

**From:** [Emily Corner](#)  
**To:** s22  
**Subject:** Re: RAERp Project Discussion [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 26 May 2020 3:00:54 PM  
**Attachments:** [Indigenous-Email-Signature-DSL172170.jpg](#)

---

Hi s22

Thanks for chasing me. We will be attending in person tomorrow if that is ok.

Best,

Emily.

Dr Emily Corner  
Lecturer

---

Centre for Social Research and Methods | College of Arts and Social Sciences | The Australian National University  
s22 Beryl Rawson Building | Ellery Crescent | Canberra ACT 2601 | Australia  
Telephone: s22

[Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [ResearchGate](#)



On 26 May 2020, at 3:00 pm, s22  
s22 <[s22@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s22@homeaffairs.gov.au)> wrote:

For-Official-Use-Only

Hi Emily,

Would you like to attend the office in person tomorrow or I can send out teleconference details in the invite today.

Thanks

s22

Regards

s22

Executive Assistant to s22 Countering Violent Extremism  
Citizenship and Social Cohesion Policy Division  
Department of Home Affairs | GPO Box 594 Canberra ACT 2601  
P: s22  
E: s22 <[s22@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s22@homeaffairs.gov.au)>

For-Official-Use-Only

---

**From:** Emily Corner <[Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au](mailto:Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 20 May 2020 1:55 PM  
**To:** s22 [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Helen Taylor <[h.taylor@anu.edu.au](mailto:h.taylor@anu.edu.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: RAERp Project Discussion [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Dear s22 [REDACTED]

Helen and I are both free to meet s22 [REDACTED]

I will get back to you with confirmation as to the meeting format. I am just checking on ANU's current policies regarding meetings with external agencies.

Will let you know as soon as I do.

Best,

Emily.

Dr Emily Corner  
Lecturer

Centre for Social Research and Methods | College of Arts and Social Sciences | The Australian National University  
s22 [REDACTED] Beryl Rawson Building | Ellery Crescent | Canberra ACT 2601 | Australia  
Telephone: s22 [REDACTED]

Twitter | LinkedIn | ResearchGate

<image001.png>

On 20 May 2020, at 13:36, s22 [REDACTED]  
s22 [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au)> wrote:

**For-Official-Use-Only**

Hi Emily,

Please confirm if you and Helen Taylor are available to meet with s22 [REDACTED]  
s22 [REDACTED] to discuss the RAERp Project.

**When:** Wednesday, 27 May 2020 between 10:30 – 1:30am  
**Where:** 3 Molonglo Dr.

Alternatively we can set up a teleconference.

Regards

s22

Executive Assistant to s22 Countering Violent Extremism  
Citizenship and Social Cohesion Policy Division

Department of Home Affairs | GPO Box 594 Canberra ACT 2601

P: s22

E: s22@homeaffairs.gov.au

### **For-Official-Use-Only**

Important Notice: The content of this email is intended only for use by the individual or entity to whom it is addressed. If you have received this email by mistake, please advise the sender and delete the message and attachments immediately. This email, including attachments, may contain confidential, sensitive, legally privileged and/or copyright information.

Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. The Department of Home Affairs and ABF respect your privacy and have obligations under the Privacy Act 1988.

Unsolicited commercial emails MUST NOT be sent to the originator of this email.

**From:** [Emily Corner](#)  
**To:** s22  
**Subject:** Fwd: Contract variation 2 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]  
**Date:** Thursday, 28 May 2020 2:07:18 PM  
**Attachments:** [900021 - Variation 2\\_28052020.pdf](#)  
[ATT00001.htm](#)

---

Dear s22

As requested, please find attached the signed contract.

Best,  
Emily.

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** s22 <s22@anu.edu.au>  
**Date:** 28 May 2020 at 12:23:21 pm AEST  
**To:** s22 <s22@anu.edu.au>  
**Cc:** s22 <s22@anu.edu.au>, Emily Corner <Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au>, s22 <s22@anu.edu.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Contract variation 2 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Dear s22  
Please find attached variation of contract signed by s22

Kind regards,

s22

---

**From:** s22 <s22@anu.edu.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 28 May 2020 10:46 AM  
**To:** s22 <s22@anu.edu.au>  
**Cc:** s22 <s22@anu.edu.au>; s22 <s22@anu.edu.au>; Emily Corner <Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au>; s22 <s22@anu.edu.au>  
**Subject:** Fw: Contract variation 2 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Dear s22

Attached is a contract variation for work that we are doing with Home Affairs. It simply extends the date for the completion of the project until later in June.

Home Affairs have requested it be executed today. My view is that this is not entirely reasonable but it would be very helpful if we were able to return a signed variation today as this would assist in maintaining the relationship and

increase the chances of future work.

