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Towards a Resilient and Safer New Zealand:

**A Model for Evaluating the New Zealand Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism
Strategy.**

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

A model for evaluating the New Zealand Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy (NZCTVES) does not currently exist and therefore there remains significant vulnerabilities within our national security system. This research set out to bridge this vulnerability through the development of a Mixed Methods Research (MMR) evaluation model, that may be applied to either the current or future strategies. The research was broken down into three focal areas; does the current strategy work and how is it evaluated, how do other nations evaluate their counter terrorism (CT) and counter violent extremism (VE) strategies, and finally, how do design, build and implement a New Zealand-centric CT and VE model. Focus area one employed deductive research via a qualitative approach, focus area two involved a thematic analysis of other nations' approach to critiquing and assessing counter-terrorism frameworks and a comparative analysis of existing empirical data in defined international settings, while focus area three finalised the capture and analysis of appropriate assessment and evaluation methodology-related findings, to design an evaluation model.

The research findings determined that an MMR approach consisting of a combination of Process and Impact evaluation, were considered most suitable for evaluating the NZCTVES. Process evaluation is a systematic assessment of how an intervention is implemented leading to determinations regarding quality, granularity and delivery of activities, as opposed to just a focus on outcomes. Impact evaluation involves a rigorous evidence-based assessment that determines the causal effect of a strategy, programme or policy on the target population. These findings led to the development of a multi-stage evaluation model, involving both foundational research methodologies, alongside elements of theory and quasi-experimental approaches. Application of this evaluation model will offer a form of fidelity, transparency and ultimately accountability to the delivery of the NZCTVES, thereby bridging a vulnerability in New Zealand's national security system.

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Chapter one: *Setting the scene.*

Despite popular common misconception, New Zealand has a history of terrorism and terrorist attacks. In the aftermath of 15 March, the New Zealand Government and broader New Zealand populace was forced to recognise that the hitherto collective and holistic response to countering terrorism was sorely lacking, the 'spectre of terrorism' having failed previously to generate sufficient concern, attention and resources from those in power over the nearly four decades following the sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior*.¹ However, New Zealand's attitude of general apathy regarding terrorism goes further back than the *Rainbow Warrior*.

Despite common misconception or perhaps ignorance², prior to 1985 New Zealand had experienced terrorist events, although nothing consistent enough to suggest the early 'waves' of terrorism (anarchist and anti-colonial as ascribed by David Rapoport), had crashed against New Zealand's shores.³ The closest New Zealand came to achieving some form of similarity with international trends in terrorism were a series of domestic bombings in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The likely perpetrators were 'the new left',⁴ left-wing activists motivated in opposition to the Vietnam war and French nuclear testing in the South-west Pacific.⁵ The bombings could be considered acts of terrorism; violence "directed against governments for purposes of political change"⁶ yet garnered minimal public attention or even awareness due to a number of factors. Firstly, public awareness was diminished from the outset largely due to the fact that media coverage consisted of a nightly 30-minute news bulletin and limited print media.⁷ When arrested, the activists were prosecuted with arson or attempted arson

¹ Battersby, John, and Rhys Ball. "Christchurch in the context of New Zealand terrorism and right-wing extremism." *Journal of policing, intelligence and counter terrorism* 14, no. 3 (2019): pp 192-194.

² Battersby, John. "Terrorism where terror is not: Australian and New Zealand terrorism compared." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 41, no. 1 (2018): 60.

³ Rapoport, David. *Waves of global terrorism: From 1879 to the present*. Columbia University Press, 2022. pp 65-110 and 111-150.

⁴ Rapoport, 151.

⁵ Battersby. "Terrorism where terror is not: Australian and New Zealand terrorism compared." 61.

⁶ Crenshaw, Martha. "The causes of terrorism." *Comparative politics* 13, no. 4 (1981): 379 and 386

⁷ Battersby (2023). "Counter Terrorism: A New Zealand Context". 294.713 Week 11 Lecture presentation, slide two. Accessed 14 October 2023.

as New Zealand did not have any counter-terrorism legislation,⁸ thereby escaping the sensationalism of a terror plot which may have increased awareness. Finally, although not directly influenced by the bombings, the government announcement in 1973 that New Zealand would withdraw from the Vietnam war, meant that effectively the activists had achieved their political goal,⁹ and subsequently they disbanded their campaign.¹⁰ Cumulatively, the lack of coverage, the paucity of appropriate legislation and the cessation of a bombing campaign led to the events being downplayed in the public consciousness and likely contributed significantly to the narrative that there is no terrorism in New Zealand.

In the years following, limited implementation of terrorism-related legislation did occur, however these were very specific in nature; the Aviation Crimes Act 1972¹¹ focussed on hijacking and the Crimes (International Protected Persons, United Nations and Associated Personnel, and Hostages) Act 1980¹² focussed on Hostage-taking as two examples. Yet at the time, no hijacking event had occurred within New Zealand nor had a major hostage situation akin to the Princes Gate Iranian Embassy siege of 1980.¹³ These two pieces of legislation exemplify a counterterrorism trend adopted by New Zealand throughout the twentieth century, one of modelling legislative and counter-terrorist activities “in large part in responses to changes at the global level”.¹⁴ The result was that New Zealand remained very much reactive to international events with no discernible analysis of threats likely to occur within New Zealand’s geographic boundaries nor within the New Zealand political, social and cultural context.¹⁵

⁸ Battersby (2023). “Counter Terrorism: A New Zealand Context”.

⁹ Cronin, Audrey Kurth. *How Terrorism Ends: understanding the decline and demise of terrorist campaigns*. Princeton University Press, (fifth printing) 2011: 80.

¹⁰ Battersby (2023). “Counter Terrorism: A New Zealand Context”.

¹¹ Conte, Alex. *Human rights in the prevention and punishment of terrorism: Commonwealth approaches: The United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand*. Springer Science & Business Media, 2010: 186.

¹² Conte. 188.

¹³ Greener-Barcham, Beth K. "Before September: A history of counter-terrorism in New Zealand." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 3 (2002): 513

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, pp 514-515.

Crucially, New Zealand's definition of terrorism, of what defined a terrorist, and the overarching legislative authority to designate an individual or group¹⁶ as such, had yet to be determined or adopted into law.

The state-sanctioned bombing of the *Rainbow Warrior* by members of the French *Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure* (DGSE) on 10 July 1985 was the first event publicly described as terrorism within New Zealand,¹⁷ and provided the first "opportunity to measure the suitability of New Zealand's counter-terrorist measures with the task in hand".¹⁸ In short, New Zealand's security and intelligence agencies and counterterrorism strategy were found wanting. There was no threat warning via intelligence agencies, the majority of the French DGSE team escaped and at the highest levels, the Cabinet Terrorist Emergency Group was not activated.¹⁹ Greener-Barcham in her historical analysis of counter-terrorism in New Zealand, writes that this event offered several opportunities for lessons to be learnt by the domestic counter-terrorism community with regards to communication, deficiencies in prior warning, and coordination between agencies.²⁰ However, her key takeaway was how "relatively few changes were made",²¹ as it took two years following the *Rainbow Warrior* incident for terrorism-specific legislation to be passed.²² The introduction of the International Terrorism (Emergency Powers) Act (ITA) 1987 was belated recognition that "it can no longer be assumed that New Zealand will remain immune from acts of international terrorism"²³ as articulated by then-Deputy Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Geoffrey Palmer in June 1987.

¹⁶ Smith, John E. *New Zealand's Anti-Terrorism Campaign: Balancing Civil Liberties, National Security, and International Responsibilities*. Wellington: Ian Axford New Zealand Fellowship in Public Policy, 2003: 3

¹⁷ Battersby, John, and Rhys Ball. "Christchurch in the context of New Zealand terrorism and right-wing extremism.": 194

¹⁸ Greener-Barcham, 515.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, 516.

²¹ Ibid, 517.

²² Battersby, John, and Rhys Ball. "Christchurch in the context of New Zealand terrorism and right-wing extremism." 194.

²³ Smith, 8.

Despite this acknowledgement, events of the early 21st century continued to highlight the tension that New Zealand security and intelligence agencies found themselves under. In 2003, (with the events of 11 September 2001 still fresh) and the Terrorism Suppression Act (TSA) introduced (despite the ITA not being repealed), the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) went on record stating “relative geographic isolation, in itself, is no guarantee of immunity...modern transport and communications have effectively made the world a smaller place.”²⁴ Around the same time, Member of Parliament Peter Dunne commented “we are not a hotbed of terrorism, nor are we likely to become one”.²⁵ These contrasting statements highlight the schism between New Zealand security and intelligence agencies and the New Zealand Public, including its elected representatives. The infrequency of domestic terror incidents in New Zealand directly corresponded with a lack of concern or interest by the majority of New Zealand society in general and the New Zealand government in particular. As the Controller and Auditor-General stated in 2003 “the greater the length of time between security incidents, the greater the likelihood of reduced public consciousness of the threat, and the more likely people will be to perceive precautions as excessive.”²⁶

This concern was echoed in a study undertaken through a series of interviews conducted with intelligence practitioners from early 2018 right through until the events of 15 March 2019.²⁷ In short, the challenge wasn’t only one of how to prevent a terror threat from occurring but also one of how to prepare the nation for such an event. As one intelligence practitioner observed:

“the public’s perception of New Zealand’s CT (counter terrorism) environment is also a challenge, the general sense is that there is nothing to see here. So how do you prepare a nation that hasn’t been communicated with by government agencies, that hasn’t got an

²⁴ Smith. 2.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Small, David. "The uneasy relationship between national security and personal freedom: New Zealand and the 'War on terror'." *International Journal of Law in Context* 7, no. 4 (2011): 471.

²⁷ Battersby, John. "Security sector practitioner perceptions of the terror threat environment before the Christchurch attacks." *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online* 15, no. 2 (2020): 296.

appreciation of the risk that exists albeit to a lesser volume than what we see in the Five Eyes countries...how do you initiate the conversation without scaring the nation?"²⁸

These concerns were again echoed in the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCOI) into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019, finding that the Intelligence and Security agencies have comparatively little social licence.²⁹ The study concluded that pre-15 March, there were significant challenges in place that degraded the ability of intelligence and security services' ability to "monitor, detect, and mitigate terrorism risk in an environment in which a strong societal and bureaucratic complacency existed—and an overarching disbelief that terrorism occurring overseas would ever actually happen in New Zealand."³⁰

On 15 March 2019, New Zealand's lack of interest, lack of investment and lack of meaningful and appropriate legislation³¹ countering terrorism became starkly clear. At 1.40pm the first shots were fired at Masjid an-Nur as Brendon Tarrant undertook the first stage of his killing spree, committing multiple murders and attempted murder.³² At 1.52pm, Tarrant arrived at the Linwood Islamic Centre, where he continued his attack, all the while live-streaming on social media using a go-pro camera.³³ At 1.59pm, Tarrant was arrested and subsequently interviewed and charged.³⁴ Fifty innocent civilians died

²⁸ Battersby, John. "Security sector practitioner perceptions of the terror threat environment before the Christchurch attacks." 298.

²⁹ Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019. Accessed 14 October at <https://christchurchattack.royalcommission.nz/the-report/executive-summary-2/executive-summary/>

³⁰ Battersby, John. "Security sector practitioner perceptions of the terror threat environment before the Christchurch attacks." 307.

³¹ Battersby, John. (2023). "There is no terrorism here!: New Zealand's long-standing gulf between perception and reality." A New Wave? (Volume 1). ISSN 2652-7332. 16.

³² New Zealand Police (2020). "Operation Deans, Evidential Overview 15 March 2019". 3. Accessed 14 October 2024 at <https://coronialservices.justice.govt.nz/assets/d836SD43-Evidential-Overview-for-Christchurch-Masjid-attacks.pdf>

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

on 15 March, with a 51st dying in Hospital on 2 May 2019³⁵ - the worst mass killing in New Zealand's modern history.³⁶

The Labour-led Government, feeling the immense political and social pressure to respond, undertook a raft of policy decisions, key among them the creation of an RCOI into the terror attack, and directed the creation of a New Zealand Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy (NZCTVES) - the first time in New Zealand's history that such a strategy existed, and on the face of it, a significant milestone in the country's acknowledgement of terrorism as a genuine risk. The following discussion reviews in detail the components of the CTVES and considers the role of responsible agencies and the evaluation of their outputs.

In an attempt to forestall and prevent future terrorist attacks and to bring "our nation together to protect all New Zealanders from terrorism and violent extremism of all kinds",³⁷ the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet released New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy Overview in February 2020³⁸, (with a further developed update in June 2021 and then October 2022). Battersby *et al.*, in a constructive yet highly critical review in the *National Security Journal* articulated the purpose of this type of strategy document. Firstly, they contend that it should convey an intent from the Government to its various agencies and to its constituents regarding the

³⁵ New Zealand Government (2019). "Death Toll from march 15 terrorist Attack increases to 51". Accessed on 14 October at <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/death-toll-march-15-terrorist-attack-increases-51>

³⁶ Battersby, John, Rhys Ball, and Nick Nelson. "New Zealand's counter-terrorism strategy: A critical assessment." *National Security Journal* 2, no. 1 (2020): 2.

³⁷ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 1. Accessed at <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-10/New%20Zealands%20Countering%20Terrorism%20and%20Violent%20Extremism%20Strategy.pdf> on 15 October 2025.

³⁸ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2020). *Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism National Strategy Overview*. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) Te Tari o te Pirimia me te Komiti Matua, February 2020 access 17 October 2024 at <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2020-02/2019-20%20CT%20Strategy-all-final.pdf>

counterterrorism approach New Zealand will undertake going forward.³⁹ The strategy should contain a clear articulation of national interests, a broad risk assessment defining the problem the strategy addresses, as well as the identification and assessment of future challenges and threats. Critically, a strategy must provide an overview of required resources, measures of effectiveness, and a basic implementation plan.⁴⁰

Considering what a strategy ought to contain, the 2020 strategy overview is sparse on detail, heavy on single-line assertions and more akin to an infographic than a document of substance. While it is able to be quickly read within minutes, it leaves “the reader with more questions than answers”.⁴¹ In contrast, the 2021 and updated 2022 version of the strategy seeks to address some of Battersby *et al*’s criticisms. As an example, the critiqued ‘abstract’ goals of reduction, readiness, response and recovery in the overview⁴² are fleshed out in slightly more detail in the updated version(s).

Responsibility for the delivery and coordination of the NZCTVES work programme across the New Zealand government falls to the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Committee (CTCC), which reports to the Security and Intelligence Board (SIB) of Chief Executives.⁴³ The strategy’s framework is split across four ‘Rs’; Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery, a framework employed across government as part of New Zealand’s integrated and holistic approach to managing national security risks. Each R is subsumed into a ‘pillar’. Reduction has three focal pillars; ‘Mohio’ or understanding, ‘Mahi tahi’ or

³⁹ Battersby, *et al*. "New Zealand’s counter-terrorism strategy: A critical assessment." 3.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid, pp 5-6.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand’s Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 10.

partnerships and ‘whakahotaetae’ or prevention.⁴⁴ The fourth pillar, Takatu, incorporates readiness, response and recovery from a terrorist event.

From the outset, both the customers of the strategy and those charged with delivery – inclusive of government agencies, security and intelligence practitioners and ultimately the New Zealand public – are presented with a confusing contradiction of terms. Page 10 of the NZCTVES states that ‘reduction’ is *the* focus on the framework. The National Emergency Management Agency, the government department charged with reducing risk, being ready for, responding to and recovering from emergencies defines reduction as; “eliminating or avoiding the risks of a hazard”.⁴⁵ In lay terms, reduction seeks to lessen the severity or frequency of something that is likely to occur. However, one page earlier, the strategy states that within the (four) pillars: “our focus is on prevention”. To evidence the confusion and disparity of the two statements, a sporting example is appropriate. Within sports medicine, several academics have argued that the term prevention should be abandoned as it implies “all events are stopped by the stated intervention” and suggest replacing prevention with reduction.⁴⁶ Again in lay terms, prevention seeks to eliminate a risk or problem before it arises. There are some critical key differences between the two terms. Firstly, in terms of scope, prevention aims to eliminate the problem, while reduction aims to mitigate its effects.⁴⁷ Secondly and presenting more of a challenge to contributing government agencies, prevention is pre-emptive, whereas reduction is pre-emptive *and* responsive. While both are appropriate mechanisms to counter terrorism and violent

⁴⁴ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand’s Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: pp 09 - 10.

⁴⁵ National Emergency Management Agency, Te Raukau Whakamarumaru, (2024). *Reduction: reduce the impacts of emergencies*. Accessed at <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/consistent-messages/reduction#:~:text=Reduction%20can%20involve%20eliminating%20or%20avoiding%20the,to%20reduce%20the%20extent%20of%20their%20impacts>. 21 July 2025.

