocacy or pro-active journalism could help support the media in their role as the Fourth Estate while broadening the scope of agendas set through the news. Reducing the reliance on PR inputs into the news, and actively recruiting journalists from a more diverse spectrum of backgrounds, would serve to widen the constrained views reflected in much current press coverage. Improving access to the media for minority or marginalized groups could also provide an avenue of redress to communities who presently are disaffected, thereby reducing the likelihood of societal issues and the possible construction of radical or problematic identities among vulnerable and impressionable community



members. Providing minority or under-represented groups with training and education for dealing with and accessing the media would help create an authentic voice in media coverage which rang true for community members. This would be especially the case if such training were made available to opinion leaders within these groups and communities, in order to give them a platform from which to highlight positive initiatives and contributions to the wider society, and through which to denounce undesirable elements or actions within their communities. Such coverage could also support inclusion within the general community.

- b) More balanced and informed coverage of the low levels of relative risk, as well as the security measures through which these are addressed, would help reduce disproportionate levels of fear in the community, and the negative consequences of that fear, while maintaining public vigilance and preparedness.
- c) Promote and support existing alternative and participatory media and establish professional independent media – ensuring the continuation and promotion of a range of alternative and accessible media sources. Strategies which sustain diverse media viewpoints and facilitate ease of access to them will enhance the plurality of views presented, increase inclusion and provide less restrictive media agenda setting. Promoting cross-cultural interaction in alternative media spaces, in addition to developing mainstream media cross-over with alternative media, would further stimulate an increased range and depth of reporting, and with it a better informed public debate and discussion. These measures would increase the reach and impact of alternative media and could facilitate and fuel more community dialogue, engagement and involvement.
- d) Recognize and develop the positive potential of radio. With a beneficial capacity for dialogue and interviews, the role of radio in providing the opportunity for cross-cultural debate and a greater exchange of ideas could usefully be promoted and facilitated. Talkback radio has the capacity to generate debate amongst the broader public and also to provide the opportunity for balanced discourse. This potential should be enhanced and developed to encourage social cohesion and interactivity between racial and ethnic minorities and the community at large. Some negative aspects of talkback radio can be countered through more effective regulation and robust public policy.
- e) Improve the diffusion of academic ideas and research findings. Use PR and marketing principles to enhance the coverage and impact of academic findings within the mass media in order to stimulate greater public debate and discussion on issues such as security, community fear and citizenship.

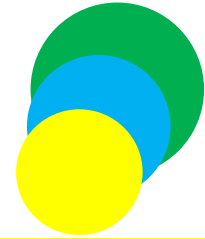


4. Social Inclusion

- a) Facilitate greater involvement of women in the media – recruitment strategies which promote greater representation of women, including from diverse communities, will improve the range of viewpoints presented and enhance culturally sensitive reporting. Community and school programs which focus on promoting interaction and support between different cultural, religious and ethnic groups would provide another avenue for building social unity and reducing the impact of negative stereotyping.

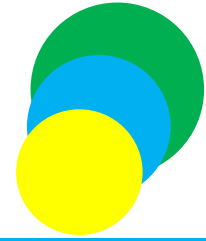
- b) Explore and advance the positive contributions made by humour, satire and pop culture – the capacity to break down barriers, create new representations and new forums for discussion through the use of humour, satire and pop culture needs greater exploration and development. Comedy, in particular, has a significant capacity to promote social equality and awareness. Opportunities to embed social equality education and awareness into different media and communication genres should be actively encouraged and pursued.

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