Regards

s22

---

**From:** Emily Corner <[Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au](mailto:Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 28 May 2020 9:38 AM  
**To:** s22 <[REDACTED]@anu.edu.au>; s22 <[REDACTED]@anu.edu.au>; s22 <[REDACTED]@anu.edu.au>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Contract variation 2 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Dear s22

I met with Home Affairs yesterday regarding the outcomes of the project. Home Affairs have requested changes be made to the report, and have requested an extension to cover this.

Unfortunately, their turnaround for this contract variation is extremely tight. I requested the signed contract yesterday but did not receive it until this morning. I am therefore requesting that this contract (variation 2) is signed by COB today.

Thank you very much,

Best,  
Emily.

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** s22 <[REDACTED]@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>  
**Date:** 28 May 2020 at 9:25:31 am AEST  
**To:** Emily Corner <[Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au](mailto:Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au)>, Helen Taylor <[h.taylor@anu.edu.au](mailto:h.taylor@anu.edu.au)>  
**Cc:** s22 <[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au>, s22 <[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au>, s22 <[REDACTED]@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>  
**Subject:** Contract variation 2 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

**For-Official-Use-Only**

Good morning Emily & Helen,

Following yesterday's meeting, please see attached contract **variation 2** for ANU's sign off.

In order to expend monies prior to the end of financial year we have only been able to extend the contract until **Friday 26 June 2020**.

Unfortunately, because the current variation expires on Monday 1 June 2020, grateful for your urgent action by **COB today**.

Sincere apologies for the tight deadline. Please feel free to reach out should you have any issues.

Kind regards,

s22

A/g National Program Manager, *Living Safe Together* |  
Intervention | Countering Violent Extremism |  
Citizenship & Social Cohesion Policy Division | Home Affairs

☐

s22 @homeaffairs.gov.au

📧

📧

**For-Official-Use-Only**

Important Notice: The content of this email is intended only for use by the individual or entity to whom it is addressed. If you have received this email by mistake, please advise the sender and delete the message and attachments immediately. This email, including attachments, may contain confidential, sensitive, legally privileged and/or copyright information.

Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. The Department of Home Affairs and ABF respect your privacy and have obligations under the Privacy Act 1988.

Unsolicited commercial emails **MUST NOT** be sent to the originator of this email.



## Variation Form

### Item 1 Work Order details

Work Order No: 900021 – Testing the Reliability, Validity, and Equity of Terrorism Risk Assessment Tools Project		
1.	Branch/Division/Section	Intervention, Countering Violent Extremism, Citizenship & Social Cohesion Policy Division
2.	Contractor	The Australian National University ABN 52 234 063 906
3.	Date of Work Order	14 June 2018

### Item 2 Variation Form

Variation Number – 2	
This Variation Form is issued in accordance with the Deed of Standing Offer for Services between the Commonwealth of Australia as represented by the <b>Department of Home Affairs ABN 33 380 054 835</b> and <b>The Australian National University ABN 52 234 063 906</b> and serves to vary the Contract formed under 900021 as specified in accordance with the terms set out below.	
Implementation date	The date this Variation is signed by both Parties.
Changes to Dates:	<b>Delete:</b> The Contract Initial End date specified in this Work Order is 1 June 2020.  Acceptance of Final Performance Report date specified in this Work Order is 1 June 2020.  <b>And replace with:</b> The Contract End date specified in this Work Order is 26 June 2020.  Acceptance of Final Performance Report date specified in this Work Order is 26 June 2020.
Other relevant matters	In all other respects, the terms and conditions of the Work Order remain unaltered.

**EXECUTION OF THE VARIATION FORM:**

Signed for and on behalf of the **Department of Home Affairs ABN 33 380 054 835** by its duly authorised representative in the presence of

s22

Signature of witness

s22

Name of witness (print)

28/05/2020

Date

Signed by **The Australian National University ABN 52 234 063 906** by its duly authorised representative in the presence of

s22

Signature of witness

s22

Name of witness (print)

28 May 2020

Date

s22

s22

Name of representative (print)

A/g Assistant Director

Position of representative (print)

s22

Signature of representative

s22

Name of representative (print)

Director, Research School of Social Sciences

Position of representative (print)



From: [Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au](mailto:Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au)  
To: s22  
Cc:  
Subject: Re: Contract variation 2 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]  
Date: Thursday, 28 May 2020 9:52:52 AM

---

Dear s22

I have sent the contract variation to be signed, but as I expressed yesterday, I am unable to guarantee that this will be completed by today. I will chase the signature again this afternoon.