⁴⁶ Shrier, Ian, Franco M. Impellizzeri, and Steven D. Stovitz. "Prevention versus risk reduction or mitigation: Why create unnecessary battles?." *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport* 26, no. 7 (2023): 372.

⁴⁷ Australian Institute of Criminology (2003). *Crime reduction or prevention: is there a difference?* Accessed at <https://www.aic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/crm002.pdf> 21 July 2025.

extremism, the contradictory priorities over two consecutive pages, poses a unique challenge to those charged with understanding and delivering on the strategy.

The Mohio pillar centres on detecting and understanding the threat. In terms of detection, three agencies are directly tasked; the multi-agency Combined Threat Assessment Group (CTAG) is responsible for assessing threat levels, the NZSIS for detecting, investigating and understanding individual terrorism threats, alongside the New Zealand Police's investigative and intelligence functions.⁴⁸ The strategy does not direct how this is to occur, what resources will be provided or in what format any 'finds' or detection of terrorist intent is to be reported, perhaps relying on already established internal mechanisms.⁴⁹

Contained within the Mohio pillar, to promote research and understanding of terrorism, the strategy proposed the establishment of a National Centre of Excellence.⁵⁰ Consisting of academics, government agencies and civil society, the purpose of the Centre sought to inform public discourse and public policy. The strategy also describes an annual national hui hosted by the centre (He Whenua Taurikura [HWT] – 'a country at peace') seeking to build dialogue, promote innovative research and to ultimately inform the public.⁵¹ It should be noted early, that HWT's "annual hui, to bring together relevant central and local government agencies, communities, civil society, the private sector and researchers to create opportunities to build relationships and share understanding of countering violent extremism and terrorism" were only held twice, in 2021 and 2022, with funding for continued events initially

⁴⁸ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 12.

⁴⁹ In-person research interview with senior NZ Police Counter-Terrorism Advisor, 12 June 2025.

⁵⁰ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 10.

⁵¹ Ibid.

under review, and ultimately discontinued.⁵² Critical response to the HWT/COE from intelligence and counter-terrorism professionals was sharp and succinct. Critiquing HWT's research associates, Battersby writes that it was; "wafer thin on those previously interested or experienced in researching terrorism"⁵³ and oriented more towards driving a perceived social and political agenda, to the extent that Battersby alleges, it construed CT as a "career into the untamed wilds of identity studies, grievance politics and activism".⁵⁴ While a provocative statement, this assertion was never publicly challenged. The strategy makes little mention of the outputs of HWT with the exception that the hui will provide a 'focus for evidence based public information that reflects the nature of the risk'.⁵⁵ HWT wrapped up after two financial years with little output of substance outside of some post-graduate funding, and unsurprisingly, contributed little new knowledge to New Zealand's terrorism and counterterrorism landscape.⁵⁶

Mahi tahi, (or partnerships), aims to take the knowledge from Mohio and direct it to the appropriate agencies. The strategy acknowledges from the outset that the security and intelligence agencies cannot manage this alone and that the CTCC must implement this strategy across government.⁵⁷ Critically, the strategy does not acknowledge the inherent difficulties regarding information-sharing agreements between government agencies. To read the strategy is to assume that New Zealand agencies will proactively and freely submit information and intelligence regardless of classification,

⁵² Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2025). Accessed at <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/our-programmes/other-work/historical-programmes/he-whenua-aurikura/he-whenua-aurikura-hui> 15 May 2025.

⁵³ Battersby, John. 2024. *Opinion: Understanding counter-terrorism needs serious scholarship*. Massey University. Accessed at [https://www.massey.ac.nz/about/news/opinion-understanding-counter-terrorism-needs-serious-scholarship/#:~:text=He%20Whenua%20Aurikura%20\(HWT\)%20was,budget%20has%20just%20been%20cut](https://www.massey.ac.nz/about/news/opinion-understanding-counter-terrorism-needs-serious-scholarship/#:~:text=He%20Whenua%20Aurikura%20(HWT)%20was,budget%20has%20just%20been%20cut). Accessed 3 February 2025.

⁵⁴ Battersby, John. 2024. *Opinion: Understanding counter-terrorism needs serious scholarship*.

⁵⁵ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: pp 12-13

⁵⁶ Rogers, Damien. 2025. *Reconstructing the National Security Agenda: New and Old Security Problems in New Zealand*. Unpublished draft submission provided to the author. 8

⁵⁷ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 15

privacy or risk. The strategy also assumes that government agencies have a clear understanding of each other's priorities while containing no information or direction as to how these partnership arrangements (inclusive of iwi, communities, businesses and academia) will actually functionally operate. The mahi tahi portion concludes by again presenting the national annual hui as the panacea to multi-sector engagement and collaboration⁵⁸ assuming a high level of harmony, discourse and unity, an aspirational endeavour bordering on unrealistic. The all-of-government approach to terrorism has been referred to as the "pre-determined solution" one which effectively glosses over the actual deep-seated issues⁵⁹ in favour of publicly palatable single-line assertions. This portion of the counterterrorism strategy reflects that notion, with little substance underlying the written descriptions.

Whakahotaetae seeks to combine the findings and discussions of Mohio and Mahi tahi to achieve 'long term prevention'.⁶⁰ According to the strategy, factors such as, 'building societal resilience', developing an 'inclusive society' and enabling through 'appropriate legislation',⁶¹ will all cumulatively prevent terrorism and violent extremism from occurring within New Zealand. Crucially, the actual prevention mechanisms that will achieve these factors are either not discussed or are mentioned as simple one-line assertions; 'strengthening our counter-terrorism laws', and 'enhancing the ability to deter and respond to objectionable material online' as two examples. The only government agency tasked in this portion is the New Zealand Police, with mention of Te Raranga (The Weave), a body of work seeking to improve frontline identification, recording and management of alleged hate crimes⁶²- crimes that do not necessarily have any link to countering terrorism or violent extremism.

⁵⁸ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 15

⁵⁹ Battersby, et al. "New Zealand's counter-terrorism strategy: A critical assessment." 6.

⁶⁰ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 16

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid, 17

Additionally, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are issues of syntax. Paragraph four of the whakahotaetae explanation reads; certain activities "... are able to help prevent extremism from arising, and identify, challenge and address it should it emerge".⁶³ Which is it? Does the strategy prevent extremism (in itself per se not being illegal), denoting it will be halted or stopped completely, or does it perhaps more realistically seek to undertake prevention-type activities that will *reduce* the likelihood of extremism occurring?

The final pillar – Takatu (be ready to respond and recover) shoehorns readiness, response and recovery into one page⁶⁴. New Zealand Police are appointed lead agency for responding to a terrorist incident but there is no other detail or direction as to how other agencies will enable, enhance and support the New Zealand Police.⁶⁵ In this, there is not much difference between the 2020 version "a generous sprinkling of buzzwords that masquerade as expertise"⁶⁶ and the 2022 version.

The more directive (and arguably more useful) components of the Strategy occur on page 20, Chapter four 'Our National Capabilities'.⁶⁷ If the four pillars are the nouns of the strategy, then the national and enabling capabilities can be viewed as the verbs – those actions undertaken by tasked and responsible government agencies. These vary for multiple agencies, as an example; the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and the Ministry for Ethnic Communities are charged in part with 'addressing the causes of violent extremism and promote social cohesion' (National Capability 01)

⁶³ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 16.

⁶⁴ Ibid, pp 18-19.

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Battersby, et al. "New Zealand's counter-terrorism strategy: A critical assessment." 5.

⁶⁷ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20.

through to sole charge capabilities such as ‘Protecting people and places, to keep them safe from harm’ (New Zealand Police – National Capability 05).⁶⁸

Figure 1. The NZCTVES national and enabling capabilities, with assigned and directed key contributing agencies (DPMC).⁶⁹



The nine capabilities span and overlap the four pillars model and form the basis of activity detailed in the Counter-terrorism Work Programme (henceforth referred to as the work programme).⁷⁰ The work programme is undertaken on an annual basis, with the work programme framework consisting of five headings; the capabilities, initiatives for that calendar year, the lead(s) agency responsible for delivering on those capabilities, key milestones and the date of either completion or status of work.⁷¹ The work programme for 2021 was released under a 2021 Official Information Act (OIA) request,⁷² the work programme for 2022 is available online unredacted, however the work programmes for 2023 and 2024 (released under OIA by DPMC) contained several redactions, notably the milestones – the

⁶⁸ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). Accessed at <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-06/Counter-Terrorism%20Work%20Programme%202022.pdf> 10 February 2025.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). Ref: OIA-2020/21-0753 release dated 18 August 2021.

key indicator of progress, while the work programme for 2025 was redacted in full.⁷³ The milestones were redacted under s6(a), *to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand*, and s9(2)(f)(iv), *to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials*.

DPMC define the national and enabling capabilities in business terms – expressions of what government organisations must be able to do in order to implement their components of the strategy and to ultimately deliver on target outcomes. A key gap identified early regards the difference between levels - from National Strategy to agencies responsible for individual activity and outcome. The capability landscape asks contributing agencies to define to multiple levels of detail, their actions and outputs. However, this level of detail is omitted in the work programme to maintain focus at the system level. This infers an expectation by government that contributing agencies will have multi-tiered, fully-developed business functions and development programmes, regularly reviewed and robust – an inference severely lacking evidence. It is more than likely that some agencies will have detailed strategies as subsets of the work programme, however these are not clearly identifiable and represent a gap in systems analysis. Put more simply, the capabilities are outlined in general, however, the actions and tasks expected and undertaken are left to respective agencies to comprehend, plan and resource in detail. Understanding and coordinating the differences between the national systems level and individual agency activity, is the responsibility of the CTCC which chairs the cross-government reduction and readiness pillars. Under response and recovery, a different governance approach is taken – the onus put on lead agencies, reporting via Watch Group to the Officials Committee for Domestic and External Security (ODESC) and then to Cabinet.⁷⁴

⁷³ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2025). Ref: OIA-2024/25-0679 release dated 27 March 2025.

⁷⁴ DPMC *Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism System Capability Review* (June 2020), OIA-2020/21-0753. p 14.

While the System Capability Review and the accompanying CT Strategy implementation plan is detailed and thorough in terms of what needs to be achieved and by whom, the same cannot be said of the Systems' ability to evaluate against the work programme. A covering paper to members of the Security and Intelligence Board (SIB) written in November 2020, states that a 'structured qualitative approach'⁷⁵ was adopted in order to evaluate the national and enabling capabilities. The review centred on four dimensions; capability management, resourcing, collaboration and information management. The review concluded that on a scale from Limited (reflecting a lack of effective or reliable capability) through to Optimised (where a capability is deemed a strategic differentiator, requiring real-time monitoring), the capabilities maturity levels for the NZCTVES should be considered 'managed' (reflecting effective and efficient performance, capabilities are fit-for-purpose, well understood, well resourced, resilient and operate consistently across the system as appropriate).⁷⁶ The troubling part of this self-administered review is that the paper states the evaluation was "*light touch, informed by workshop discussions and reviews of papers provided.*"⁷⁷ In addition, "*Agencies were not asked to provide detailed evidence*"⁷⁸ in support of their self-evaluation. Further, the review was interrupted by the Covid-19 lockdown and faced *ongoing challenges in engaging with agency representation*" either distracted or reassigned to the AOG Covid-19 response'.⁷⁹

In addition to the less-than-inspiring 'light touch' self-review, the 'key capability challenge areas' of the paper are redacted. However, what is not redacted in the capability review raises a number of issues. To start, a qualitative approach to review based on discussion, as acknowledged by the CTCC

⁷⁵ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2020). Cover Sheet for SIB Item 4, 'CT Update: CT System Capability review'. Ref: OIA-2020/21-0753.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ DPMC Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism System Capability Review (June 2020), OIA-2020/21-0753. P 4.

chair, 'is not a fully scientific mechanism'.⁸⁰ As in any self-assessment, there appears a distinct lack of rigour, although the CTCC chair countered that 'there is no incentive [for contributing agencies] to paint a rosy picture'.⁸¹ Secondly, the evaluation is binary with no performance measures – agencies report either an increase or decrease (as assessed against their work programme outputs). It is unclear whether progress is represented by increased or decreased agency focus, activity, or resource against the work programme. An example provided is that attacks disrupted or the number of those identified and deradicalised under He Aranga Ake (National Capability 03 – Prevent and counter Violent Extremism) *could* be representative of progress achieved under this capability.⁸² Further, the evaluation is subjective – while initiatives are considered annually from a baseline of post-attack 2019 and annual capability milestones are identified, there is no stated endstate or optimal outcome(s) assigned. Combined with an ongoing challenge that different contributing agencies view the operating environment in a different lens (and therefore with differing levels of enthusiasm and organisational input and resourcing), ultimately, the systems capability review represents a lack of rigour, resourcing and consistency, which in turn manifests as a significant national security challenge - a challenge apparent at the outset in 2020, when the capabilities were initially reviewed, through to the contemporary operating environment. Both the CTCC Chair and the DPMC CT Programme Manager acknowledged 'there has not been a huge amount of investment' in CT.⁸³

Establishing the NZCTVE Strategy, the NZ Government did address a key recommendation of the RCOI; "Develop and implement a public facing strategy that addresses extremism and preventing, detecting and responding to current and emerging threats of violent extremism and terrorism."⁸⁴ However, several crucial sub-recommendations have been missed or not taken under action. Recommendation

⁸⁰ In person research interview with DPMC CTCC Chair, and Programme Manager, 12 March 2025

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019, Recommendation 4.

4 (c) recommends the Government: sets the purpose and the direction of the strategy, with goals, milestones and performance measures.⁸⁵ Having reviewed and critiqued the strategy, the purpose (vision) and goals are declared, milestones are scattered throughout the work programme, yet there is no mention either publicly available or received under OIA, that outlines performance measures. Additionally, Recommendation 2 asks for the establishment of a new National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA), that is responsible for strategic intelligence and security leadership functions including *Recommendation 2 (i): Systems performance monitoring and reporting*.⁸⁶ Although the establishment of a NISA was investigated, it has not (at time of writing) been established. However, the recommendation regarding systems performance monitoring and reporting is still a valid concern. Findings from Europe in the 2010s with particular reference to CT and PCVE, recognises the necessity for embedding evaluation practice in a thorough, rigorous and systematic way.⁸⁷ Systems monitoring occurs via meetings chaired by the CTCC, yet the performance monitoring appears arbitrary, akin to agencies marking their own homework. This raises the question – how can the New Zealand public have confidence in the nation’s counter-terrorism systems if there is no robust and rigorous mechanism with which to evaluate its performance and effectiveness?

The concept of evaluation is not new to Western Governments. The *Magenta Book*, a United Kingdom Government publication written by the Treasury in 2020, is a central government guide to evaluation.⁸⁸ In the executive summary the book outlines two main purposes for carrying out an evaluation: learning

⁸⁵ Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019, Recommendation 4, (c).

⁸⁶ Ibid, Recommendation 2 (i).

⁸⁷ Bellasio, Jacopo, Joanna Hofman, Antonia Ward, Fook Nederveen, Anna Knack, Arya Sofia Meranto, and Stijn Hoorens. "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): 18

⁸⁸ United Kingdom Government. (2020). *The Magenta Book*. Accessed at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e96cab9d3bf7f412b2264b1/HMT_Magenta_Book.pdf 28 July 2025.

and accountability.⁸⁹ Learning helps decision makers manage risk and uncertainty, gain “a general understanding” of what works, for whom and for when, and provides examples and generate evidence to inform future decisions.⁹⁰ Government accountability is a key tenant of a liberal democracy, and evaluation produces evidence that can demonstrate an intervention’s impact, while also allowing scrutiny by taxpayers.⁹¹ Within New Zealand, the Public Service Commission (formerly the State Services Commission) alongside the Treasury, published a performance measurement document in 2008 stating: “Any agency with a policy, delivery, monitoring or sector oversight role needs a robust performance measurement framework to know whether its activities are effective and efficient.”⁹² The NZCTVES is an important document for New Zealand’s national security, representing and directing how we are to counter terrorism and prevent and counter violent extremism. The lack of an evaluation model for this document represents a critical gap. This gap seeks to be bridged over the course of the following chapters with the development of an NZCTVES evaluation model. Adoption and implementation of such a model will be able to finally offer a form of fidelity, transparency and ultimately accountability to the delivery of the NZCTVES.

⁸⁹ United Kingdom Government. (2020). *The Magenta Book*. Accessed at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e96cab9d3bf7f412b2264b1/HMT_Magenta_Book.pdf 28 July 2025.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 6.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² New Zealand State Services Commission and the New Zealand Treasury. (2008). *Performance Measurement, Advice and examples on how to develop effective frameworks*. Accessed at <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Performance-Measurement-Advice-and-examples-on-how-to-develop-effective-frameworks.pdf> 20 July 2025.

