

## **Bourke St terror attack: Federal Government wants to cancel radicals' citizenship**

Sharri Markson, National Political Editor, The Daily Telegraph, November 22, 2018 12:00am

Bourke St attacker was one of 400 'persons of interest'. Police knew Hassan Khalif's passport was cancelled

The Morrison government is preparing to strip extremists of their Australian citizenship if they are entitled to acquire a foreign one based on where they, their parents or even their grandparents were born.

The plan to deport terrorists who are solely Australian citizens is understood to have been discussed at the high-level National Security Committee of Cabinet.

The government is also planning to announce strong new laws around dual-national terrorists living in Australia. The current legislation is unworkable because it requires an extremist to have been convicted of a terror offence with a sentence of six years or more before they can be booted out of the country.



Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton admitted in February that current anti-terror laws were not working. Picture: Kym Smith

The Daily Telegraph has learned the vast majority of the 400 terrorists monitored by ASIO are either dual-citizens or are entitled to acquire a foreign citizenship based on where they were born or the birthplace of their parents or grandparents.

Yet, only six dual-national terrorists have been stripped of their Australian citizenship. The rest are walking free, with ASIO lacking the resources to monitor every one of them full-time.

The plan to deport terrorists who are solely Australian citizens has the backing of some Liberal MPs, while others are concerned at the prospect of leaving an Australian citizen stateless.

Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton confirmed the plan while speaking to 2GB's Ray Hadley this morning. Listen to the audio here: "You can take citizenship away from somebody as long as you don't render them stateless, even if they were born here there's a potential, depends on the country, but in some cases a country won't recognise dual nationality and in some cases if they're stripped of their Australian citizenship then they're automatically recognised by a country to which they have a citizenship entitlement," Mr Dutton told Hadley.

"We've been working in this area for a long time Ray because we've cancelled visas at a record rate so that we can kick criminals out of the country and we should be cancelling citizenship of terrorists and people who would seek to do us harm because we don't want them here."

Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration, Jason Wood, who sits on the Intelligence and Security Committee, said if extremists were born overseas but had become Australian citizens, they should be deported based on their eligibility to reacquire the citizenship of their birth country.

"As far as I'm concerned, if you've put your hand up to say you uphold the rights and responsibility of Australian citizenship, but the next minute you want to talk jihad all day, it's a breach of contract and you need to go," Mr Wood said. He said secure courts should also be set up to deal with sensitive material from intelligence agencies. "One issue is a dual-citizen can't be evicted unless they are convicted of a terror offence," he said.

By contrast, more than 160 bikies have been booted out of the country and 20 dual-citizens have had their Australian citizenship revoked for child sex offences. Michael Sukkar, the former chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, said: “We need to make it easier to revoke the citizenship of people who represent a real threat to our values.



Assistant Treasurer Michael Sukkar (left): “We need to make it easier to revoke the citizenship of people who represent a real threat to our values and way of life.”

“A good place to start would be to expand the scope of deportation to include terrorist sympathisers. This should include those on a security agency watch list, as well as people who repeatedly associate with known terrorists.”

A spokesman for the Morrison government said: “The government hasn’t ruled out any options. It has explored some measures with high constitutional risk.”

In a speech to the Press Club in February, Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton admitted the current anti-terror laws were not working. “I am concerned that legislation to strip the Australian citizenship of dual-nationals engaged in terrorism is not working as it should,” Mr Dutton said.

The Daily Telegraph has exposed the flaws around stripping dual-citizenship terrorists of their Australian nationality since March last year and, in response, former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull wrote to Mr Dutton asking him to

strengthen the anti-terror legislation. Yet nothing has happened in 20 months, despite Mr Dutton pushing for change behind the scenes.



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