Two other things:

The final payment for the project is contingent on the acceptance of the final performance report, not the final report. I understand that Home Affairs would like the final product (with corrections) prior to payment, but this was not in the original contract. This might need to be expressed in writing as it was not in the original agreement. I have CC'd in my department manager as record of this, as the Centre may wish to seek further guidance as it was not part of the original contract.

Please note, I am more than happy to review the requested changes, but as I said yesterday, not all changes may be accepted, and we will of course provide a rebuttal for these instances. I am unfortunately unable to provide specific details of any changes as I have not yet seen the request.

Unfortunately, Dr Taylor spoke out of turn yesterday, and as the Primary Investigator on the project, I am not happy to send Home Affairs the data set gathered during the systematic review. As we noted yesterday, this is an extremely rich data source on its own and is not connected to the tools. I am more than happy to send the bibliography of all studies that were gathered, but as per the contract material, our outputs and specifically those relating to the instruments are owned by the department, and not the data gathered. All data gathered will be securely stored in the Australian Data Archive as per our ethics agreement with the university. All confidential data will be destroyed after a period of 5 years, but the systematic review data will be made freely available to researchers after a publishing period.

Best,  
Emily.

On 28 May 2020, at 9:25 am, s22  
s22 @homeaffairs.gov.au wrote:

### **For-Official-Use-Only**

Good morning Emily & Helen,

Following yesterday's meeting, please see attached contract **variation 2** for ANU's sign off.

In order to expend monies prior to the end of financial year we have only been able to extend the contract until **Friday 26 June 2020**.

Unfortunately, because the current variation expires on Monday 1 June 2020, grateful for your urgent action by **COB today**.

Sincere apologies for the tight deadline. Please feel free to reach out should you have any issues.

Kind regards,

s22

A/g National Program Manager, *Living Safe Together* |  
Intervention | Countering Violent Extremism |  
Citizenship & Social Cohesion Policy Division | Home Affairs

☐

s22 [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s22@homeaffairs.gov.au)





**For-Official-Use-Only**

Important Notice: The content of this email is intended only for use by the individual or entity to whom it is addressed. If you have received this email by mistake, please advise the sender and delete the message and attachments immediately. This email, including attachments, may contain confidential, sensitive, legally privileged and/or copyright information.

Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. The Department of Home Affairs and ABF respect your privacy and have obligations under the Privacy Act 1988.

Unsolicited commercial emails **MUST NOT** be sent to the originator of this email.

<900021 - Variation 2\_28052020.pdf>

<ANU Corner - signed work order.pdf>

<900021 - Variation 1\_19 March 2020 signed.pdf>

---

**From:** Emily Corner s22@anu.edu.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 June 2020 2:07 PM  
**To:** s22  
**Cc:** Helen Taylor; s22  
**Subject:** Re: Home Affairs comments [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

**Follow Up Flag:** Flag for follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi s22

Thanks for this.

So the standard format typically follows a brief statement to say that funding was received by 'a'. There is not normally a statement to reflect that it does not represent the views of the funder, as articles pass through peer review and are subject to change on multiple levels. I can request this if necessary?

Best,

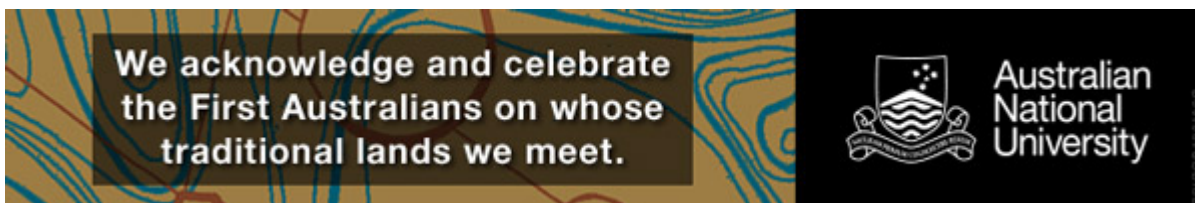
Emily.

Dr Emily Corner  
Lecturer

---

Centre for Social Research and Methods | College of Arts and Social Sciences | The Australian National University  
s22 Beryl Rawson Building | Ellery Crescent | Canberra ACT 2601 | Australia  
Telephone: s22

[Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [ResearchGate](#)



On 24 Jun 2020, at 2:01 pm, s22@homeaffairs.gov.au> wrote:

**UNCLASSIFIED**

Hi Emily,

Context/changes in the main document would also be great.

Thank you for the update on the articles. We'd be happy to be cited in the funding acknowledgements. To double check, would this include a standard/usual caveat that the article does not represent the views of Home Affairs / Australian Government etc.?