Chapter two. *Methodology and Literature*

Review.

Research topic and the research gap

Following the terror attack on Al Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre in March 2019⁹³, New Zealand was forced to reflect on its uneasy and at times apathetic relationship with terrorism and violent extremism. The ten-minute terror attack on 15 March resulted in the deaths of 51 innocent civilians and 89 wounded.⁹⁴ The attack also galvanised a government and population largely apathetic to the threat of terrorism.⁹⁵ In the aftermath of the attack, a flurry of models, strategies, hui, and broad dialogue were entered into. The New Zealand Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (NZCTVES) was one such strategy. Authored by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) and released in 2020 (with further updates in 2021 and 2022), it was subject to immediate criticism in the academic field⁹⁶ and anecdotally, was largely side-lined in certain government agencies due to a lack of detail and direction in the strategy. Having read, analysed and critiqued multiple academic articles pertaining to the NZCTVES and New Zealand's relationship with the phenomenon of terrorism and violent extremism writ large, I had initially wished to focus my thesis on a critique of the Strategy. However, when considering how I may go about this and when reading the subject academic literature, I determined that there is an evaluation gap in terms of determining the efficacy and overall approach of New Zealand's counter-terrorism strategy, and that this omission was not unique to New Zealand. In 2021, Erika Brady produced a doctoral thesis '*Assessing Counter-terrorism Strategies through a Mixed-methods Research Design: The case of CONTEST in the UK*'⁹⁷, a thesis focussed on assessing the impact of the United Kingdom's counter-terrorism strategy using an exploratory mixed

⁹³ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 3

⁹⁴ New Zealand Police Museum. '2019 – Operation Deans Targeted Terrorist Attacks. Christchurch, 15 March'. Accessed 07 October 2023 at: <https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/history-and-museum/museum/exhibitions/place-many-brave-deeds/2019-operation-deans-targeted>

⁹⁵ Satherley, Nicole, Kumar Yogeeswaran, Danny Osborne, Sadi Shanaah, and Chris G. Sibley. "Investigating the effects of right-wing terrorism on government satisfaction: A time course analysis of the 2019 Christchurch terror attack." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2021): 2176

⁹⁶ Battersby, John, Rhys Ball, and Nick Nelson. "New Zealand's counter-terrorism strategy: A critical assessment." *National Security Journal* 2, no. 1 (2020).

⁹⁷ Brady, Erika. "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." PhD diss., University of St Andrews, 2021.

methods research design.⁹⁸ Having identified what I believe to be a similar critical gap within New Zealand's approach to countering terrorism, I set out to design an evaluation framework or model that can evaluate and measure the effectiveness of the NZCTVES. For clarification purposes, the methodological considerations pertaining to the evaluation model are not addressed here but instead are articulated in; Chapter Three (Theory of Change and Evaluation Methods), Chapter Four (Brady and Rand) and Chapter Five (Evaluation Design).

Research Objectives/Questions/Hypothesis

A model for evaluating the NZCTVES does not currently exist and therefore there remains significant vulnerabilities within our national security system. These are encapsulated in the following questions.

1. Does our current strategy work and how is it evaluated?
2. How do other nations/agencies/bodies evaluate their CT/VE strategies?
3. How to design, build and implement a NZ-centric CT/VE evaluation model?

The aim of the study is to determine how we may objectively assess and critique the NZCTVES, through the creation of an evaluation model, which if implemented could significantly strengthen the national security system leading to a resilient and prepared New Zealand, with specific regard to counter-terrorism and preventing and countering violent extremism.

⁹⁸ Brady, Erika. "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." 6.

Methodology

Research tradition and approach.

Initially, I had considered an approach for this research centred in the perspective of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS), although, as Richard Jackson observed in 2007,⁹⁹ CTS has applications across various disciplines including; government and public policy, security, intelligence and defence, justice and sociology to name but a few. The epistemological commitment of CTS acknowledges, in part, that terrorism knowledge reflects the social-cultural context within which it emerges,¹⁰⁰ in this case, the unique cultural and social setting with which the New Zealand government has focused the NZCTVE strategy – “a strategy of a time and place”.¹⁰¹

Having identified the possible epistemological setting of the research, an interpretivist approach¹⁰² was considered, focusing on the understanding and perception from the point-of-view of research participants¹⁰³ – in the context of this research, whether or not research participants believe the NZCTVE strategy is effective and critically, how they understand this efficacy could be evaluated. Primary research participants were to be key practitioners of the strategy; members of the CTCC at DPMC, intelligence, police and security staff, and NGO and community de-radicalisation practitioners. Collection and analysis of data was to be based on initial structured questionnaires, followed by a series of focus group feedback at regular points of the evaluation model development.

⁹⁹ Jackson, Richard. "The core commitments of critical terrorism studies." *European political science* 6 (2007): 244.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 246

¹⁰¹ DPMC CCTC Chair, formal interview, 12 March 2025.

¹⁰² Bryman, Alan, Saul Becker, and Joe Sempik. "Quality criteria for quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research: A view from social policy." *International journal of social research methodology* 11, no. 4 (2008): 16

¹⁰³ Ryan, Gemma. "Introduction to positivism, interpretivism and critical theory." *Nurse researcher* 25, no. 4 (2018): 9.

To achieve this, I proposed to undertake 'action research', a methodology that "aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to further the goals of social science simultaneously."¹⁰⁴ Action research offers considerable potential for research participants to act as project designers,¹⁰⁵ empowering participants and critically, achieving buy-in from those currently working within the New Zealand Government. The 'research calculus' was based on a) a group of practitioners and subject matter experts in their field plus b) their considerations, concerns and ideas for effective evaluation of the strategy, combined with c) an evaluation model based on researched best practise (my design); to answer d) would this evaluation model be fit for purpose to evaluate the NZCTVES?

The methodological approach outlined above quickly ran into difficulty when (as discussed later in the midpoint review), the majority of government agencies declined to interact or participate in the research. Changing tack, the research approach transitioned to an iterative process from hypothesis, to answering a cascading series of research questions (based around three focus areas), undertaking thematic and comparative analysis, leading to a methodologically sound evaluation model design. For the purposes of data collection, I broke the collection down into three different but overlapping focus areas, based on the hierarchy of concepts outlined in the research objectives paragraph.

Focus Area one – *Does the strategy work, and how is it assessed?* This focus area employed deductive research via a qualitative approach. The intent of this focus area was to determine the contextual and practical application of the NZCTVES and to answer a series of cascading research questions. This was achieved through the answers to questions based on Official Information Act (OIA) requests, followed by structured interviews, seeking to answer questions that include; what NZ government practitioners

¹⁰⁴ O'Brien, Rory. "An overview of the methodological approach of action research." (1998).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

think of the current strategy; do they understand it and the role they/their organisation plays; do they consider it an appropriate mechanism and ultimately; do they think the strategy works? Following analysis of the OIA responses and structured interviews with research participants, a thematic analysis of the findings was undertaken alongside a literature review of academic perspective pertaining to the NZCTVES.

Focus area two – *How do other nations/agencies/bodies evaluate their CT/VE strategies?* The intent of this focus area was to determine and understand approaches taken by other nations and agencies. This research involved a thematic analysis of other nations' approach to critiquing and assessing counter-terrorism frameworks and a comparative analysis of existing empirical data in defined international settings. Determining key themes in measures of success and measures of effectiveness helped inform the final evaluation model design.

Focus area three – *How to design, build and implement a NZ-centric CT/VE evaluation model?* The intent of this focus area was to finalise the capture and analysis of appropriate assessment methodology-related information and design an evaluation model. This was achieved through an analysis of select evaluation research typologies and constructs such as Theory of Change (ToC) and Mixed Methods Research (MMR) that were then applied to the New Zealand CT/PCVE context.

Methodology (midpoint) findings (April 2025).

A series of OIA requests to multiple government departments were made in early 2025. The targets of the OIA were all government agencies, departments and entities tasked under national and enabling capabilities in the NZCTVE strategy. These agencies were: New Zealand Police, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the New Zealand Security and Intelligence Service (NZSIS), the Government Communication Security Bureau (GCSB), the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the Ministry of Ethnic Communities, the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), the Department of Corrections, the National Emergency Management Agency (including Civil Defence and Emergency Management), the New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS), the Ministry of Transport (MoT), the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Immigration New Zealand (INZ). Although not tasked directly, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) was also contacted due to the public/private partnership nature of the strategy.

The following request was submitted under the Official Information Act in early 2025, to the above-named agencies.

- 1. Please provide any strategy, annual reporting policy documentation, framework or assessment schedule that addresses and defines your agencies' progress measures in meeting your tasked outcomes and actions with specific regard to the NZCTVE strategy.*
- 2. Please provide the assessment methodology your agency uses to measure your success, progress or gaps in meeting your tasked outcomes. Please include KPIs, quantitative data (metrics) and any qualitative measures of success/progress.*
- 3. If your agency does not have any formal assessment measures, please provide a brief explanation as to why your agency has chosen not to do so.*
- 4. If your agency has a planned assessment framework which is currently under development, please state when this assessment is due to be released and whether it will be made available to the NZ Public.*

Responses varied in both terms of quality of response, timeliness and interest in engaging on the subject topic. No response was received from: the Department of Internal Affairs assigned to National Capability (NC) NC03 and Enabling Capability (EC) 01 and 02, NEMA (NC07 and EC01 and 02), the Ministry of Transport (EC01 and 02), and Immigration New Zealand (EC01 and 02).

With the exception of DPMC, the NZDF, NZ Police and the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, all other agencies which responded, essentially deferred to DPMC as lead agency for all matters pertaining to the strategy, including evaluation, constructive criticism and any formal assessment of the strategy as it exists today. Faced with this tone, a decision was made to forgo the All-of-Government (AOG) focus group as it became apparent from OIA returns that very few government agencies were actually focussed on evaluating progress or success of the strategy. A decision was made in conjunction with my supervisor to narrow the research to focus areas two and three with literature review, analysis of theoretical articles and focussed interviews employed to critique focus area one.

Ethical considerations

When considering the ethical issues pertaining to my study, I identified the following areas which required a careful and considered approach given that the research design inherently critiques NZ government decisions and actions.

My first consideration regards the position of the researcher and the implications of undertaking this research as a part time student. As an employee of a government department, I have a personal sense of loyalty and a professional sense of dedication and duty to my organisation and country. This could potentially lead to a perceived conflict of interest, wherein my critique and academic viewpoint/stance held in the research, may be interpreted to advantage the Intelligence Community

(IC) and the New Zealand Government. In a similar vein, there was a need to carefully manage ways for a government employee to critique their agency usefully and constructively and that of other government departments, without falling afoul of professional integrity standards. Richard Jackson sums this up succinctly; *“the extent to which terrorism scholars are directly linked to state institutions and sources of power in ways that make it difficult to distinguish between the state and academic spheres.”*¹⁰⁶ This is in sharp contrast to the position of an independent academic or researcher undertaking the same research. While a similar viewpoint may be shared, having no professional ties to an organisation or agency, somewhat frees the researcher to apply a perspective, unconstrained through professional and legal obligation. The stance I held throughout my research covered both areas. I acknowledged from the outset my position as a current serving government employee and articulated that this position offers advantages and insight to the research, a research benefit not held by an outsider. Through careful moderation and oversight from my supervisor, confidence in balancing the maintenance of professional integrity with that of objective and critical research was upheld.

Sharing a somewhat similar theme to that described above, the research design proposed incorporates interviews with other members of the intelligence community (IC). While anonymity and source protection can be offered, there was a concern that there would be those who are reluctant to interview for fear that it may impact on their professional careers, or those who cater their answers to align to what they think their parent organisation or employer would wish for them to say. The chosen mitigation technique was to represent views in general terms through thematic analysis, not focussing on ‘who’ but rather ‘what’ and ‘why’ the interview subjects are making certain statements.

¹⁰⁶ Jackson, 245.

Significance and relevance of the research.

As discussed above in the methodological approach, CTS asks of its researchers, *who is terrorism knowledge for, and what functions does it serve in supporting their interests?*¹⁰⁷ In this case, my research seeks to address a critical gap in New Zealand's national security system – New Zealand has a Counterterrorism and Violent Extremism strategy, but how can it be evaluated? How can New Zealand's citizens be assured it is fit for purpose, is effective – essentially, does it work?

Former Prime Minister Jacinda Adern wrote in the 2021 foreword of the NZCTVES, that the purpose of the document was to show all New Zealanders, and indeed the world, how the New Zealand Government “undertakes its responsibility to keep Aotearoa safe for all New Zealanders.”¹⁰⁸ The former Prime Minister goes on to discuss the prevention aspects of the strategy, as well as working alongside international partners and organisations, academia, civil society and the private sector.¹⁰⁹ Nowhere in the foreword, nor within the document itself does it state how this strategy will be considered effective at achieving its aims. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), the lead agency charged with overall responsibility for coordinating the strategy does not detail anywhere how strategy effectiveness may be identified, articulated and then measured against. Prior to commencing my research, a one-page work programme for 2022¹¹⁰ is the last listed publicly available oversight document available but even that was incomplete.

From an aspirational perspective, the evaluation model will be considered by security and intelligence practitioners across government security and intelligence agencies. Not only would this allow for

¹⁰⁷ Jackson, 244.

¹⁰⁸ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 1.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ DPMC: <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-06/Counter-Terrorism%20Work%20Programme%202022.pdf> – accessed 06/06/24

greater buy-in from government agencies, but it will also help forestall any critique that this framework was designed by an academic outsider with no knowledge of the mechanisms of government or the national security system.

The design, adoption and implementation of a mechanism to test and evaluate the very strategy charged with keeping New Zealand safe from terrorism and violent extremism fills an identified gap in the current national security environment. An evaluation model, appropriately researched, designed and constructed will immediately add objective value to critiquing, measuring, enhancing and strengthening our National Security System. Furthermore, an evaluation model (or findings thereof) made available to the New Zealand public would add crucial transparency and accountability to the government of the day and the ministries and agencies charged with implementing the strategy on its behalf.

Thematic literature review

Historical and contextual relevance – New Zealand’s approach to terrorism, research discourse, legislative challenges and missed opportunities.

An understanding of the New Zealand context with regard to terrorism and violent extremism provides a critical starting point in the literature, enabling a researcher to situate New Zealand’s unique relationship with terrorism and violent extremism. It also helps position the research in understanding why Leading New Zealand’s CT and VE strategy is premised on four pillars; *Mohio* (understand), *Mahitahi* (work together), *Whakahotaetae* (prevent) and *Takatu* (readiness, response and recovery).¹¹¹ Academics in the security, intelligence and terrorism studies discipline contend that one of the reasons 15 March resulted in such an indelible mark on the New Zealand psyche, was because of a tendency

¹¹¹ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand’s Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*.

to “block terrorism from their past”¹¹² and “pretend they had no current problem because they had no previous one”.¹¹³ In their critique of the NZCTVES, John Battersby, Rhys Ball and Nick Nelson argue that an almost total perception – across Government and civilian population alike – of a nation unaffected “by terrorism of any kind”¹¹⁴ poorly positioned New Zealand with respect to identifying, mitigating and ultimately countering acts of terrorism and violent extremism. As a result, the terror attack on 15 March 2019 shocked New Zealand – not only for unprecedented extent of the mass killing involved – but also because of the unexpected nature of the terror attack itself and New Zealand’s apparent inability to defend itself.

This is not to suggest terrorism is unknown to New Zealand. John Smith writing 16 years prior to 15 March, acknowledges contrasting NZ government approaches, quoting then-Deputy Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer in June 1987: “it can no longer be assumed that New Zealand will remain immune from acts of international terrorism”.¹¹⁵ This statement came during the passage of the International Terrorism (Emergency Powers) Act two years after the French state-sanctioned bombing of the Greenpeace vessel *Rainbow Warrior* in Auckland Harbour. However, in 2003 and in the relatively recent aftermath of the 11 September attacks, Member of Parliament Peter Dunne commented “we are not a hotbed of terrorism, nor are we likely to become one”.¹¹⁶ By 2014, the political pendulum had swung back again, with then-Prime Minister John Key stating in a speech on national security; “New Zealand has long been portrayed as having a benign threat environment. It gives me no pleasure

¹¹² Battersby, J. (2019). The Ghost of New Zealand’s Terrorism Past and Present. *National Security Journal*, 1(1): 36

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Battersby, *et al.* "New Zealand’s counter-terrorism strategy: A critical assessment." 1.

