



## **CHALLENGING RACISM AND BUILDING SOCIAL COHESION**

Pre-Budget Submission by All Together Now

Submitted in August 2020  
for the October 2020 federal budget announcement

*Note: This submission replaces the earlier submission made by All Together Now before the Budget was deferred to October, due to changed circumstances.*

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## Proposal in two pages

Since COVID-19 made its way to Australia earlier this year, the number of complaints about racist incidents increased. The Asian Australian Alliance reported an average of 47 racist incidents per week between April to June in their recent report "I Am Not A Virus",<sup>1</sup> a figure that is likely to represent only a fraction of the real number of incidents. The Australian Human Rights Commission has also seen an increase in racial discrimination complaints this year.<sup>2</sup>

Given that racism can lead to mental and physical health issues,<sup>3</sup> thereby adding to Australia's overall health burden during the pandemic, it is vital the Australian Government acts now to prevent further emotional abuse and subsequent long-term costs for our health sector.

Among the many factors driving the increase in racist incidents are:

- social commentary in mainstream media which undermines social cohesion;<sup>4</sup>
- a media landscape which is predominantly white;<sup>5</sup>
- a rise in conspiracy theories, particularly those with racist and antidemocratic undertones;<sup>6</sup>
- the absence of a national anti-racism strategy and public education campaign;<sup>7</sup> and
- the growth of right wing extremism in Australia.<sup>8</sup>

There are many more factors, including the economic uncertainty and social dislocation that have been the markers of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are proposing several interventions the Federal Government can introduce to challenge the above, as outlined below.

### Proposal 1

**All Together Now is requesting \$1.659 million in forward estimates to 2025 to provide training for journalists, producers, presenters, journalism students and educators to challenge racism and respectfully report on diverse communities and issues.**

This will foster a media landscape that is diverse, respectful and conducive to social cohesion.

All Together Now is well-placed to work in partnership with *Reporting Islam* to implement this by building on their jointly held knowledge of media mentoring. From 2014-2018, *Reporting Islam* received \$1.2 million in federal funding to train journalists and journalism educators on how to fairly and accurately report on Muslim communities and issues. The program reached over 1,000 participants and created a statistically significant increase in the level of understanding among the journalists that participated. However, there is much more work to be done in educating journalists, as our research shows.<sup>9</sup>

### Proposal 2

**All Together Now is requesting \$5.985 million in forward estimates to 2025 to provide training for frontline workers about how to identify right-wing extremism and how to respond when a young person in their care is at risk of engaging with extremist groups, channels, narratives and conspiracy theories.**

Last summer's bushfire crisis and the current COVID-19 crisis has led to an alarming rise in online conspiracy theories and fake news that are seeking to directly undermine Australia's democracy and multicultural values. All Together Now will develop evidence-based and interactive online training modules for frontline workers in order to enhance their capacity to encourage critical thinking and engagement of young people with extremist and undemocratic conspiracy theories and fake news.

All Together Now has a track record in educating frontline workers and young people about the dangers of violent extremism, via its successful Community Action for Preventing Extremism (CAPE) project. An independent evaluation of CAPE conducted by the Policing, Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism (PICT) unit at Macquarie University in July 2020 found that "The majority of participants [i.e. frontline workers] indicated that the CAPE training had improved their ability to respond effectively to YPAR [young people at risk] and others holding far-right narratives."

### The cost of inaction

**The combined costs of implementing all proposals in this submission over the next four and half years (2020-2025) is \$7.644 million.**

A study by Dr Amanuel Elias published in 2016 found that the costs of racism to Australia's health system was \$44.9 billion over the decade 2001-2011 (despite our best efforts, it is likely this figure has risen in the meantime).

As a point of comparison, the investment we are requesting to challenge racism and support social cohesion is just over **half the average amount the NRL paid each club in 2018** alone, at an average of \$13.9 million per club.<sup>10</sup>

# Detailed Proposal

## About All Together Now

[All Together Now](#) is an ACNC-registered charity with a national focus. Its purpose is to educate Australians about racism. It does this by imagining and delivering innovative and evidence-based projects that promote racial equity.