Happy to discuss

Cheers

s22

## UNCLASSIFIED

---

From: Emily Corner <[Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au](mailto:Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au)>

Sent: Monday, 22 June 2020 11:05 AM

To: s22 <[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au>

Cc: Helen Taylor <[h.taylor@anu.edu.au](mailto:h.taylor@anu.edu.au)>; s22 <[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au>;

s22 <[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s22 <[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au>

s22 <[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au>

Subject: Re: Home Affairs comments [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Dear s22

Sorry for my radio silence. We are more than happy to have these revisions to you by the 26th June.

I just wanted to check though, as in our meeting there was the suggestion that the main document would also require amending to reflect the changes in the executive summary. We are more than happy to do this also.

Also, as previously discussed with s22 the article that we have submitted that details the methodology of the systematic review (but not the results as detailed in the report - in the article we focused solely on mental health and personality), is undergoing review. We have split the article into two (due to the size). The first article, focusing on mental health has been accepted. I wanted to double check if you wish to be cited in the funding acknowledgements. Both the Canadian government and the European Union are being acknowledged as funders (for the UCL side of the systematic review), so I wanted to know if you would also want to be acknowledged. Happy to talk over the phone s22 if needed.

Best,

Emily.

Dr Emily Corner  
Lecturer

---

Centre for Social Research and Methods | College of Arts and Social Sciences | The Australian National University  
s22 Beryl Rawson Building | Ellery Crescent | Canberra ACT 2601 | Australia  
Telephone: s22

<image001.jpg>

On 12 Jun 2020, at 10:09 am, s22  
s22 @homeaffairs.gov.au> wrote:

UNCLASSIFIED

Hello Emily,

Thank you for meeting with us the other day. As discussed, and with apologies for our lateness, below are Home Affairs's suggestions for the draft report.

The suggestions are based on our discussion around contextualising some of the statements and discussions so that the findings can be better understood by readers without a research background. Without greater context, we think some readers may interpret the report findings more negatively than intended. We reiterate that we value your independence as researchers and are not seeking to amend your findings.

### Executive Summary

This is the section of the report most readers will visit. We would be grateful if you would revisit the writing tone. Some decision makers might misinterpret your findings as they are currently expressed and conclude that the Australian Government should dispense with both tools, leaving law enforcement and correctional agencies with only operational experience. We provide the following comments in relation to your findings on page 2:

- **Dot point 1** about risk specification could be reframed to confirm your finding about risk specification and suggest that the instrument manuals be revised to provide greater clarity.
- **Dot point 2's** finding about the theoretical and empirical evidence base is valuable, however, we think it would be useful to clarify that this is the evidence base largely documented in the instrument manuals for users. We are aware, for example, that Dr Pressman has also relied heavily on communication with practitioners in law enforcement, intelligence and correctional agencies, that would not be appropriate to cite in the manual.
- **Dot point 3**, the reader may interpret this finding as a significant weakness in the instruments. We invite you to consider whether it would be appropriate to contextualise this finding on page 2 and in the body of the report, perhaps with a recommendation that the instrument manuals would be improved by clarifying this issue in their next revision.
  - We agree that neither instrument manual specifies that they provide a comprehensive SPJ protocol, as outlined by Logan and Lloyd

(2018), and can fairly be characterised as SPJ 'lite'. In fairness to the instruments, they are designed to be used by a range of users and SPJ lite is the optimum approach in these circumstances, according to Logan and Lloyd. In our view SPJ lite is a strength rather than weakness for many of the applications of the VERA-2R. Further, some appropriately qualified and experienced VERA-2R users conduct a full SPJ risk formulation, and do not require the VERA-2R manual to stipulate how to do this or the circumstances in which this should be undertaken.

- **Dot points 4 and 5**, represent important elements of your research findings, but we are concerned that the finding as they are expressed suggests that the instruments are not fit for purpose. We invite you to reconsider how to express your finding here and in the body of the report, including recommending that the instruments' authors be more explicit about the role of social networks, age and gender.
  - With respect to **gender and age**, we agree that these are significant risk factors. Our understanding is that these variables are not present in the instruments because the individuals being assessed have already been identified as being on a pathway of radicalisation to violence (and as you would expect, are predominantly young males). We also argue that with respect to VERA-2R, the instrument recognises the importance of **social networks**, and the presence of information in many indicators signals the subject's involvement in social networks that promote and perpetrate violent extremism.
- We are very interested in learning more about the variables identified in your finding at **Dot point 6**. We appreciate that you intend to undertake further work in this area outside the scope of this report and that you are reluctant to release your full data set. We would be grateful, however, if you would expand the number of variables that you have identified at Table 7 on page 95.
  - As discussed at our meeting, please include a list of the literature that you identified during the Systematic Review as an appendix.
  - We are not surprised that religious beliefs appeared frequently in the literature. We are interested to learn if there are equivalent or parallel variable(s) apparent for studies of extreme right wing extremists.
- The **sub-dot point under Dot point 6** summarises your finding that both instruments lack the majority of variables identified in the SR. We think that this finding, if communicated to the authors, would improve both instruments' manuals.
- **Dot point 7** as it is currently worded might lead to the rejection of both instruments in Australia, as decision makers may misunderstand your research parameters. We request this finding be clarified to note that it arises from the experiment conducted in Task 4, and that the finding cannot be understood without reading your discussion and caveats in the Task 4 Chapter.