¹¹⁵ Smith, John E. *New Zealand's Anti-Terrorism Campaign: Balancing Civil Liberties, National Security, and International Responsibilities*. Wellington: Ian Axford New Zealand Fellowship in Public Policy, 2003: 8

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 2.

to tell you that is changing".¹¹⁷ This theme of contrasting opinion and ambivalence towards terrorism in New Zealand is continued throughout the research of New Zealand academics.

Taking Battersby's *et al.*, point (terrorism is not a new phenomenon to New Zealand), why prior to 15 March was its society so relatively apathetic to the threat of terrorism? The literature suggests this can be answered across three distinct yet overlapping themes; a paucity of academic discourse accompanied by some questionable international commentary and analysis leading to a lack of domestic public awareness, a dearth of appropriate New Zealand-specific terrorism legislation similarly discounting terrorism as a possibility here,¹¹⁸ and a domestic intelligence and counter-terrorism apparatus hamstrung by a balancing act of perception versus reality – a manifest example of Aesop's 'boy who cried wolf'. In addition, the *frequency* and *severity* of terrorist events in New Zealand are much lower than elsewhere and were often prosecuted as other offences.

A lonely conversation – international and domestic academic perspective on terrorism in New Zealand.

Lutz Bornmann, when discussing the societal impacts of research, identifies several societal benefits from rigorous academic study; increases in societal quality, public values, usefulness, the transfer of knowledge and critically - societal relevance - as key outputs which enable a sense of learning and context in a given phenomenon.¹¹⁹ In a somewhat meta circumstance, one reason as to why there is so little comprehension regarding terrorism in the New Zealand context, is precisely because there is so little written about the subject matter, remaining an especially "under-researched topic

¹¹⁷ William Hoverd, "Differentiating between New Zealand's two security research agendas" in *New Zealand National Security: Challenges, Trends and Issues*, ed. William Hoverd, Rouben Azizian, and Carl Bradley (Auckland: Massey University Press, 2017).

¹¹⁸ John Battersby, "Facing up! The legal and definitional challenges of New Zealand's approach to terrorism," in *New Zealand National Security: Challenges, Trends and Issues*, ed. William Hoverd, Rouben Azizian, and Carl Bradley (Auckland: Massey University Press, 2017).

¹¹⁹ Bornmann, Lutz. "What is societal impact of research and how can it be assessed? A literature survey." *Journal of the American Society for information science and technology* 64, no. 2 (2013): 217.

academically".¹²⁰ Battersby and Ball consider this to include and be reflective of a lack of public awareness in that terrorism in New Zealand is not well understood.¹²¹ If the New Zealand public is only tangentially aware of terrorism as a phenomenon due to a deficit in academic and public discourse in general, let alone specific to New Zealand, then it is of little wonder that the events of 15 March were so shocking. The NZCTVES acknowledges this bluntly – the first pillar of the strategy (Mohio or understanding) addresses detection and understanding of the threat,¹²² an implicit inference that successive governments had not, until the release of the strategy, achieved wide-spread acceptance of the terrorism phenomena, and critically an understanding of what this threat could entail.

A thorough review of New Zealand-centric articles on terrorism and counter-terrorism show that results are limited to around a dozen key academics. A fair criticism is that the paucity of academic attention could result in an echo chamber of information and opinions. However, when reviewing the available literature, key New Zealand authors approach their research from a series of differing angles; Cyril *et al.*, write of terrorism risk management from a hospitality and major events perspective,¹²³ Greener-Barcham focuses her writing on historical cases of terrorism in New Zealand prior to 11 September,¹²⁴ Conte from a New Zealand perspective on International Law and Terrorism post 11 September,¹²⁵ while Battersby, Ball and Rogers both before and after 15 March 2019 interrogate organisational pitfalls and perspectives (security sector practitioner's perspectives,¹²⁶ comparative

¹²⁰ Battersby, John, and Rhys Ball. "Christchurch in the context of New Zealand terrorism and right wing extremism." *Journal of policing, intelligence and counter terrorism* 14, no. 3 (2019): 192.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 13.

¹²³ Peter, Cyril, Jill Poulston, and Erwin Losekoot. "Terrorism, rugby, and hospitality: She'll be right." *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 3, no. 4 (2014): 253-261.

¹²⁴ Greener-Barcham, Beth K. "Before September: A history of counter-terrorism in New Zealand." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 3 (2002): 509-524.

¹²⁵ Conte, Alex. "International Law and Terrorism: A New Zealand Perspective." *New Challenges and New States: What Role for International Law* (2002).

¹²⁶ Battersby, John. "Security sector practitioner perceptions of the terror threat environment before the Christchurch attacks." *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online* 15, no. 2 (2020): 295-309.

analysis between Australian and New Zealand intelligence and security organisations against domestic terrorist events¹²⁷ and New Zealand's experience post-terrorist event).¹²⁸ Most of the authors indicate that clear findings, trends and analysis articulate the fact that New Zealand hasn't been immune to domestic terrorist attacks,¹²⁹ (and is unlikely to remain so in the future), however, the relative low scale of terror events in New Zealand¹³⁰ (or in some cases mis-identification), has resulted in a cultural malaise and general apathy towards terrorism in New Zealand. The major contrasting objection to this point are the perspectives of New Zealand security practitioners themselves which will be discussed later in this literature review.

Internationally, academic commentary of terrorism in New Zealand would support a local perspective that terrorism in New Zealand does not exist.¹³¹ Although scant international academic articles have been written on the subject, the general position is that because New Zealand does not feature on the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) in any major category and because New Zealand is not a developing country within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), terrorism "will not see the light of day in New Zealand".¹³² This argument is primarily based on the principle that proximity to conflict and poverty equates to higher instances of terrorism. Colin Brown, New Zealand Chief Customs Officer in 2014, skewers this argument, stating this perspective only considers one dimension of terrorism, and does not consider radicalised individuals or those who could conduct 'inspired' attacks in locations set far from conflict.¹³³ Further undermining international perspectives

¹²⁷ Battersby, John. "Terrorism where terror is not: Australian and New Zealand terrorism compared." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 41, no. 1 (2018): 59-76.

¹²⁸ Rogers, Damien, Nick Nelson, and John Battersby. "Public inquiries on counterterrorism: New Zealand's experience." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 16, no. 3 (2023): 452-474.

¹²⁹ Battersby, John. "Terrorism where terror is not: Australian and New Zealand terrorism compared." 61.

¹³⁰ Tillett, Josinta. "Understanding lone-actor terrorists: The global context and how it can be applied to New Zealand." *National Security Journal* 3, no. 3 (2021): 5.

¹³¹ Ozdeser, Huseyin, Behiye Cavusoglu, and Odebola Taiwo James. "Terrorism Will Not Survive in the Realm of New Zealand." *Journal of City and Development* 1, no. 1 (2019): 27.

¹³² Ibid, 24.

¹³³ Smith, Colin. "Border security and counter terrorism-the New Zealand experience." *United Service* 66, no. 1 (2015): 24.

that New Zealand is devoid of terrorism, the 2024 GTI report places New Zealand 50th of 162 nations measured against the impact of terrorism.¹³⁴ Notably, this places New Zealand in the middle of her 'Five Eyes' counterparts, behind the United States of America (30) and the United Kingdom (41) but ahead of Canada (52) and Australia (57).¹³⁵ Although limited in scope, what international evidence of terrorism within New Zealand does show (primarily through international think tanks such as the Institute for Economics and Peace), is that New Zealand is not immune to the terrorism phenomena, despite New Zealand's reputation as "a place free from modern world ills (including terrorism)" pervading the security literature.¹³⁶

It is worth noting here that this is likely a result of a popular myth, shared both domestically and internationally – New Zealand, an isolated nation in the bottom of the South Pacific Ocean is able to leverage her geographic isolation thereby avoiding traditional threats (direct conflict with another nation's state)¹³⁷ and asymmetrical threats such as international terrorism.¹³⁸ New Zealand academics view this quite differently; Hoverd as one example, decries the reliance on geographic isolation, arguing that national security is linked to a nation's global interconnectedness,¹³⁹ while Beth Greener-Barcham and Manuhua Barcham cite Rohan Gunaratna describing Australia and New Zealand as "the two countries in the region [the South Pacific] where foreign [terrorist] groups operate".¹⁴⁰ It quickly becomes apparent that outside of a select group of New Zealand academics, and New Zealand Security

¹³⁴ Institute for Economics & Peace. Global Terrorism Index 2024: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism, Sydney, February 2024. Available from: <http://visionofhumanity.org/resources> (accessed 10/09/2024).

¹³⁵ Global Terrorism Index 2024: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism: 6

¹³⁶ Le Gros, Lydia. "From 'Nah' to 'Yeah Nah': A Critical Analysis of New Zealand's Counterterrorism Discourse." PhD diss., University of Otago, 2023: 12. (Note – the original thesis is identified as master's thesis, while the official reference or citation is for a PhD. The reason for this discrepancy is unknown).

¹³⁷ William Hoverd, "Changing New Zealand National Security Dynamics" in New Zealand National Security: Challenges, Trends and Issues.

¹³⁸ Rouben Azizian, "Security and Strategy in the Asia-Pacific: Challenges and Opportunities for New Zealand," in New Zealand National Security: Challenges, Trends and Issues.

¹³⁹ William Hoverd, "Changing New Zealand National Security Dynamics"

¹⁴⁰ Greener-Barcham, Beth K., and Manuhua Barcham. "Terrorism in the South Pacific? Thinking critically about approaches to security in the region." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 60, no. 1 (2006): 75.

and intelligence practitioners themselves, “discussing terrorism (in New Zealand) is not a straightforward matter... partly as a result of its peculiar legislation.”¹⁴¹

New Zealand’s terrorism legislation

New Zealand society’s indifferent or perhaps unaware approach to terrorism on home soil is mirrored in domestic legislation. New Zealand law expert David Small, argued in a 2011 article in the *International Journal of Law and Context*, that due to the perception of New Zealand as a low-risk country, justification regarding counter-terrorism specific legislation would have to be made under the premise and acceptance of terrorism as a global threat – “an international phenomena” where terrorists view “the world as their stage”.¹⁴² Small quotes the perspective of the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service in 2003, when considering the growing terrorism spectre in New Zealand post-11 September. This assessment of the NZSIS is promptly and summarily discounted by Small as “largely, a proxy threat”.¹⁴³ Although Small was primarily concerned with generalised anti-terror laws impacting upon individual’s personal freedoms and human rights,¹⁴⁴ his perspective of the terrorist threat in New Zealand as ‘trivial’ as recently as 2011, highlights the existing challenges to security practitioners who have advocated for more specific counter-terrorism legislation.

Josinta Tillett, writing in *the National Security Journal* in 2021, identified a historic “lack of terrorism-related legislation,”¹⁴⁵ including the International Terrorism (Emergency powers) Act which dealt exclusively with *international* acts of terror that has never been evoked, and the post-11 September

¹⁴¹ Battersby, John. "Terrorism where terror is not: Australian and New Zealand terrorism compared." 67.

¹⁴² Small, David. "The uneasy relationship between national security and personal freedom: New Zealand and the 'War on terror'." *International Journal of Law in Context* 7, no. 4 (2011): 471

¹⁴³ Ibid, 472.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 473

¹⁴⁵ Tillett, "Understanding lone-actor terrorists: The global context and how it can be applied to New Zealand." 3.

Terrorism Suppression Act (TSA), the complexity of language of which “rendered it practically unusable unless applied after the fact.”¹⁴⁶ The TSA was most infamously applied by New Zealand Police and the NZSIS in 2007, when investigating a group of left-wing and Māori radicals and activists. Following 41 Search Warrants and 18 arrests, the Solicitor-General denied Police permission for the use of terrorist charges because the legislation is “unnecessarily complex, incoherent, and, as a result, almost impossible to apply to the domestic circumstances observed by the police in this case”.¹⁴⁷ An interesting implication of this lack of consistent application of terrorist-related legislation, is that until the act of terror on 15 March, and the subsequent guilty verdict of Brendon Tarrant, legally New Zealand had never had a terrorist¹⁴⁸ on home soil despite arguably being host to several terrorist acts over the 20th and 21st centuries.¹⁴⁹

Alex Conte argues that the ‘legal deficiency’¹⁵⁰ in New Zealand’s counter-terrorism legislation is grounded in a general lack of consensus as to what amounts to a terrorist act.¹⁵¹ Conte, writing in 2002, posited that from a New Zealand perspective, terrorism isn’t necessarily ‘special’ in and of itself and that individuals facing charges relating to crimes of terrorism will be held accountable under existing laws; murder, unlawful possession of a weapon, wilful damage and endangering public safety as several examples.¹⁵² Conte writing in the early 2000s and Tillett writing more recently in 2021, infer that New Zealand’s terrorist legislation is reflective of a “clear lack of centralised leadership in the

¹⁴⁶ Tillett, "Understanding lone-actor terrorists: The global context and how it can be applied to New Zealand." 3.

¹⁴⁷ Geddis, Andrew, and Elana Geddis. "Addressing terrorism in New Zealand’s low threat environment." In *Extremism, free speech and counter-terrorism Law and policy*, pp. 190-209. Routledge, 2019: 195

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Battersby, John, and Rhys Ball. "Christchurch in the context of New Zealand terrorism and right-wing extremism." 193-196.

¹⁵⁰ Tillett, "Understanding lone-actor terrorists: The global context and how it can be applied to New Zealand." 3.

¹⁵¹ Conte, "International Law and Terrorism: A New Zealand Perspective." 170.

¹⁵² Ibid, 175-176.

nation's approach to countering terrorism"¹⁵³ resulting in a less-prepared nation facing terrorism and terrorist attacks. Battersby, writing a 2018 comparison between Australian and New Zealand terrorism - and less than twelve months prior to the events of 15 March - summarised the leadership-legislation issue succinctly;

because of the perception of a low to non-existent risk of terrorism here, political leaders are reluctant to update legislation lest it be seen as an overreaction to fears about a threat we do not face. Unless something like the recent European instances of terrorism occur here, there will be no perception of any real need to prevent such an event.¹⁵⁴

From the coal-face; perspectives of New Zealand security and intelligence practitioners.

Beth Greener-Barcham writes in her historical analysis of counter-terrorism in New Zealand, that terror attacks in New Zealand (prior to 15 March) offer several opportunities for lessons to be learnt by the domestic counter-terrorism community with regards to communication, deficiencies in prior warning, and coordination between agencies.¹⁵⁵ Her key takeaway following the *Rainbow Warrior* attack; how "relatively few changes were made".¹⁵⁶ Confirmation of such academic critique was echoed and confirmed in one of the findings of the Royal Commission of Inquiry to 15 March,¹⁵⁷ acknowledging that New Zealand's counterterrorism approach was "misguided and erroneous".¹⁵⁸ However, some academics challenge this notion of a misguided and erroneous CT approach – that while a fair overall criticism of the national security sector's method to countering terrorism within New Zealand – that it is not a fair critique of the security professionals themselves, individuals whose

¹⁵³ Tillet, "Understanding lone-actor terrorists: The global context and how it can be applied to New Zealand." 5.

¹⁵⁴ John Battersby, "Facing up! The legal and definitional challenges of New Zealand's approach to terrorism," in *New Zealand National Security: Challenges, Trends and Issues*.

¹⁵⁵ Greener-Barcham, "Before September: A history of counter-terrorism in New Zealand. 516

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 517.

¹⁵⁷ Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019. Accessed 14 October at <https://christchurchattack.royalcommission.nz/the-report/executive-summary-2/executive-summary/>

¹⁵⁸ O'Farrell, Tim. "'Islamic terrorism' in New Zealand? The John Key Government, Counterterrorism, and the 'Islamic terrorism' Narrative." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 15, no. 4 (2022): 893

roles “were complicated by an overarching sense of social, bureaucratic and political complacency toward the threat of terrorism.”¹⁵⁹

Referenced in the earlier segment on New Zealand terrorism legislation, Small writing in 2011 echoes perspectives represented earlier in this literature review; that the terrorist threat to New Zealand is often downplayed.¹⁶⁰ However, Small’s academic critique isn’t one of likelihood or not of domestic terrorist attack, but rather how the infrequency of domestic security incidents leads to challenges to garner public support for terrorism-specific legislation; “...the greater the length of time between security incidents, the greater the likelihood of reduced public consciousness of the threat”.¹⁶¹ Battersby writes that a very similar perspective was held by a number of security sector practitioners, who, immediately prior to the events of 15 March, shared concerns of “a struggle to convince the wider public service or politicians that there was a legitimate concern”¹⁶² (of a terrorist attack). Battersby also included perspectives on the issues faced by practitioners when attempting to convince the wider New Zealand public, one senior practitioner observing to him:

the public’s perception of New Zealand’s CT environment is also a challenge, the general sense is that there is nothing to see here. So how do you prepare a nation that hasn’t been communicated with by government agencies, that hasn’t got an appreciation of the risk that exists albeit to a lesser volume than what we see in the Five Eyes countries. How do you do that? How do you initiate the conversation without scaring the nation?¹⁶³

Crothers and O’Brien articulate the immediate challenges facing the security and intelligence sector in the immediate aftermath of a terror event, when citing the 15 March attacks; “security services

¹⁵⁹ Battersby, John. "Security sector practitioner perceptions of the terror threat environment before the Christchurch attacks."