The organisation was established in 2010. Its work has won several awards including the [Intercultural Innovation Award](#) sponsored by the United Nations (UNAOC) and BMW, and is a finalist for the Australian Human Rights Commission's 2019 "Racism. It Stops With Me" Award.

All Together Now has received government funding from several jurisdictions. Its "Challenging Racialised Discourse" project is currently funded by the Department of Social Services. Additionally, the organisation currently receives funding from Multicultural NSW as well as a number of private donors. The organisation's major project in 2012, the award-winning "One Parramatta" project, was funded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. The forerunner to CAPE, "Exit White Power", was funded for two consecutive years by the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department under its Building Community Resilience program. All Together Now has also sold training packages to several NSW and VIC state government departments.

## Proposal 1 detail

**All Together Now is requesting \$1.659 million in forward estimates to 2025 to provide media training that supports journalists, producers, presenters, journalism students and educators to produce content that promotes respect and community cohesion.**

### Background

All Together Now was a recipient of the DSS National Research Grants program between 2018-2020. During this period it monitored the mainstream media and found that 55% of opinion pieces involved a negative depiction of race. This research has led to strategic conversations with media regulatory bodies (Australian Press Council, Australian Communications and Media Authority, Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance). In addition, All Together Now's work has provided a key resource for the federal government's latest anti-racism campaign, *Say No to Racism in Australia*,<sup>11</sup> which links to All Together Now's *Reporting Racism Clearing House*.<sup>12</sup>

Our research is currently investigating whether the number of negatively racialised pieces have increased during COVID-19 and corresponding economic downturn, thereby undermining social cohesion in Australia. ASIO has highlighted that this period has seen an increased risk in far right extremism and recruitment to extremist groups, as well the spread of anti-government conspiracy theories online.<sup>13</sup>

Of the Australians recently surveyed by the e-Safety Commission,<sup>14</sup> nearly 70% used the internet to access news. However, 38% report having had a negative personal experience online during COVID-19. With mainstream media increasingly being shared and consumed online, our proposal aims to strengthen the ability of online media to promote inclusive narratives and foster social cohesion.

Our proposal in this budget request seeks to address emerging issues by educating journalists, producers, presenters and media workers to create social commentary that enhances social cohesion and precludes racism.

### Budget Request

**All Together Now is seeking an investment of \$71,823 in the 2020-21 federal budget to build on its research funded under the National Research Grants program.**

*Challenging Racism, Representing Diversity* is a project that provides training for journalists, producers, presenters and media workers to report on diverse issues and communities.

Building on the open-source materials developed at Griffith University under the successful government-funded project *Reporting Islam* (now defunct), and collaborating with that project's former staff, it will develop training packages to be delivered in newsrooms and media organisations across Australia.

## Budget detail

**With an investment commitment of \$71,823 in the 2020-2021 federal budget and \$1.659 million in forward estimates to 2025, All Together Now aims to:**

- research and report on ongoing trends of racism in the media, led by an Expert Advisory Panel;
- consult with media organisations and culturally and linguistically diverse communities to develop best practice in reporting diversity;
- develop journalist/media worker training materials (including train-the-trainer materials);
- provide 70 training sessions;
- develop a suite of online and audio-visual materials to support ongoing training;
- undertake an independent evaluation of the above; and
- provide evidence-based policy recommendations at the conclusion of the project.

There will be a team of 7 people driving this program nationally. All Together Now is requesting funds in forward estimates as our team builds trust among journalists and media organisations. Funds will be utilised to achieve the above goals as follows:

	<b>2020-21 Budget (A\$'000)</b>	<b>2021-22 Budget (A\$'000)</b>	<b>2022-23 Budget (A\$'000)</b>	<b>2023-24 Budget (A\$'000)</b>	<b>2024-25 Budget (A\$'000)</b>
Salaries	52.9	233.0	250.9	255.3	259.7
Community Consultations	-	25.6	9.9	23.4	9.9
Training Delivery	-	30.5	23.8	44.3	23.8
Training Resources	11.1	74.6	2.2	7.6	2.1
Monitoring & Evaluation	-	30.0	36.5	30.0	36.5
Overheads (office expenses, accounting, insurances)	7.8	44.8	44.8	44.0	44.0
<b>Total excluding GST</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>438.5</b>	<b>367.9</b>	<b>404.5</b>	<b>376.0</b>