- **Dot point 8** could be similarly misunderstood unless the finding qualifies the finding with an explanation, for example, that the results of Task 4 did not reveal an acceptable standard of inter-rater reliability. It would also be helpful to recognise in the body of the report that the experimental study is based on small numbers and that further experimentation would be valuable to confirm the experimental finding.

**Page 3, paragraph 2 ‘despite the results etc’**

- It would be appreciated if some contextual sentences in this paragraph and the body of the report qualified this implication by explaining, for example, that this finding is from Task 4 and acknowledging that it arose under experimental conditions that attempt to model but do not replicate real world use of the instruments.

**Page 3, recommendations**

- We acknowledge your recommendation that a process evaluation would be valuable. We would also be interested in other recommendations that you wish to offer about how the two instruments might be improved, for example, by updating the instruments in light of the SR and user experience, being clearer about the author’s expectations with respect to SPJ, and steps that could be taken to improve inter-rater reliability.
- Finally, you explained at our meeting that you did not mean to suggest that the department should cease using the VERA-2R and Radar instruments. We are concerned that the casual reader or a reader without a research background might conclude that this is the report’s main conclusion. We request a paragraph to avoid this potential misinterpretation.

s22 who has done most of thinking on this, is happy to discuss any of the above s22 @homeaffairs.gov.au or s22

We’d be grateful for the final version of the report by 26 June. But happy to discuss if you have concerns with the timeframe.

Cheers

s22

s22

Director, Intervention  
Countering Violent Extremism Centre

Department of Home Affairs

T | s22

E | s22

**UNCLASSIFIED**

Important Notice: The content of this email is intended only for use by the individual or entity to whom it is addressed. If you have received this email by mistake, please advise the sender and delete the message and attachments immediately. This email, including attachments, may contain confidential, sensitive, legally privileged and/or copyright information.

Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. The Department of Home Affairs and ABF respect your privacy and have obligations under the Privacy Act 1988.

Unsolicited commercial emails MUST NOT be sent to the originator of this email.



**From:** [Emily Corner](#)  
**To:** s22  
**Cc:** [Helen Taylor](#); s22  
**Subject:** Re: Home Affairs comments [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Thursday, 30 July 2020 9:32:42 AM  
**Attachments:** [PastedGraphic-1.tiff](#)

---

Dear s22

Thanks for getting in touch, and thank you for letting us know that the work has been accepted. Helen and I are very proud of what we achieved, particularly in the last stages of the project, with Canberra being subject to some of the worst aspects of the current apocalypse.

I would also like to extend our thanks to you all, for all that you and the team (including everyone past and present) have done to help. I feel like I met most of Home Affairs during the project, and each and every person was nothing but gracious, friendly and most helpful. So please, if you see any of the past team members, extend our thanks.

Please do get in touch with any further queries about the project, or any other items, I am more than happy to help.

Best,

Emily.

Dr Emily Corner  
Lecturer

Centre for Social Research and Methods | College of Arts and Social Sciences | The Australian National University

s22 Beryl Rawson Building | Ellery Crescent | Canberra ACT 2601 | Australia

s22

Twitter | LinkedIn | ResearchGate



On 29 Jul 2020, at 16:47, s22 <[s22@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s22@homeaffairs.gov.au)> wrote:

**UNCLASSIFIED**

Hi Emily,

Apologies for the delay, I was unexpectedly away.

Thank you for the changes outlined below. The report now provides further context that will benefit colleagues and stakeholders without a research background. We're happy to accept the report as final.

I'll check with the team if there are any loose contractual ends, but I think those have also been completed.

Thank you, and Helen, for the diligent work on this project over a long period, especially with multiple organisational changes on the government side.

Happy to discuss any of the above, or outstanding issues from your perspective.

With a relatively small Australian CVE academic community, I'm sure we'll engage again soon.