¹⁶⁰ Small, David. "The uneasy relationship between national security and personal freedom: New Zealand and the 'War on terror'." 471

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Battersby, John. "Security sector practitioner perceptions of the terror threat environment before the Christchurch attacks." 297.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 298.

surveillance had failed to generate prior information on the perpetrator”¹⁶⁴ and “has received considerable criticism for its apparent failure”.¹⁶⁵ When considering the historic and contemporary context in the lead-up to 15 March, the literature reviewed weaves together a consistent and damning tapestry which displays a societal lack of understanding (Mohio), agencies failing to work together and unsupported by legislation (mahi tahi), and a public and political body unprepared for a terrorist event (whakahotaetae and takatu) .

Existing critique(s) of the Strategy: ‘why, not what and how’.

Having considered the historical and current context regarding New Zealand’s terrorism landscape, themes in the literature turn to a post-release critique of the strategy. Within this, a consideration of how government intent and agenda permeate policy and approach is critical to understanding the design principles of the NZCTVES. When reviewing the literature, there is very little in the way of objective academic commentary regarding the CT/VE strategy. Battersby *et al.*, in a highly critical review in the *National Security Journal* articulates the purpose of the NZCTVES. Firstly, NZCTVES should convey intent from the Government to its various agencies and to its constituents regarding the counterterrorism approach New Zealand will undertake going forward.¹⁶⁶ Ideally, the strategy should *also* contain a clear articulation of national interests, a broad risk assessment, identification and assessment of future challenges and threats, an overview of required resources, measures of effectiveness, and a basic implementation plan.¹⁶⁷ In the opinion of Battersby *et al.*, the strategy “comes up well short of what it should be”.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Crothers, Charles, and Thomas O’Brien. "The Contexts of the Christchurch terror attacks: social science perspectives." *Kōtuitui: New Zealand journal of social sciences online* 15, no. 2 (2020): 248.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 256.

¹⁶⁶ Battersby, *et al.* "New Zealand’s counter-terrorism strategy: A critical assessment." 3.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 1.

A somewhat meta 'critique of the critique' identifies at first blush a case of quantity over quality, which in turn helped informed the research gap identified for this thesis. Battersby *et al.*, are scathing of the NZCTVE strategy, finding the 2020 strategy sparse on detail, heavy on one-liners and more akin to a shiny infographic than a document of substance, able to be read within minutes but leaving "the reader with more questions than answers".¹⁶⁹ This critique is almost entirely based on comparison and contrast with other Five Eyes partners with considerable focus on "a paucity of information",¹⁷⁰ comparing the initial six-page New Zealand document with that of longer and more detailed strategies released by New Zealand's partners.¹⁷¹ Whilst total paged numbers in and of themselves don't equate to a successful strategy or a critique thereof, a separate argument of Battersby *et al.*, focuses on the *agenda* behind the strategy, stating that the strategy fails to leave New Zealand "better off" in terms of responding to the threat of terrorism. Battersby *et al.*, articulate this by arguing the pitfalls of an all/whole-of-government approach due to a revisionist interpretation of events which seeks to further a social cohesion agenda, as opposed to identifying and countering "a diverse array of security challenges".¹⁷²

This theme of government agenda and intent is further discussed by Lydia Le Gross in her 2022 thesis; *A Critical Analysis of New Zealand's Counterterrorism Discourse*,¹⁷³ which concludes that government rhetoric influences "how the New Zealand Government identifies and responds to threat".¹⁷⁴ As an example of the government practice of rhetoric over threat, just under five years prior to Tarrant's terrorist attack, the New Zealand Government announced its first rise of the National Terrorism threat

¹⁶⁹ Battersby, *et al.* "New Zealand's counter-terrorism strategy: A critical assessment." 5-6.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 5

¹⁷¹ Battersby, *et al.* "New Zealand's counter-terrorism strategy: A critical assessment.", 4.

¹⁷² Rogers, Damien *et al.* "Public inquiries on counterterrorism: New Zealand's experience." 452.

¹⁷³ Le Gros, Lydia. "From "Nah" to "Yeah Nah": A Critical Analysis of New Zealand's Counterterrorism Discourse."

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

level,¹⁷⁵ from 'Very low' to 'low'. This reflected the assessment of domestic intelligence and security agencies who deemed that the threat of terrorism had shifted from being considered unlikely to "possible but not expected".¹⁷⁶ Shortt writes that the announced increase was accompanied by no publicly transparent rationale but was likely an attempt to "build and strengthen public trust".¹⁷⁷ At the time, despite no public justification as to the rise, it is almost certain that the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) was responding to the threat of Islamic State and the Levant (ISIL) foreign fighters returning from Syria and Iraq to their home nations.¹⁷⁸ The point, Shortt argues, is that the government of the day was more concerned with being seen to appear transparent to the domestic populace, as opposed to sharing relevant information pertaining to the threat.

Battersby *et al.*, conclude their critique of the NZCTVES by stating the strategy is;

too short, under-developed and lacks evidence of a genuine knowledge base of contemporary terrorism, or violent extremism, trends. There is also insufficient appreciation of the relative success or failure of various international counter terrorism and counter violent-extremism responses. The strategy itself appears disconnected from New Zealand's own nuanced, but nevertheless actual, 50-year experience of political violence and lacks many of the components one would expect to see enunciated in such an important document as this.

Other approaches: frameworks for measuring effectiveness of CT/VE strategies.

Although not an exhaustive literature review of every CT/VE strategy worldwide, this review would not be complete without considering approaches proposed by other nations, academics and think-tanks. A 2018 RAND Corporation report notes a methodological shift from a post-September 11 'coercive' approach to countering terrorism by Western Governments, to one in the late 2010s of more holistic preventative measures.¹⁷⁹ Effectiveness of preventative approaches, focus on

¹⁷⁵ Shortt, Richard. "Raising New Zealand's terrorism threat level: Is transparency important in national security?." *Salus Journal* 3, no. 1 (2015): 1.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 3.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 5.

¹⁷⁹ Bellasio *et al.*, "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): 73.

developing a taxonomy of key characteristics (type, goal, target, activities, implementation etc) and undertaking thematic analysis.¹⁸⁰ Writing in the United Kingdom's context, Brady acknowledges the difficulty in assessing strategy efficacy, stating that even apparently simple metrics such as foiled terror plots are notoriously hard to define, let alone "establishing parameters and metrics for evaluation".¹⁸¹ Brady opines that analysis must include broader themes such as "community activities, education and health sector policies, critical infrastructure protections and transportation developments"¹⁸² which can all be evaluated and assessed for their performance. An understanding of how other bodies assess their respective strategies will become a useful aid when designing the evaluation model.

Brady's perspective – that successful counter terrorism assessment frameworks must contain more than binary conclusions of 'terror plots foiled' led her to the development of a mixed-methods research design with which to assess the UK CT strategy, CONTEST. Brady initially considered a form of composite indicator, similar to the GTI and the Global Peace Index.¹⁸³ However, due to analysis and time-constraints, Brady developed a model which incorporated both qualitative (public perspectives, practitioner perspectives and lessons learned)¹⁸⁴ and quantitative indicators (government KPIs as an example) on a multi-level basis (the four 'Ps' – pursue, prevent, protect, prepare as an example).¹⁸⁵ Brady summarises her model:

The ALTPEG model which is developed explores themes which arose in the first phase of the project, specifically Assessment, Learning, Transparency, Perspectives, Events and Goals. With the ability to measure CONTEST's performance by workstream (Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare), by thematic category or by nuanced sub-question, a range of analysis can be undertaken to better understand what might or might not be working

¹⁸⁰ Bellasio *et al.*, "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): 73.

¹⁸¹ Brady, E. "An analysis of the UK's Counter-Terrorism Strategy, CONTEST, and the challenges in its evaluation. Sicherheitspolitik-blog." (2016): 7.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, p 8.

¹⁸³ Brady, Erika. "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." 122.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid* 124.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 123 and 129.

appropriately. A further level of analysis is carried out through the Traffic Light System, to assess which aspects of CONTEST need more attention for future improvement. This model is the first of its kind and is designed to provoke debate and provide a platform on which scholars and researchers can develop our understanding of the impact of the Counter-Terrorism strategies globally.¹⁸⁶

Figure 2. Dr Erika Brady's ALTPEG model.¹⁸⁷

Categories	Associated Questions	WS1	WS2	WS3	WS4	Strategy-Wide	Score (per Q)	Score (per Cat)
Assessment	Are assessments carried out?							
	Are they independent?							
	Are the publicly available?							
Learning	Does learning happen?							
	Can it be measured?							
Transparency	Is the strategy transparent?							
	Has transparency improved over time?							
Perception	Are the perceptions of the public positive?							
	Are the perceptions of the media positive?							
	Are the perceptions of the practitioners positive?							
Events	Are more events foiled than are successful?							
	What is the balance of attacks which are stopped (foiled) versus not stopped (successful or failed)?							
Goals	[To be completed based on strategy of study]							
	[To be completed based on strategy of study]							
	Score (per workstream)							
	Score (Contest total)							

Research gap and conclusion.

In summary, the literature reviewed to generate an understanding of the New Zealand context, tells a contrasting tale of New Zealand academics and security and intelligence professionals who viewed

¹⁸⁶ Brady, Erika. "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK.", ABSTRACT

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, ALTPEG Model.

(and view) New Zealand as a nation susceptible to terrorism and not immune to the resulting consequences, compared with a public uninured or unaccustomed to terrorist acts, the impacts to the public psyche and their feelings of safety. The critical perspectives of New Zealand security academics illustrate why the NZCTVES' first pillar is *Mohio* or understanding – a belated realisation that we as New Zealanders prior to 15 March, did not understand the terrorist phenomena enough to prepare for it. Also evident in the literature, is that despite being placed more highly in the GTI than the New Zealand public might expect, little was actually done to prepare (*Whakahotaetae*) the nation for future terrorist attacks post 11 September. Symbolic of this, is the confusing and complex terrorism legislation that security and intelligence practitioners must operate within. As Shortt wrote, successive governments are attuned to public discourse and sensitive to criticism. In the security sector, it has been determined a form of transparency will in part, act as counter to this criticism. In the chaos and heightened emotional aftermath of 15 March, the New Zealand Government ushered in New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy, in a public display of government accountability and transparency.

However, noticeable by its absence, neither the NZCTVES nor any reviewed critique, considers how the strategy in and of itself may be evaluated. In the interests of public awareness, public safety, and in order to bring important conversations regarding the phenomenon of terrorism in New Zealand to the fore, a publicly accessible and understandable evaluation model must be considered.

Chapter three: *Theory of Change and Evaluation Methods*

A review of the literature suggests almost conclusively that the purpose of terrorism is to achieve a form of political or social *change* through the use or threat of violence.¹⁸⁸ Although no rational government wishes to accept that a terrorist attack forces change, international evidence suggests otherwise; the attacks on 11 September in 2001 and the Madrid bombings in 2004 are two well-known examples of violence directly influencing state decisions. In the case of 11 September, shortly after United States President George W. Bush declared a Global War on Terror (GWOT)¹⁸⁹ while in Spain, the Madrid bombings were a catalyst for an unexpected victory of the Socialist Party over the incumbent centre-right Popular Party.¹⁹⁰ Whilst these may not have been the results sought by the terrorist actors, change was an inevitable consequence of these terrorist acts. As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, New Zealand's response to terrorism pre-15 March was largely driven by external factors, primarily what actions and legislative changes other like and partner nations were undertaking. In lieu of an organic driver for change in the New Zealand context – such as a proactive and independent 'peacetime' review of New Zealand's counter-terrorism landscape and an associated strategy, workplan and outcomes - the events of 15 March and the resulting RCOI *became* the catalyst for major change – across the spectrum of how New Zealand's security and intelligence agencies operate, through to the public and social construct in how everyday New Zealanders view the spectre of terrorism.

This chapter begins by positing that a critical opportunity was lost between the review, actions and findings of the RCOI and the development and implementation of the NZCTVES, with ongoing implications for robust review and evaluation of the Strategy. In short, when interrogating the data

¹⁸⁸ For example: Santifort, Charlinda, Todd Sandler, and Patrick T. Brandt. "Terrorist attack and target diversity: Changepoints and their drivers." *Journal of peace research* 50, no. 1 (2013): 77 and Waldron, Jeremy. "Terrorism and the Uses of Terror." *The Journal of Ethics* 8 (2004): 8 and Levitt, Geoffrey. "Is terrorism worth defining." *Ohio NUL Rev.* 13 (1986): 103.

¹⁸⁹ Williams, Dodeye Uduak, Enoch Okon, and Tony Onibasa. "The Utility of Military Force and the Global War on Terror (GWOT): Strategic or Tactical?." *Journal of Humanities and Social Policies* 4, no. 2 (2018): 1

¹⁹⁰ Chari, Raj. "The 2004 Spanish election: terrorism as a catalyst for change?." *West European Politics* 27, no. 5 (2004): 957.

from RCOI, through NZCTVES, responses to OIAs and structured interviews, there is no evidence that a formal Theory of Change (ToC) process was undertaken, with resulting gaps in evaluation of the strategy's efficacy. Part one of this chapter seeks to identify how the incorporation of a ToC could lead to clearer evaluation measures and opportunities for network analysis, participative network mapping and predictive modelling. This will set the scene for the second half of Chapter Two: an analysis of evaluation approaches. The aim of this analysis seeks to identify the principles and methods of rigorous and transparent government programme evaluation.

Te Tahuhu o te Maturanga (the New Zealand Ministry of Education), defines a ToC as a roadmap that sets out how and why a desired change is expected to come about, identifying why a planned activity will lead to an intended result and explaining the underlying rationale.¹⁹¹ Further, a ToC should illustrate and articulate the precise link(s) between activity(s) and the achievement of the long-term goal(s) which in turn should lead to better evaluation; identifying indicators and measures of success.¹⁹² In short, ToC can be described as 'a theory of how and why an initiative works' with clear connections between activities and outcomes.¹⁹³ Davies states that a ToC typically involves some form of diagrammatic representation in order to succinctly represent 'multiple parallel and intersecting causal pathways.'¹⁹⁴ Crucially, a ToC defines long-term goals and then maps backwards to identify key changes in the status quo.¹⁹⁵ The changes are illustrated rather than declared in text, visually depicting the causal pathways and connections between activities, outputs and outcomes, each in a logical

¹⁹¹ Te Tahuhu o te Maturanga (Ministry of Education) 2025. 'A Theory of Change' accessed at <https://evaluationhub.education.govt.nz/theory-of-change/a-theory-of-change/#:~:text=Theory%20of%20Change?-,A%20Theory%20of%20Change%20sets%20out%20HOW%20and%20WHY%20a,terms%2C%20to%20reach%20a%20goal> 01 May 2025.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Davies, Rick. "Representing theories of change: Technical challenges with evaluation consequences." *Journal of Development Effectiveness* 10, no. 4 (2018): 438

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 439.

¹⁹⁵ Taplin, Dana H., Hélène Clark, Eoin Collins, and David C. Colby. "Theory of change." *Technical papers: a series of papers to support development of theories of change based on practice in the field*. ActKnowledge, New York, NY, USA (2013). 2.

relationship to one another.¹⁹⁶ Davies writes that ToC exist ‘in many and varied forms’¹⁹⁷ – below is a simplified exemplar of a ToC with annotated component descriptors.

