

The Academic-Practitioner Nexus in Countering Terrorism in New Zealand

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Abstract : After the 15 March 2019 Mosque attacks in Christchurch, the New Zealand security sector has had to address its training and preparedness levels for dealing with contemporary terrorist threats as well as potential future manifestations of terrorism. From time to time, members of the academic community from Australia and New Zealand have been asked to assist agencies in this endeavour. In the course of 2018, New Zealand security sector professionals working in the counter-terrorism area were interviewed about how they regarded academic contributions to understanding terrorism and counter-terrorism. Responses were mixed, ranging from anti-intellectualism, a belief that the inability to access classified material rendered academic work practically useless - to some genuine interest and desire for broad based academic studies on issues practitioners did not have the time to look at. Twelve months later, researchers have revisited those spoken to prior to the Brenton Tarrant 15 March shooting to establish if there has been a change in the way academic research is perceived, viewed and valued, and what key factors have contributed to this shift in thinking. This paper takes this data, combined with a consideration of the literature on higher education within professional police and intelligence forces, and on the general perception of academics by practitioners, to present a series of findings that will contribute to a more proactive and effective set of engagements, between two distinct but important security sectors, that reflect more closely with international practice.

Keywords : academic, counter terrorism, intelligence, practitioner, research, security

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