Cheers

s22

s22

Director, Intervention  
Countering Violent Extremism Centre

Department of Home Affairs

s22

s22 [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s22@homeaffairs.gov.au)

**UNCLASSIFIED**

---

**From:** s22

**Sent:** Monday, 29 June 2020 4:28 PM

**To:** 'Emily Corner' <[Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au](mailto:Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au)>

**Cc:** Helen Taylor <[h.taylor@anu.edu.au](mailto:h.taylor@anu.edu.au)> s22

s22 [@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU](mailto:s22@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU)>; s22

s22 [@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU](mailto:s22@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU)> s22

s22 [@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU](mailto:s22@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU)>

**Subject:** RE: Home Affairs comments [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

**UNCLASSIFIED**

Thanks Emily,

Overall it looks good, we're just running through it one final time and will get back to you shortly.

On the attribution issue, happy to be referenced as a funder consistent with how Canada and the EU will be.

Cheers

s22

s22  
Director, Intervention  
Countering Violent Extremism Centre

Department of Home Affairs

s22  
E s22 @homeaffairs.gov.au

UNCLASSIFIED

---

**From:** Emily Corner <[Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au](mailto:Emily.Corner@anu.edu.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 June 2020 2:02 PM  
**To:** s22 @homeaffairs.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Helen Taylor <[h.taylor@anu.edu.au](mailto:h.taylor@anu.edu.au)> s22  
s22 @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s22  
s22 @homeaffairs.gov.au>; s22 @homeaffairs.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Re: Home Affairs comments [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Dear s22

Please find attached the amended final report. We have attended to each of the comments. We have also provided information as to how we have attended to these comments in the section below.

#### Executive Summary

This is the section of the report most readers will visit. We would be grateful if you would revisit the writing tone. Some decision makers might misinterpret your findings as they are currently expressed and conclude that the Australian Government should dispense with both tools, leaving law enforcement and correctional agencies with only operational experience. We provide the following comments in relation to your findings on page 2:

- Dot point 1 about risk specification could be reframed to confirm your finding about risk specification and suggest that the instrument manuals be revised to provide greater clarity.

**We have included this in the recommendations section**

- Dot point 2's finding about the theoretical and empirical evidence base is valuable, however, we think it would be useful to clarify that this is the evidence base largely documented in the instrument manuals for users. We are aware, for example, that Dr Pressman has also relied heavily on communication with practitioners in law enforcement, intelligence and correctional agencies, that would not be appropriate to cite in the manual.

**We have included a footnote in the executive summary which acknowledges this.**

· Dot point 3, the reader may interpret this finding as a significant weakness in the instruments. We invite you to consider whether it would be appropriate to contextualise this finding on page 2 and in the body of the report, perhaps with a recommendation that the instrument manuals would be improved by clarifying this issue in their next revision.

**We have included this in the recommendations section and in the main text**

· We agree that neither instrument manual specifies that they provide a comprehensive SPJ protocol, as outlined by Logan and Lloyd (2018), and can fairly be characterised as SPJ 'lite'. In fairness to the instruments, they are designed to be used by a range of users and SPJ lite is the optimum approach in these circumstances, according to Logan and Lloyd. In our view SPJ lite is a strength rather than weakness for many of the applications of the VERA-2R. Further, some appropriately qualified and experienced VERA-2R users conduct a full SPJ risk formulation, and do not require the VERA-2R manual to stipulate how to do this or the circumstances in which this should be undertaken.

**We are unable to comment on this, as we conducted an experimental approach and a holistic assessment of the instruments given the materials we were able to access. Without conducting a process evaluation, we are unable to make this comment.**

· Dot points 4 and 5, represent important elements of your research findings, but we are concerned that the finding as they are expressed suggests that the instruments are not fit for purpose. We invite you to reconsider how to express your finding here and in the body of the report, including recommending that the instruments' authors be more explicit about the role of social networks, age and gender.

**We have included this in the executive summary and within the main body of text also**

· With respect to gender and age, we agree that these are significant risk factors. Our understanding is that these variables are not present in the instruments because the individuals being assessed have already been identified as being on a pathway of radicalisation to violence (and as you would expect, are predominantly young males). We also argue that with respect to VERA-2R, the instrument recognises the importance of social networks, and the presence of information in many indicators signals the subject's involvement in social networks that promote and perpetrate violent extremism.

**We have added in a clarification here, but note that the thematic analysis of the VERA-2R highlighted that the factors within the VERA-2R which express social elements are more closely aligned with beliefs and ideology, not explicitly social networks. We suggest that during a revision of the instrument, this is attended to.**

· We are very interested in learning more about the variables identified in your finding at Dot point 6. We appreciate that you intend to undertake further work in this area outside the scope of this report and that you are reluctant to

release your full data set. We would be grateful, however, if you would expand the number of variables that you have identified at Table 7 on page 95.