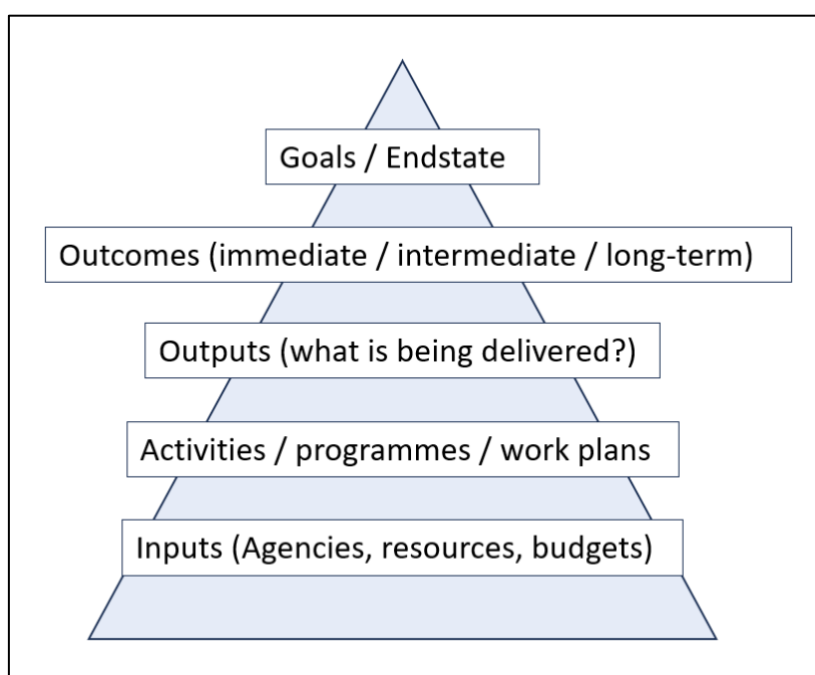


Figure 3. Simplified representative Theory of Change diagram(Author).¹⁹⁸

The components of the exemplar diagram are as follows.¹⁹⁹

Goals or Endstate. Goals describes the desired attainment of the end towards which effort is directed. Endstate refers to the desired final conditions where stated objectives have been achieved, and a sustainable outcome for the future is in place. Goals are employed across the public and private sector, while the concept of an Endstate is inherently military in nature and design. Both are applicable in a ToC. In some ToC models, this is described as the ‘purpose’.

¹⁹⁶ Taplin, Dana H., Hel ne Clark, Eoin Collins, and David C. Colby. "Theory of change." 2.

¹⁹⁷ Davies, Rick. "Representing theories of change: Technical challenges with evaluation consequences." 439.

¹⁹⁸ In-person research interview with Richard Robyns, 11 April 2025.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

Outcomes. Can be described as the ‘impact’ of activities or a consequence following an action. In this ToC model, *outcomes* are measured temporally, over short, intermediate and the long term. The top-level changes that result wholly or in part from the outcomes.²⁰⁰

Outputs. What is being delivered. Specified and deliberate actions/tasks/deliverables and processes.

Activities. Describes the programmes or work plans in place, including responsible or lead individuals, groups and agencies, that are expected to contribute to change.

Inputs. Refers to the resources and factors that a programme or project invests to achieve its objectives. May include; budget/money, time, staff, equipment, materials, technology and partners.

In addition to clear definitions of terms and diagrammatic representation, ToC have four key principles. The Canadian evaluation consultancy ‘Eval Academy’ define the principles as such; a ToC should be credible (based on insight and experience of different stakeholders), achievable (the required resources to achieve the change process must be available), supported (key stakeholders must have some level of involvement in defining the ToC) and crucially, a ToC must be testable (identifying clear indicators of achievement for each outcome which in turn will direct the necessary data captured to inform an evaluation).²⁰¹ When considering the NZCTVES, two of the four principles are present, one is unknown and one is absent. The strategy is credible and supported, based on insights, input and consideration from over sixteen Government agencies and (stated) involvement from academia, non-government organisations, iwi and community groups. Whether the strategy is achievable is a matter of perspective. The stated aim of the strategy is to work together “to prevent terrorism and violent extremism of all kinds in New Zealand”.²⁰² This is a worthwhile and admirable aim however unlikely to

²⁰⁰ Eval Academy (2022). *How to develop a Theory of Change for Evaluation*. Accessed at <https://www.evalacademy.com/articles/how-to-develop-a-theory-of-change-for-evaluation> on 01 June 2025

²⁰¹ Eval Academy (2022). *How to develop a Theory of Change for Evaluation*.

²⁰² Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand’s Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*.

succeed on both a macro and micro level. At the macro level, both the third-person singular and the present participle 'prevent' acknowledge an incomplete status, therefore the outcome of the aim can never be completed or achieved. More importantly, at the micro level, as discussed in Chapter one, there has not been the investment from the New Zealand Government required to achieve transformative change in countering terrorism and violent extremism "of all kinds."²⁰³ The principle absent from the NZCTVES is that it lacks the ability to be tested or evaluated.

To be fair to the NZCTVES authors', elements of inputs to a ToC are at least represented in some forms; the Strategy describes the vision (*protecting New Zealanders from terrorism and violent extremism of all kinds*), the nature of the risk and the framework for delivering the vision.²⁰⁴ However, there is confusion evidenced in both the strategy, workplans and implementation plans with regard to some of the syntax used. For example, the CT Strategy Implementation plan (2020) refers to key elements of Mohio, Mahi-Tahi, Whakahotaetae and Takatu pillars as 'goals' denoting an endstate²⁰⁵, but the workplans (2020 – 2024) refer to these as 'initiatives' denoting an activity underway, and the NZCTVES itself refers to the same passages of text as objectives denoting a form of outcome. While this may be viewed as semantics, the phrasing of the strategy and associated supporting elements must be clear, lest differing government agencies interpret the strategy in different ways leading to the potential for disjointed outcomes.

²⁰³ DPMC CTCC Chair, formal interview, 12 March 2025.

²⁰⁴ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*.

²⁰⁵ DPMC CT Implementation plan, OIA 2020/21-0753 accessed at <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-02/dpmc-roiar-oia-2020-21-0753-counter-terrorism-system-capability-review.pdf>

Furthermore, the only diagrammatic representations available with regards to the NZCTVES are operational level workplans²⁰⁶ and the 2020 CT Implementation plan.²⁰⁷ The diagram below represents an example of the diagrammatic releases offered by DPMC under OIA.

Figure 4. DPMC Counter-Terrorism Work Programme.²⁰⁸

Counter-Terrorism Work Programme 2022					
	CAPABILITY	INITIATIVES 2022	LEAD(S)	KEY MILESTONE(S)	DATE
CORE CAPABILITIES	Address the causes of violent extremism and promote social inclusion	- Policy Community Engagement Tool (Royal Commission of Inquiry Recommendation 38) - Coordination with Social Cohesion Programme and National Action Plan on Racism	DPMC	Ongoing – tool to be used for all public engagements on CT.	Ongoing
	Understand the threat environment, to inform prevention efforts	He Whenua Taurikura National Centre of Research Excellence (RCOI Rec 14)	MSD/MOJ	Ongoing – close agency engagement, incl. on PCVE Strategic Framework.	Ongoing
	Prevent and counter violent extremism (PCVE), to safeguard and build resilience in our communities	- PCVE Strategic Framework (RCOI Rec 4) - He Aranga Ake - PCVE strategic fund	DPMC	Cabinet agreement.	Sept 2022
	Detect and investigate threats, to enable effective preventive action	- Reporting and response mechanisms (RCOI Rec 12) - Indicators framework (RCOI Rec 13)	NZ Police	Programme operational.	Dec 2022
	Protect people and places, to keep them safe from harm	- CT legislative review (RCOI Rec 18) - Safer Communities Fund, tranche 3 - Designations framework review	DPMC / DIA	Establish strategic fund mechanisms.	Dec 2022
	Respond to incidents, to protect lives and support victims	CT Readiness Programme	MOJ	Ministerial agreement to phasing.	July 2022
ENABLING	Recover from terrorist incidents, to support a return to wellbeing	Support the welfare and recovery of victims, families, communities and organisations, and improve system preparedness.	DPMC	Programme operational from end of June 2022.	Ongoing
	Coordinate the system, to ensure our efforts are integrated, effective, efficient and reflect our values	- Counterterrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy refresh (RCOI Rec 4) - Enhanced central CT coordination / delivery capability	CTCC	Ongoing – monitored through CTCC and implementation of the RCOI.	Ongoing
	Collaborate and communicate, to enable us to work together as a nation to reduce the risk	- Advisory Group on Counter-Terrorism (RCOI Rec 7) - He Whenua Taurikura annual hui (RCOI Rec 16)	DPMC	Begin Strategy refresh (for completion in first half of 2023).	Dec 2022
			DPMC	To be scoped as part of consideration of new agency.	Dec 2022
			DPMC	Establish Advisory Group.	Dec 2022
			DPMC	Host annual hui.	Dec 2022

It is clear from reviewing the work plans, that the multiple parallel causal pathways as ascribed by Davies are absent, replaced by a simplified line diagram which fails to capture the connectivity or complexity between activities and outcomes. In doing so, the work plan oversimplifies the activities and outputs without clarifying the relationships between agencies and operational impact. While the CTCC and participating agencies can see on a page what activities are being undertaken, there is no underlying rigour or transparency interrogating the efficacy of the initiatives. The CT strategy implementation plan, while offering more detail in terms of linking the four pillars to outcomes and

²⁰⁶ DPMC workplans, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

²⁰⁷ DPMC CT Implementation plan, OIA 2020/21-0753 accessed at <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-02/dpmc-roiar-oia-2020-21-0753-counter-terrorism-system-capability-review.pdf>

²⁰⁸ DPMC workplans, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

responsible agencies, manages to confuse activities and outputs, while inserting a traffic light status system with no caveats or descriptors. (see below).

Figure 5. DPMC CT Strategy Implementation Plan 2020.²⁰⁹

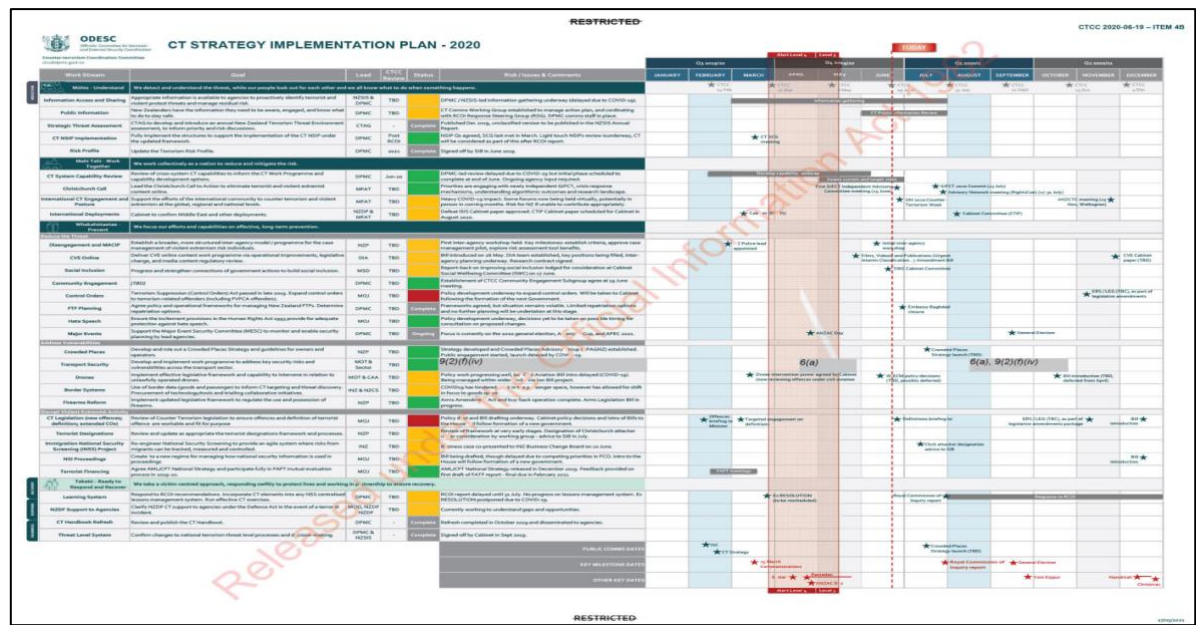
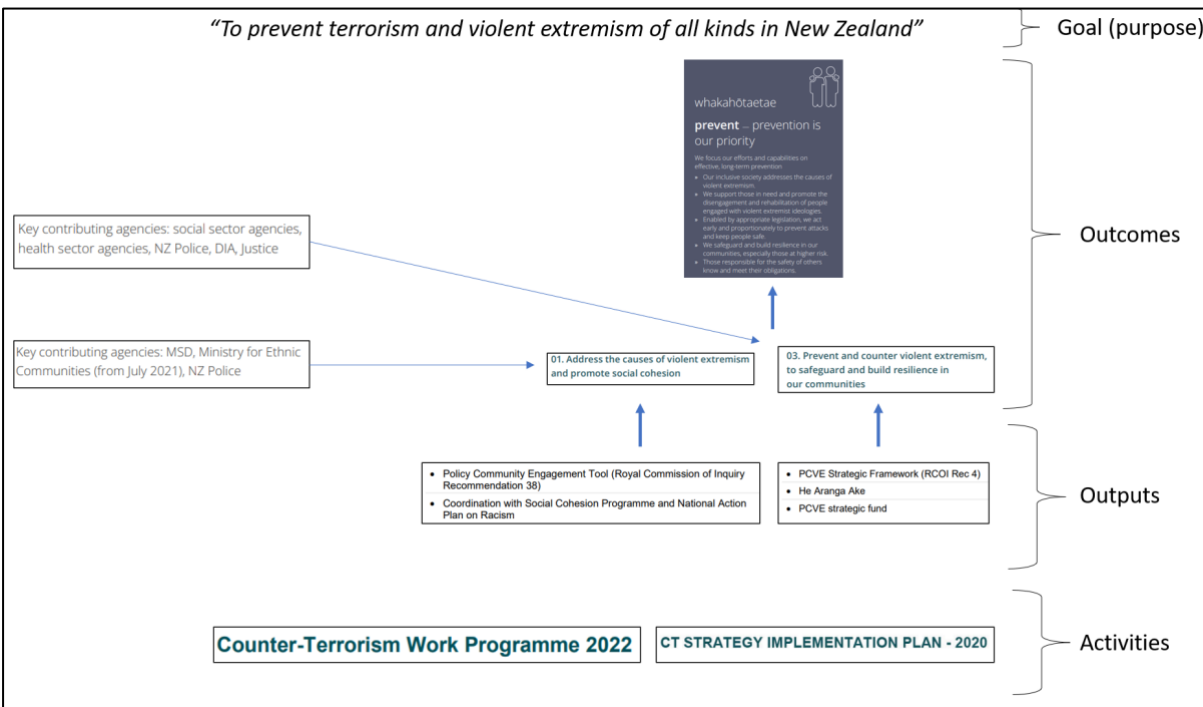


Figure 6: NZCTVES mock ToC (Author)



²⁰⁹ DPMC CT Implementation plan, OIA 2020/21-0753

Following on, I attempted to retrospectively devise a simplified ToC based on existing information accessed across the strategy itself, DPMC work plans and the CT Implementation Plan. This was done to envisage what a TOC might look like if applied to the current strategy. Following Taplin *et al.*, 'Theory of Change' parameters, I worked backwards from the stated goal²¹⁰, 'to prevent terrorism and violent extremism of all kinds', with the outcomes represented by two of the National Capabilities. However, it became quickly apparent that without measures of effectiveness or indicators of success (an evaluative model or framework built into the strategy), the difference between outputs and outcomes was too broad to illustrate the causal links and critically, whether the impact of the outputs were achieving the desired outcomes. Lacking indicators or measures meant there was no flexibility in the hypothetical ToC, to allow for either formative or summative evaluation, leaving no space for adaptive changes or the incorporation of new initiatives.

This was challenging, as with a dearth of data, the ToC presented as a blunt line diagram with no nuance, no assigned responsibility and no clear outcomes. Further, critical outcomes of a ToC were absent; components such as network analysis (how the agencies work as a 'system of systems'), participative network mapping (the interrelationships between agencies and their activities) and predictive modelling (are agencies achieving their directed tasks and activities) were unable to be generated.

Taplin *et al.*, discuss a further addition to a ToC, coupling monitoring with evaluation²¹¹ which allows for design improvement, real-time understanding of the strategy and evidence as to whether scaling of initiatives is required. Monitoring is evidenced in practise – via regular meetings of the CTCC –

²¹⁰ Taplin, Dana H., Heléne Clark, Eoin Collins, and David C. Colby. "Theory of change." *Technical papers: a series of papers to support development of theories of change based on practice in the field*. 2.

²¹¹ Ibid, 4.

however the associated evaluation is not evidenced. It is also not known to what level or indeed whether individual agencies monitor their own progress within their own areas of responsibility. A properly designed and considered ToC should theoretically give agencies an understanding of their relationships with other contributing partners, who has primacy and responsibility for certain actions and outcomes, accompanied with evaluation measures and indicators that transform the ToC from a staid document into a dynamic and adaptive guiding principle for change. Although outside the scope of this research, it is recommended that whenever, if ever, the NZCTVES is reviewed, updated or re-written, a ToC is one of the first actions undertaken before pen is put to paper on any CT and PCVE strategy amendments. As noted in the epilogue of this thesis, a new CT strategy has now been published (which occurred after the completion of this research). There is no evidence that any consideration has been given to evaluation or that any TOC has been contemplated.