## Proposal 2 detail

**All Together Now is requesting \$5.985 million in forward estimates to 2025 to educate frontline workers from around the country about assisting young people at risk of engaging with right-wing extremism.**

### Background

Immediately after the Christchurch terrorist attack in March, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said, “This attack reminds us of the evil that is ever-present and would seek to strike out at any time ... We will keep Australians safe in every possible way we can.”<sup>15</sup> Further, in ASIO’s 2018-2019 Annual Report, it is stated that, “The threat from the extreme right wing in Australia has increased in recent years”. On 24 February 2020, the ASIO Chief made this grave warning: “In Australia, the extreme right-wing threat is real and it is growing.” Clearly, challenging the extremist right-wing threat is a focus of Australia’s national security and therefore a priority for the federal government.

The emergence of COVID-19 has further exacerbated the situation. Centre for Multicultural Youth’s recent study into how the COVID-19 crisis is affecting refugee and migrant young people found that respondents felt a knock to their confidence, motivation and employment aspirations.<sup>16</sup> Beyond Blue reported in April that there has been a 40% increase in the number of people using their services compared with the same period last year.<sup>17</sup> In addition to this, the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner’s survey into the effects of COVID-19 on Australians’ internet usage found that 18-24 year olds were most commonly affected by negative online experiences during COVID-19 restrictions and were the group most likely to self-identify that they needed training in preventing or responding to a negative online incident such as bullying or hate speech (younger age groups were not surveyed).<sup>18</sup> Several political, socioeconomic and cultural drivers of extremism have coincided during this crisis to create a situation whereby many young people are at heightened risk of being recruited by extremists.

Given that Australia’s terrorist threat level remains at “Probable”,<sup>19</sup> community-based countering far-right extremism programs such as that undertaken by All Together Now’s [Community Action for Preventing Extremism](#) (CAPE) project are vital in complementing national security work in ensuring that this threat level does not escalate.

### Budget Request

All Together Now is seeking an investment of **\$689,952** in the 2020-21 federal budget to enable its growing and successful countering far-right extremism project CAPE to expand across Australia. CAPE has been central to the success of the highly effective community-based CVE program in NSW.

Since 2012, All Together Now has been promoting resilience and responses to far-right extremism by undermining extremist right-wing recruitment processes. The current focus of the project is on **increasing community awareness** of the dangers of far-right extremism, and on



**training and supporting a NSW-wide network** of frontline workers who work with young people at risk of engaging with far-right extremism.

With over eight years of experience in countering far-right extremism in Australia, All Together Now understands that front-line workers are best-placed to intervene when a young person shows signs of interest or involvement in extremist right-wing ideology.

Since 2017, All Together Now has:

- Delivered CAPE training to 215 frontline workers in NSW. These trainings are in high demand and there is currently a waiting list. By November 2020 CAPE will have trained 260 frontline workers in NSW;
- Developed and facilitated 4-month training programs to 15 "CAPE Youth Ambassadors" in NSW;
- Facilitated workshops to 105 vulnerable young people in NSW; and
- Delivered expert training to 115 NSW and VIC government officers.

An independent evaluation of CAPE conducted by the Policing, Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism (PICT) unit at Macquarie University in July 2020 highlighted the “ongoing benefits” experienced by training participants (i.e. frontline workers) and that after 6 months “many of the participants still felt they had gained knowledge and skills, and had increased their awareness, understanding, and ability to engage with far-right extremism. For those who had the opportunity to engage with YPAR, the majority of participants had developed practical resources that had professional benefit.”