We have expanded this, and have added elements into table 7

o As discussed at our meeting, please include a list of the literature that you identified during the Systematic Review as an appendix.

We have created an appendix, and have added this to the email. Please note that this appendix is not mentioned in the final report, as we are providing this to your team, not to the wider readership.

· We are not surprised that religious beliefs appeared frequently in the literature. We are interested to learn if there are equivalent or parallel variable(s) apparent for studies of extreme right wing extremists.

In response to the request, the research team disaggregated the data to examine only those studies with samples of right-wing extremists (n=77). Analysis of 611 variables demonstrated that there are no equivalent or parallel variables to religion that are cited frequently in the literature. The only variable found to be cited slightly more frequently than in the combined dataset is having military experience. This variable made up 1.6% of all variables cited in studies examining right-wing extremism as compared with 1.0% of variables in the main dataset

· The sub-dot point under Dot point 6 summarises your finding that both instruments lack the majority of variables identified in the SR. We think that this finding, if communicated to the authors, would improve both instruments' manuals.

We have added a recommendation in the Executive Summary to this effect

· Dot point 7 as it is currently worded might lead to the rejection of both instruments in Australia, as decision makers may misunderstand your research parameters. We request this finding be clarified to note that it arises from the experiment conducted in Task 4, and that the finding cannot be understood without reading your discussion and caveats in the Task 4 Chapter.

We have added two footnotes to clarify the message in this section. We have also added a paragraph emphasising the experimental nature of the research in the Executive Summary.

· Dot point 8 could be similarly misunderstood unless the finding qualifies the finding with an explanation, for example, that the results of Task 4 did not reveal an acceptable standard of inter-rater reliability. It would also be helpful to recognise in the body of the report that the experimental study is based on small numbers and that further experimentation would be valuable to confirm the experimental finding.

The main body of the report already noted that the sample size was an issue across all results. We have emphasised this point, and have added in a recommendation for future work to address this.

Page 3, paragraph 2 'despite the results etc'

· It would be appreciated if some contextual sentences in this paragraph and the body of the report qualified this implication by explaining, for example, that this finding is from Task 4 and acknowledging that it arose under experimental conditions that attempt to model but do not replicate real world use of the instruments.

We have attended to this in the Executive Summary, but also note this was in the body of the report. We have therefore strengthened this is the main body also.

Page 3, recommendations

· We acknowledge your recommendation that a process evaluation would be valuable. We would also be interested in other recommendations that you wish to offer about how the two instruments might be improved, for example, by updating the instruments in light of the SR and user experience, being clearer about the author's expectations with respect to SPJ, and steps that could be taken to improve inter-rater reliability.

We have added in more recommendations into the executive summary to reflect this request.

· Finally, you explained at our meeting that you did not mean to suggest that the department should cease using the VERA-2R and Radar instruments. We are concerned that the casual reader or a reader without a research background might conclude that this is the report's main conclusion. We request a paragraph to avoid this potential misinterpretation.

We believe that with the amendments and qualifications added in response to the comments above, the casual reader will now not misinterpret the conclusion of the report.

Please let me know if you require any further clarifications.

Best,

Emily.

Dr Emily Corner  
Lecturer

---

Centre for Social Research and Methods | College of Arts and Social Sciences | The Australian National University

s22 Beryl Rawson Building | Ellery Crescent | Canberra ACT 2601 | Australia

Telephone: s22

[Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [ResearchGate](#)

<image001.jpg>

On 12 Jun 2020, at 10:09, s22 [REDACTED]  
s22 [REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au> wrote:

UNCLASSIFIED

Hello Emily,

Thank you for meeting with us the other day. As discussed, and with apologies for our lateness, below are Home Affairs's suggestions for the draft report.

The suggestions are based on our discussion around contextualising some of the statements and discussions so that the findings can be better understood by readers without a research background. Without greater context, we think some readers may interpret the report findings more negatively than intended. We reiterate that we value your independence as researchers and are not seeking to amend your findings.

### Executive Summary

This is the section of the report most readers will visit. We would be grateful if you would revisit the writing tone. Some decision makers might misinterpret your findings as they are currently expressed and conclude that the Australian Government should dispense with both tools, leaving law enforcement and correctional agencies with only operational experience. We provide the following comments in relation to your findings on page 2:

- **Dot point 1** about risk specification could be reframed to confirm your finding about risk specification and suggest that the instrument manuals be revised to provide greater clarity.
- **Dot point 2's** finding about the theoretical and empirical evidence base is valuable, however, we think it would be useful to clarify that this is the evidence base largely documented in the instrument manuals for users. We are aware, for example, that Dr Pressman has also relied heavily on communication with practitioners in law enforcement, intelligence and correctional agencies, that would not be appropriate to cite in the manual.
- **Dot point 3**, the reader may interpret this finding as a significant weakness in the instruments. We invite you to consider whether it would be appropriate to contextualise this finding on page 2 and in the body of the report, perhaps with a recommendation that the instrument manuals would be improved by clarifying this issue in their next revision.