In summary, by not engaging in a ToC following the events of 15 March, from the outset agencies responsible for delivering on the NZCTVES lacked the rigour of a formal and structured process with which to identify cause and effect, understand and interrogate the relationships between inputs, outputs and outcomes, monitor, critically evaluate and evolve the strategy through exploration of parallel approaches. This has resulted in an inability to properly evaluate, with an outcome that is unable to provide fidelity that our CT strategy is working and fit for purpose, while missing potential opportunities and avenues to evolve. The next part of this chapter investigates a select number of the plethora of evaluation models and approaches available in both the public and private sector, with a view to determining the methodological approach to sound evaluation that may be best employed towards evaluating the NZCTVES.

At the macro level, Filgueiras and Queiroz make a working assumption that evaluating policy and strategy is not only a managerial mechanism but rather a consideration of what and how to evaluate

(chosen methodologies), and what results will be achieved.²¹² Furthermore, programme evaluation will involve competing priorities, worldviews, available technologies (data collection and analysis) and capacities not always available to the evaluators.²¹³ This is important to note early, as objectivity of evaluation is critical, especially when considering that the National Security strategy and CT strategy post-2019, were “of a time and a place” – implicit reference to the political, cultural and social context and environment at the time.²¹⁴ Therefore, a robust approach to evaluation is an inherent component of a robust strategy. As Filgueiras and Queiroz write, institutional autonomy in evaluation creates the conditions for accountability and effectiveness²¹⁵ – the NZCTVES evaluation model must survive interference from the political machinations inherent in the New Zealand system of government; agenda, bias, political stance and the revolving three-year election cycle – while being agile enough to respond to changes, both politically and in the operating environment.

An additional consideration at the macro through micro levels, is to ask the question: what type of evaluation is suitable for the NZCTVES? *The Magenta Book* offers three main options; process evaluations which considers what can be learned from how the intervention was delivered²¹⁶; impact evaluation, which asks what difference an intervention has made²¹⁷, and; value-for-money evaluation, which looks at whether the intervention is a good use of resources.²¹⁸ A process evaluation of the NZCTVES would likely require a longitudinal study, utilising qualitative surveys and questionnaires of both public and private sectors including intelligence and security practitioners as well as members of the public. These findings would likely be subjective in nature, although using some quantitative

²¹² Filgueiras, Fernando, and Lúcia de Fátima Nascimento Queiroz. *"The governance of public policy evaluation systems: policy effectiveness and accountability."* Organizações & Sociedade 28 (2021): 208

²¹³ Ibid, 209

²¹⁴ DPMC CTCC Chair, formal interview, 12 March 2025.

²¹⁵ Filgueiras, Fernando, and Lúcia de Fátima Nascimento Queiroz. *"The governance of public policy evaluation systems: policy effectiveness and accountability."* 209.

²¹⁶ *The Magenta Book*. (2020): pp 14-15

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

administrative data may provide more objective data²¹⁹ with which to analyse. An impact evaluation will similarly involve an extended timeframe, analysing measurable achievements seeking to address attribution of any changes, employing both qualitative and quantitative analysis. An evaluation model for the NZCTVES will need to incorporate elements of both *process* and *impact* due to the nature of how the strategy is written, and in order to identify outcomes that will lead to enduring adaptive and flexible implementation and action. For the purposes of this study, a value-for-money evaluation was discounted as this evaluation typology is assessed as unable to assist in broadly assessing the strategy in full. However, some elements of fiscal evaluation will be incorporated.

At the micro or operating level, Stufflebeam writes that evaluation approaches allows programme managers to legitimise and strengthen approaches that incorporate sound principles of evaluation while discrediting those that do not.²²⁰ He further defines programme evaluation as “a study designed and conducted to assist some audience to assess an object’s merit and worth”.²²¹ This working definition fits the gap found in the NZCTVES – largely we trust that the strategy has merit and works but lacking programme evaluation, we cannot be sure. If we cannot be sure, we cannot improve or evolve as this only occurs when “the knowledge generated by evaluation are incorporated into rules, habits and organisational cultures”.²²²

For the purposes of this thesis, a comparative analysis of over a dozen evaluation models and associated academic critique was undertaken, with which to determine the key principles and factors associated with effective evaluation models. Noted early, Stufflebeam identifies a key difference between the phrasing evaluation *approach* versus evaluation *model*, writing that some academics have

²¹⁹ *The Magenta Book*. (2020): 15.

²²⁰ Stufflebeam, Daniel. “Evaluation models.” *New directions for evaluation* 2001, no. 89 (2001): 09

²²¹ *Ibid*, 11.

²²² Filgueiras, Fernando, and Lúcia de Fátima Nascimento Queiroz. “The governance of public policy evaluation systems: policy effectiveness and accountability.” 210.

found using the term 'model' too demanding to cover their published ideas about programme evaluations.²²³ I prefer to use the term 'model' as it denotes a specific and moderated process that can be applied directly to the NZCTVES, as opposed to 'approach' which I deem too open-ended, subject to a lack of control and ultimately too ambiguous to support an effective evaluation of an agile and dynamic counter terrorism and violent extremism strategy.

Writing in *New Directions for Evaluation*, Stufflebeam analyses 22 different evaluation approaches.²²⁴ His methodology involved sorting each approach into one of four categories; pseudo evaluations, questions and/or method oriented, improvement/accountability and social agenda/advocacy.²²⁵ Each category of approach was then characterised by ten descriptors including; the main cues set to evaluate, sources of questions addressed, key considerations in determining when to use which approach, alongside strengths and weaknesses.²²⁶ Stufflebeam's findings were compared against Lee and Whitford's study on Government effectiveness, specifically 'levels of analysis', perception versus objective measures, and the development of measurement criteria using sets of independent data and variables.²²⁷ The result, is a methodologically sound starting point that I can use to set the basis of my evaluative model, including functional components of multiple approaches leading to a bespoke hybrid model (mixed-methods). The chosen characteristics and comparative analysis are explained in the paragraphs below.

From the outset, I rejected evaluation models that would be characterised as 'pseudo evaluations' – that is to say, an evaluation model that utilises bad practise. The primary characteristic of a pseudo

²²³ Stufflebeam, 9.

²²⁴ Ibid, 11.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Lee, Soo-Young, and Andrew B. Whitford. "Government effectiveness in comparative perspective." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis* 11, no. 2 (2009): 249-281.

evaluation is that they are often motivated by political objectives, seeking to provide unwarranted claims of achievement, inaccurate or agenda-based and biased information.²²⁸ In the context of the NZCTVES, this presents a fine line to balance. On one hand, maintaining the trust and confidence of the New Zealand public is a critical facet of politics and a key objective of the New Zealand Government of the day. Rightly, due to operational security requirements some information should be contained to 'need-to-know', lest it give nefarious and bad actors, including terrorists, an advantage in identifying and exploiting vulnerabilities and gaps in our national security system. To that end, total transparency is neither desired nor possible to achieve.

On the other hand, offering an inaccurate picture of the domestic terrorism and violent extremism landscape within New Zealand and our ability to effectively counter it, may undermine both trust and confidence and operational effectiveness, presenting a dilemma for intelligence and security agencies and ultimately the government. If an evaluation model were to present biased information, it would run the risk of misleading decision-makers, discredit government agencies and lower overall confidence.²²⁹ This effect could be mitigated through existing legislation, namely the Intelligence and Security Act 2017 and the Protective Security Requirements (PSR), which balances national security with individual rights and democratic principles including the 'need to know'.²³⁰ Specifically, the Act directs the Inspector-General under section 158, (1), to undertake either directed or proactive reviews of the intelligence and security agency ensuring compliance with New Zealand law, including human rights law.²³¹ If the Inspector General determined it was in the public interest and there was a genuine

²²⁸ Stufflebeam, 13.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Parliamentary Council Office, Te Tari Tohutohu Paremata. (2017). *Intelligence and Security Act*. Accessed at <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2017/0010/latest/DLM6920823.html> 21 July 2025.

²³¹ Ibid.

‘need to know’ regarding the evaluated state of the NZCTVES, then they would be able to review and release this information as required.

Reviewing Stufflebeam’s monograph, I was able to further discount certain aspects of evaluation approach due to a number of reasons. These included elements of ‘questions- and methods-oriented evaluation’²³² – which were too narrow in scope; experimental testing²³³ – not applicable in evaluating a system holistically, nor is it able to assess the particulars of a programme’s success; cost-benefit analysis²³⁴ – largely quantitative and ignores qualitative reasoning, and; Clarification Hearing²³⁵ – essentially putting a programme on trial, with role players arguing a programme had failed or succeeded; this approach was deemed only marginal in relevance to programme evaluation.²³⁶

However, there were nuggets of practicality in mostly all of Stufflebeam’s assessed evaluation approaches. The approaches deemed closest to most effective evaluation of the NZCTVES, included elements of ‘Objectives-based Studies’²³⁷, ‘Outcome Evaluation as Value-Added Assessment’²³⁸, and ‘Case Study Evaluations’²³⁹. Ultimately, due to the multitude of characteristics that could not be neatly defined under one evaluation approach, I settled on a Mixed Methods Research approach (MMR), similar in description to Brady’s CONTEST Mixed-Methods Research Design.

An MMR approach employs both quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate a programme, involving the collection and analysis of numerical and non-numerical data to gain insights into a

²³² Stufflebeam, 16

²³³ Ibid, 26

²³⁴ Ibid, 31

²³⁵ Ibid, 33

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid, 17

²³⁸ Ibid, 22

²³⁹ Ibid, 34.

particular phenomenon or issue.²⁴⁰ Benefits include the ability to research and evaluate complex and multidimensional areas and the provision of “rich and in-depth data”²⁴¹ that helps make sense of cultural, organisational and societal context, while providing numerical data that identifies relationships and patterns – a series of requirements to which the NZCTVES certainly fits.

When considering the epistemological ‘fit’, another aspect that encourages the use of an MMR model to evaluate the NZCTVES is that it incorporates multiple methods to address research questions as opposed to one strict form of research methodology, such as positivism for example. Adopting elements of a post-positivism approach, MMR allows subjectivity through engagement with research participants to offer alternate outcomes to that of a strictly quantitative approach.²⁴² Utilising the contrasting elements of the interpretivist and constructivist paradigm, allows the evaluation model to acknowledge the social phenomenon of terrorism (interpretivist) and the inherent realities of human interaction with the real world (constructivist).²⁴³ The ultimate outcome, is a methodological approach to the evaluation model of pragmatism, simply oriented to ‘what works.’²⁴⁴ This approach offers potential success in the form of interpreting and evaluating the NZCTVES, combining quantitative methods that can determine indicators, trends and relationships,²⁴⁵ while allowing a form of sensitivity using qualitative methods that will help explore the logical flow of the NZCTVES (or identify logic gaps) and to better understand the processes leading to change options and outcomes.

²⁴⁰ Chandrakumar, Sathiyakumar, and Ramakrishnan Vivek. "A critical review of the mixed method application and its criticism." *Social work and education* 10, no. 2 (2023): 243.

²⁴¹ *Ibid*, 243.

²⁴² Dawadi, Saraswati, Sagun Shrestha, and Ram A. Giri. "Mixed-methods research: A discussion on its types, challenges, and criticisms." *Journal of Practical Studies in Education* 2, no. 2 (2021): 26.

²⁴³ *Ibid*.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 26

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 28.

Critics of the MMR approach state that it can be time-consuming and resource-intensive²⁴⁶, and that the rigorous application required²⁴⁷ can lead to breadth over depth with regards to its findings. A suggested mitigation is to approach the evaluation sequentially, using quantitative data to inform qualitative exploration or using qualitative data to develop quantitative measures.²⁴⁸ However, a sequential approach may lead to an additional problem. The findings obtained from a survey may influence the second (an interview as an example).²⁴⁹ An additional critique of MMR asks whether or not the findings of the data will be incommensurable with one another – that is to say that the quantitative and qualitative findings cannot be assessed to the same standard leading to contradictory findings.²⁵⁰ The overarching critique of MMR, is that it combines fundamentally opposing philosophical epistemological approaches – a quantitative approach guided by positivism where the data and operating realities are static and a qualitative approach guided by interpretivism where the evaluation is set in a dynamic reality.²⁵¹ Dawadi *et al.*, summarise these critiques and challenges as thus; “mixing methods is not a solution in itself, it might also create some problems”.²⁵²

Given the complex nature of evaluating the NZCTVES, (the number of agencies involved, and the public-private sector mix as two examples), an MMR approach is still deemed the most prudent and effective option. As an example, NC04 – *Detect and investigate threats, to enable effective prevention action* – incorporates a directed output to conduct security intelligence and criminal investigations which could be measured quantitatively; as well as a directed output to ‘understand the capabilities and intentions of those with terrorist and violent extremist ideologies’ – an almost exclusively

²⁴⁶ Sathiyakumar and Vivek, 244.

²⁴⁷ Fàbregues, Sergi, Elsa Lucia Escalante-Barrios, Sinem Toraman Turk, Timothy C. Guetterman, and Michael D. Feters. "Assessing quality in mixed methods research: concepts, frameworks, and criteria." In *Handbook of mixed methods research in business and management*, p 83. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2023.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Dawadi *et al.*, 32.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 33.

²⁵² Ibid, 32.

qualitative output.²⁵³ Ultimately, as the evaluation model designer, having weighed the benefit and opposite perspectives of evaluation design, my rationale is that MMR offers evaluation value from both a quantitative and qualitative approach and that the NZCTVES is too complex to draw from one method alone. An option explored in the Chapter five, *Evaluation design*, is to employ two temporally different stages of evaluation contained within the one overall model – the first, a (relatively) shorter and more defined evaluation that seeks to provide concurrent findings leading to shorter-term change, and the second, a longitudinal evaluation with greater depth leading to enduring outcomes.

Having decided on an MMR evaluation process, the following challenges unfold regarding the development of an MMR evaluation design; defining the evaluation type (process evaluation, impact/outcome evaluation, economic evaluation or all three),²⁵⁴ priority (more emphasis on qualitative analysis or quantitative data or equal),²⁵⁵ recognising the types of data required and from where and how to source,²⁵⁶ phasing (determining a single, sequential or concurrent evaluation),²⁵⁷ identifying performance measures and indicators,²⁵⁸ determining the point of integration²⁵⁹ and finally, answering the question of attribution (have any changes, if achieved, been caused by delivery of the NZCTVES), all the while ensuring that the principles of evaluation are adhered to; legitimacy, ownership, partnership, validity, reliability, fit for purpose, unbiased and transparent²⁶⁰. The MMR design for the NZCTVES will be explained and discussed in Chapter five.

²⁵³ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*.

²⁵⁴ Bellasio *et al.*, "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): 27.

²⁵⁵ Dawadi *et al.*, 28

²⁵⁶ Lee, Soo-Young, and Andrew B. Whitford, 256

²⁵⁷ Nagpal, Disha, Ida Kornerup, and Monica P. Gibson. "Mixed-method research: a basic understanding." *CODS-Journal of Dentistry* 12, no. 1 (2021): 12-15.

²⁵⁸ Lee, Soo-Young, and Andrew B. Whitford, 256

²⁵⁹ Nagpal, Disha, Ida Kornerup, and Monica P. Gibson, 12

²⁶⁰ Robyns, Richard (2025). Formal interview conducted 11 April 2025.

Chapter four: *Brady and RAND*

Having determined the most appropriate evaluation method by analysing and considering the merits of multiple evaluative approaches is a MMR approach, one additional point of comparison remains. This chapter seeks to undertake a comparative analysis of the approaches taken by academic, Dr Erika Brady in her MMR approach to the British CT strategy, CONTEST, and that of the private non-profit company RAND, in their analysis of the Netherlands CT strategy with a secondary focus on other Western nations' evaluation of CT and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) policies.²⁶¹ Supporting evidence is corroborated from *The Magenta Book*, the publication mentioned toward the conclusion of Chapter one. From this comparative analysis, relative strengths and opportunities for application in the New Zealand context can be determined.