#### Budget detail

Research published earlier this year by the U.S. Institute for Economics and Peace concluded that investing \$1 in prevention saves \$16 in the cost of conflict. Prioritising prevention saves taxpayer dollars, and it saves lives. <sup>20</sup>

**With an investment commitment of \$689,952 in the 2020-2021 federal budget and \$5.985 million in forward estimates to 2025**, All Together Now aims to:

- Develop and upload evidence-based and interactive online training modules about how to identify right-wing extremism as a frontline worker and how to respond when a young person is at risk of engaging with right-wing extremist narratives (including conspiracy theories and fake news), groups, channels and platforms.
- Educate a minimum of 800 front-line workers nationally in the first full year (2021-2022), with a view to scaling to reach thousands nationally;
- Promote the training program to services of frontline workers across the nation in order to ensure that a wide range of relevant frontline workers are made aware of the training program and trained, with a special focus on regional areas and community-based frontline services who work with vulnerable young people;

- Support a nation-wide network of frontline workers who work with young people at risk of engaging with extremist right-wing groups;
- Establish an online education module for past students to stay up-to-date on this issue; and
- Conduct an independent impact assessment of this program annually.

There will be a team of 12 people driving this program nationally. All Together Now is requesting funds in forward estimates to capitalise on economies of scale as our team builds trust in communities, and will be utilised to achieve the above goals as follows:

	<b>2020-21 Budget (A\$'000)</b>	<b>2021-22 Budget (A\$'000)</b>	<b>2022-23 Budget (A\$'000)</b>	<b>2023-24 Budget (A\$'000)</b>	<b>2024-25 Budget (A\$'000)</b>
Staff salaries	365.2	748.7	767.4	786.6	806.2
Staffing on-costs (holiday cover, leave loading, workers' compensation, EAP)	55.5	113.3	115.6	119.0	120.4
Consultants (accountant, auditor, e-learning development, evaluation)	126.5	114.0	114.0	114.0	114.0
Intra- and interstate travel	40.0	152.0	152.0	152.0	152.0
Overheads (office expenses, online systems, insurances)	102.8	156.7	163.5	164.4	169.2
<b>Total excluding GST</b>	<b>690.0</b>	<b>1,284.7</b>	<b>1,312.5</b>	<b>1,336.0</b>	<b>1,361.8</b>

## Appendix: References

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- 2 See: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-09/coronavirus-covid-19-racist-attacks-data-collection-strategy>.
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- 8 See: <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6657792/far-right-wing-extremism-is-growing-in-australia-asio-doesnt-know-why/>.
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- 11 Australian Government 2020, 'Say no to racism in Australia', accessed 21 July 2020, <https://www.australia.gov.au/helpstopracism>.
- 12 All Together Now, 'Reporting racism clearing house', accessed 21 July 2020, <https://reportingracism.alltogethernow.org.au/>.
- 13 Burgess, K (2020), 'Far right wing extremism is growing in Australia. ASIO doesn't know why', *The Canberra Times*, 2 March, <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6657792/far-right-wing-extremism-is-growing-in-australia-asio-doesnt-know-why/>; Christodoulou, M 2020, 'ASIO briefing warns that the far-right is exploiting coronavirus to exploit new members', *ABC News*, 12 June, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-12/asio-briefing-warns-far-right-is-exploiting-coronavirus/12344472>.
- 14 eSafety Commissioner, 2020, 'Covid-19 impact on Australian adults' online activities and attitudes', June, <https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-06/Covid-19-impact-on-Australian-adults-online-report.pdf>.
- 15 See: <https://www.liberal.org.au/latest-news/2019/03/15/prime-ministers-statement-shooting-incident-christchurch-new-zealand>.
- 16 Center for Multicultural Youth, 'Locked Down and Locked Out: The impact of Covid-19 on employment on young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Victoria', June 2020: <https://www.cmy.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Locked-Down-and-Locked-Out-Report-June-2020-final.pdf>.
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<sup>18</sup> eSafety Commissioner, 2020, 'Covid-19 impact on Australian adults' online activities and attitudes', June, <https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-06/Covid-19-impact-on-Australian-adults-online-report.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Australian Government, 2020, 'National Terrorism Threat Advisory System', accessed 21 August 2020, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Securityandyourcommunity/Pages/National-Terrorism-Threat-Advisory-System.aspx>.

<sup>20</sup> See: <https://www.fcni.org/updates/invest-in-conflict-prevention-2188>.