- We agree that neither instrument manual specifies that they provide a comprehensive SPJ protocol, as outlined by Logan and Lloyd (2018), and can fairly be characterised as SPJ 'lite'. In fairness to the instruments, they are designed to be used by a range of users and SPJ lite is the optimum approach in these circumstances, according to Logan and Lloyd. In our view SPJ lite is a strength rather than weakness for many of the applications of the VERA-2R. Further, some appropriately qualified and experienced VERA-2R users conduct a full SPJ risk formulation, and do not require the VERA-2R manual to stipulate how to do this or the circumstances in which this should be undertaken.
- **Dot points 4 and 5**, represent important elements of your research findings, but we are concerned that the finding as they are expressed suggests that the instruments are not fit for purpose. We invite you to reconsider how to express your finding here and in the body of the report, including recommending that the instruments' authors be more explicit about the role of social networks, age and gender.
  - With respect to **gender and age**, we agree that these are significant risk factors. Our understanding is that these variables are not present in the instruments because the individuals being assessed have already been identified as being on a pathway of radicalisation to violence (and as you would expect, are predominantly young males). We also argue that with respect to VERA-2R, the instrument recognises the importance of **social networks**, and the presence of information in many indicators signals the subject's involvement in social networks that promote and perpetrate violent extremism.
- We are very interested in learning more about the variables identified in your finding at **Dot point 6**. We appreciate that you intend to undertake further work in this area outside the scope of this report and that you are reluctant to release your full data set. We would be grateful, however, if you would expand the number of variables that you have identified at Table 7 on page 95.
  - As discussed at our meeting, please include a list of the literature that you identified during the Systematic Review as an appendix.



- We are not surprised that religious beliefs appeared frequently in the literature. We are interested to learn if there are equivalent or parallel variable(s) apparent for studies of extreme right wing extremists.
- The **sub-dot point under Dot point 6** summarises your finding that both instruments lack the majority of variables identified in the SR. We think that this finding, if communicated to the authors, would improve both instruments' manuals.
- **Dot point 7** as it is currently worded might lead to the rejection of both instruments in Australia, as decision makers may misunderstand your research parameters. We request this finding be clarified to note that it arises from the experiment conducted in Task 4, and that the finding cannot be understood without reading your discussion and caveats in the Task 4 Chapter.
- **Dot point 8** could be similarly misunderstood unless the finding qualifies the finding with an explanation, for example, that the results of Task 4 did not reveal an acceptable standard of inter-rater reliability. It would also be helpful to recognise in the body of the report that the experimental study is based on small numbers and that further experimentation would be valuable to confirm the experimental finding.

#### **Page 3, paragraph 2 'despite the results etc'**

- It would be appreciated if some contextual sentences in this paragraph and the body of the report qualified this implication by explaining, for example, that this finding is from Task 4 and acknowledging that it arose under experimental conditions that attempt to model but do not replicate real world use of the instruments.

#### **Page 3, recommendations**

- We acknowledge your recommendation that a process evaluation would be valuable. We would also be interested in other recommendations that you wish to offer about how the two instruments might be improved, for example, by updating the instruments in light of the SR and user experience, being clearer about the author's expectations with respect to SPJ, and steps that could be taken to improve inter-rater reliability.
- Finally, you explained at our meeting that you did not mean

to suggest that the department should cease using the VERA-2R and Radar instruments. We are concerned that the casual reader or a reader without a research background might conclude that this is the report's main conclusion. We request a paragraph to avoid this potential misinterpretation.

s22 who has done most of thinking on this, is happy to discuss any of the above s22 @homeaffairs.gov.au o s22

We'd be grateful for the final version of the report by 26 June. But happy to discuss if you have concerns with the timeframe.

Cheers

s22

s22

Director, Intervention  
Countering Violent Extremism Centre

Department of Home Affairs

s22

E | s22 @homeaffairs.gov.au

UNCLASSIFIED

Important Notice: The content of this email is intended only for use by the individual or entity to whom it is addressed. If you have received this email by mistake, please advise the sender and delete the message and attachments immediately. This email, including attachments, may contain confidential, sensitive, legally privileged and/or copyright information.

Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. The Department of Home Affairs and ABF respect your privacy and have obligations under the Privacy Act 1988.

Unsolicited commercial emails MUST NOT be sent to the originator of this email.