Similar to the four pillars of NZCTVES, CONTEST (COuNter Terrorism Strategy - the United Kingdom's Counter-Terrorism equivalent), has four main workstreams, *Prevent, Pursue, Protect* and *Prepare*.²⁶² First published in 2011, with updates in 2018 and 2023, CONTEST seeks to; stop people becoming or supporting terrorism; stop terrorist attacks from happening; strengthen existing protections against terrorist attacks and to minimise the risk of a terrorist attack.²⁶³ In the United Kingdom CONTEST is the responsibility of a lead government agency - the Home Office. Comparable to the multi-agency and public/private engagement across the NZCTVES, CONTEST was developed and is continually supported with input from police, the security and intelligence agencies, frontline practitioners, victims of terrorism and their families, the private sector, academics, community leaders, international partners and the public.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Bellasio *et al.*, "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018 (2018)

²⁶² Brady, Erika. "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." 159.

²⁶³ United Kingdom Government. (2023). Accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest-2023> 01 July 2025.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

CONTEST differs from the NZCTVES in a number of areas, and this has been critiqued thoroughly by academics (see *Battersby et al., 2020*) and so will not be re-litigated. However, one short example illuminates the gulf between New Zealand and Five Eyes partners' strategies. Unlike the NZCTVES, CONTEST actively names targeted terrorist groups and actors throughout the document - the right-wing terrorist group *National Action* is listed alongside Daesh (ISIL) and the Irish Republican Army (IRA).²⁶⁵ The reasons as to why the NZCTVES does not explicitly do so are unknown, perhaps because the New Zealand Police maintain and publish the Designated Terrorist List which names both individuals and groups.²⁶⁶ However, this does highlight a key difference. While still a strategic-level document, CONTEST appears to contain specificity and detail lacking in the NZCTVES,²⁶⁷ evidence of a strategy designed to evolve, to remain agile, to tolerate change and containing tasks to be delivered (and measured) against. In short, CONTEST was written with evaluation in mind, following a ToC.

That being said, CONTEST does not escape scrutiny either. Brady writes that UK Government declaration of 'satisfaction' with regard to its investment in counter terrorism work is not unbiased "presented from the Government's perspective... it provides no metrics as to why it is 'satisfied'... without any data behind it to back up that claim, it rings quite hollow".²⁶⁸ Brady critique is a reference to Stufflebeam's observation of 'Politically Controlled Studies' wherein "persons holding or seeking authority may present unwarranted claims about their achievements."²⁶⁹ Dissatisfied with this, Brady's

²⁶⁵ Brady, Erika. "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." 8.

²⁶⁶ New Zealand Police (2025). *Designated individuals and organisations*. Accessed at <https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/designated-entities-14-mar-2025.pdf> 20 July 2025.

²⁶⁷ Battersby, *et al.*, "New Zealand's counter-terrorism strategy: A critical assessment." pp 5-6.

²⁶⁸ Brady, Erika. "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." 8

²⁶⁹ Stufflebeam, Daniel. "Evaluation models." *New directions for evaluation* 2001, no. 89 (2001): 13.

research sought to develop an “independent and effective methodological approach to assess the effectiveness of policy without the burden of a government-biased agenda.”²⁷⁰

Brady’s research spanned years, inclusive of public, private and government surveys, closed and open questionnaires, FOIA (Freedom Of Information Act) requests, official government reports, and quantitative and qualitative approaches.²⁷¹ Analysing Brady’s thesis, there are several key differences that set her research apart from my application in the New Zealand context as well as several contextual nuggets that proved useful. Brady’s research involved two phases; firstly, a longitudinal study understanding themes and patterns of counter-terrorism policies under CONTEST.²⁷² The findings of phase one allowed her to develop an analytical model in phase two.²⁷³ A longitudinal study is out of scope for my research, focusing on developing an evaluation model rather than evaluating the NZCTVES itself. Brady’s phase one work led to an evaluation design type that is described as an *ex-post* evaluation²⁷⁴ – a retrospective assessment from the first published 2011 version of CONTEST through to the 2018 updated release. This is informative for the purposes of my research in terms of discounting an evaluation typology. The NZCTVES is ongoing - it has been implemented but yet to be completed. This leads me towards an *embedded* model²⁷⁵ design, that allows for evaluation of processes that are enduring while not ignoring early impacts as a result of intervention(s).

²⁷⁰ Brady, Erika. "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." 9

²⁷¹ Brady, Erika. "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." PhD diss., University of St Andrews, 2021. Ch 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

²⁷² Ibid, 36.

²⁷³ Ibid, 128.

²⁷⁴ Bellasio *et al.*, "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): 50

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

A key insight interpreted from Brady's work is realising objectivity in exclusivity is not achievable.²⁷⁶ Subjectivity will be apparent throughout the application of an evaluation model. This becomes important when considering how to represent the findings and balancing subjective and likely qualitative 'perception' of a strategy's efficacy and quantitative elements of overall 'performance' of the strategy.²⁷⁷ For her model, Brady adopted a visual traffic-light representation, indicating which elements of CONTEST are performing more or less well.²⁷⁸ Alongside being internationally recognised as a simple way of distinguishing performance rating, a traffic-light system aligns with what is already being used by DPMC with regards to the status of the CT strategy implementation plan²⁷⁹ and so is deemed a suitable potential way of representing NZCTVES performance when considering evaluation outputs.

The traffic-light system was predicated on a one to five scoring scale of six thematic categories of evaluation performance; Assessment, Learning, Transparency, Perceptions, Events and Goals.²⁸⁰ Briefly, Assessment, Learning and Transparency are connected through the themes of Oversight and Analysis,²⁸¹ (what is working and what isn't, while being as open and honest about it as is feasible under national security); Perception asks whether the public, the media and government practitioners themselves consider the strategy positively²⁸²; Events compares CT events across three categories,

²⁷⁶ Brady, "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." 119.

²⁷⁷ Brady, "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." 118.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (2020). *CT Implementation Plan – 2020*. Accessed at <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-02/dpmc-roiar-oia-2020-21-0753-counter-terrorism-system-capability-review.pdf> 01 July 2025.

²⁸⁰ Brady, "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." 117

²⁸¹ Ibid, 124.

²⁸² Ibid, 131.

successful, failed and foiled,²⁸³ and Goals considers whether or not the UK Government has met its stated CT and PCVE goals.²⁸⁴

For the NZCTVES evaluation model, I have established different criteria (based on impact and process evaluation), however, Brady's characteristics of 'assessment' (inclusive of lessons learned), 'transparency' and 'goals' have cross-over to the NZCTVES evaluation model. 'Events' is considered too binary and as discussed in Chapter one, while New Zealand has not avoided terrorism events, the frequency of attacks is too low to make this measure feasible and may lead to inaccurate findings and a false sense that terrorism does not exist in New Zealand. Similar, 'perception' was considered but has been discounted as a measure due to the scale and scope of this research. However, what is particularly useful and relevant from analysing Brady's themes, is her use of a multi-level approach to evaluation. The six thematic categories represent the micro level of the model,²⁸⁵ the meso-level analyses the strategy sub-levels (the 4 Ps) through aggregation of the scores of the six categories per workstream,²⁸⁶ while at the macro level Brady considers whether the over-arching aim of CONTEST (*to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence*) has been met.²⁸⁷ As it comparably relates to the NZCTVES, the micro level is the seven national and two enabling capabilities, the meso-level is represented by the four pillars and the macro level can be represented by the stated vision of the strategy; *Bringing our nation together to protect all New Zealanders from terrorism and violent extremism of all kinds*. I have judged that the micro-level (national and enabling capabilities), to be the most appropriate level at which to evaluate the NZCTVES.

²⁸³ Brady, "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." 126.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Brady, "Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK." 128.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 129.

In contrast to Brady's thesis where she was the sole researcher, the RAND study incorporated a team approach, with three primary focus areas; a targeted literature review of CT evaluation practise from 2013 onwards; the development of an analytical framework to assess evaluations, and; a report on findings, results and recommendations stemming from the study of CT and PCVE evaluations.²⁸⁸ Dutch CT policy in the 21st century was "first formulated into a coherent strategy" in 2011, with a four year National Counterterrorism Strategy (*Nationale Contraterrorismestrategie*).²⁸⁹ The 2011 strategy intentionally expanded Dutch CT and PCVE from an inherently security-focused policy to one inclusive of both security and society-based measures.²⁹⁰ Unlike the NZCTVES, the Dutch strategy was designed with evaluation in mind, allowing for a second iteration, over the period 2016-2020. The revised second version built on criticisms and lessons learnt from the first, identifying five focus areas, somewhat similar to CONTEST; Procure – the timely collection and analysis of threats; Prevent – the prevention, disruption of terrorist attacks before they occur; Protect – the physical and virtual protection of people, property and places; Prepare – preparation for terrorist attacks and their consequences, and; Pursue – law enforcement in the face of extremism and terrorism.²⁹¹

The RAND study was particularly useful given its meta-approach – an evaluation of evaluation approaches. At the macro level, one of their key findings mirrored one of my own with regard to the NZCTVES: the increase in CT and PCVE programmes and policies across Western countries combined with the pace of implementation (often encouraged and enforced from political imperative), has resulted in programmes rarely evaluated and often designed based on principled yet untested assumptions.²⁹² The design aspect just mentioned becomes important in the NZCTVES evaluation

²⁸⁸ Bellasio *et al.*, "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): x.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 16

²⁹⁰ *Ibid*.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, pp 16-17.

²⁹² *Ibid*, 18.

model, as a key theme identified by RAND is that it is not just outputs and outcomes that should be evaluated but so too the initiative, programme and/or strategy *design* alongside the implementation.²⁹³

If a strategy or policy design is implemented with evaluation in mind, then formative evaluation is possible. Formative evaluation allows for data to permit successive adaptations,²⁹⁴ acknowledging inherent evidence-based flexibility in the programme or strategy. Formative evaluations guide decision-making, making use of both quantitative and qualitative analysis of data, taking a proactive stance in support of the programme or strategy.²⁹⁵ For the purposes of my research, formative evaluation goes hand in hand with an embedded approach (discussed above in the Brady segment), wherein; Formative evaluation is the *purpose* or *function* of the evaluation (to provide ongoing feedback for improvement), while an embedded evaluation is the *approach* or *method* that describes how the evaluation activities are integrated within a program or process. However, the NZCTVES appears not to be designed or written with evaluation in mind, by default leading towards a summative evaluation which is inherently retrospective and reactive. Largely outcome focussed, summative evaluation allows for accountability and determining success or failure but does not allow for quality assurance or change outside of major strategic divergence from initial policy. Summative findings are best aligned with the ex-post evaluation method, akin to Brady's work with CONTEST. As discussed earlier, my preference is to conduct an embedded evaluation combined with a formative purpose. The challenge lies in trying to fit this approach within a construct (the strategy), that was not designed with evaluation in mind.

²⁹³ Bellasio *et al.*, "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): 23.

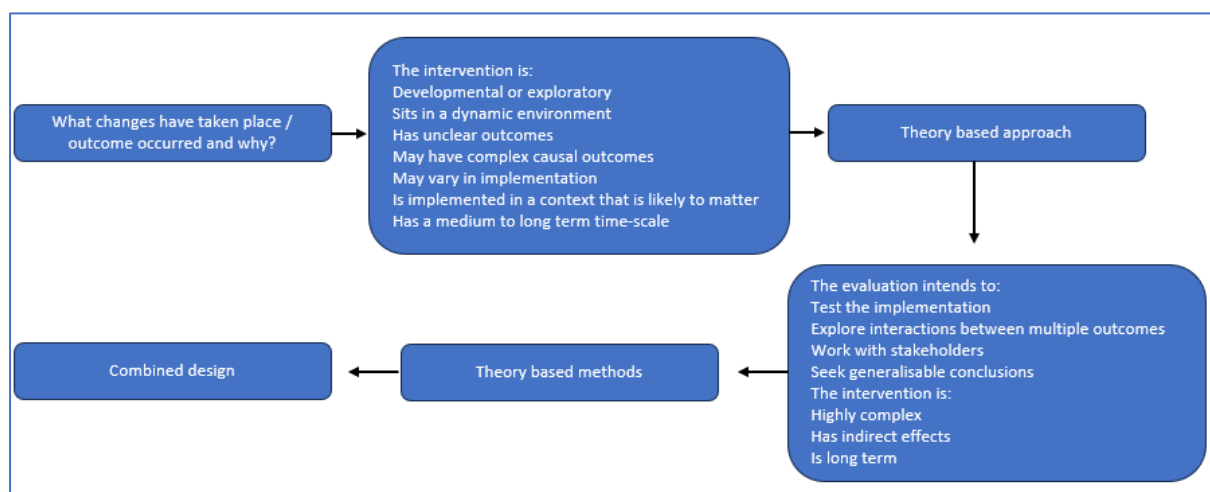
²⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 25.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid*.

Another theme brought up in the RAND study, (and worthy of consideration in the NZCTVES evaluation model), regards attributing additionality. This is a form of *impact evaluation* (as mentioned in Chapter three), where the focus looks at what has happened after an intervention implementation²⁹⁶ – in this case what was the impact following the release of the strategy. This is of critical importance, yet will be challenging to evaluate, as the provision of evidence (upon final data analysis) as to whether change had occurred after the intervention is based upon pre-initiative baseline. Pre-15 March, there was no CT or PCVE strategy in place with which to compare the NZCTVES with. This will require an element of subjectivity to the final analysis to be built into - and allowed for - in the evaluation model. Attribution additionality will be useful when evaluating the National and Enabling capabilities with arguably some form of quantifiable outputs for specific agencies such as; NC02. *Understand the threat environment, to inform prevention efforts* and NC05. *Detect and investigate threats, to enable effective prevention action.*²⁹⁷

The flow chart below describes the relationship between impact evaluation and an MMR design.²⁹⁸

Figure 7: Impact evaluation relationship with MMR (UK Govt)



²⁹⁶ Bellasio et al., "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): 50

²⁹⁷ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20.

²⁹⁸ *The Magenta Book*, 33

A theory-based approach is designed to draw conclusions regarding an intervention; causal linkages, supported by strong evidence that will rule out alternate influences.²⁹⁹ Stakeholders will include; New Zealand government agencies, intelligence, security and police practitioners, NGOs, iwi and community members, academics and the private sector – essentially the same ‘customers’ that the NZCTVES is directed at and undertaken by.

An accompanying methodological approach to impact evaluation is to combine attribution with a longitudinal evaluation design which are generally specific to PCVE interventions focussed on “capacity building activities designed to increase individual and group-level resilience to violent extremist rhetoric or activities”.³⁰⁰ These principles are part of a *process evaluation* typology (as discussed in Chapter three), where questions such as; what has worked well or less well and why; what could be improved, and; how has the context influenced delivery.³⁰¹ This would allow for an evaluation of more qualitative national capabilities such as NC01. *Address the cause of violent extremism and promote social cohesion* and *Prevent and counter violent extremism, to safeguard and build resilience in our communities*.³⁰² Importantly, a process evaluation is consistent with a theory-based approach, similar to that of an impact evaluation.³⁰³ Mutually supportive of one another, the combination of typologies will seek to address gaps found in qualitative analysis by using quantitative data and vice versa.

In contrast to Brady’s bespoke (and self-admittedly subjective)³⁰⁴ scoring of categories of evaluation, all of the evaluations analysed by RAND were given ratings on the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale

²⁹⁹ *The Magenta Book*, 36.

³⁰⁰ Bellasio *et al.*, “Counterterrorism evaluation.” (2018): 50

³⁰¹ *The Magenta Book*, 15.

³⁰² Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand’s Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20.

³⁰³ *The Magenta Book*, 43.

³⁰⁴ Brady, “Assessing counter-terrorism strategies through a mixed methods research: the case of CONTEST in the UK.” 117.

(MSMS) with both an attributional evaluation design and a longitudinal evaluation design (both preferred options to take to the evaluation model of the NZCTVES) measuring low on the MSMS. The MSMS is a five-point scale designed to measure rigour and internal validity of an evaluation, specifically with regard to causal hypotheses.³⁰⁵ Causal hypotheses in CT and PCVE strategies are probabilistic (vice deterministic), as there are multiple causes and multiple effects.³⁰⁶ As a hypothetical example, a PCVE hypothesis may state: *education packages in primary and secondary schools in the North Island causes a decrease in youth radicalisation numbers*. This hypothesis could be tested by comparing North Island youth radicalisation rates with that of the South Island (assuming such data existed), however this correlational design would not answer unambiguously that the hypothesis, and therefore the intervention, is correct. There are multiple other factors at play. The MSMS seeks to address this issue by assessing the *internal validity* of an evaluation, where the question; “does a change in X cause a change in Y” is answered.³⁰⁷ The five-point scale measures from level one, where the evaluation design fails to rule out threats to internal validity, while also failing to establish causal order, to level five; research that involves explicit randomisation into treatment and control groups.³⁰⁸

The key relevance for the NZCTVES evaluation model is that a low MSMS score, does not necessarily negate the value of the findings of causality but rather that careful articulation and description must accompany any evaluation based on low MSMS scores. The RAND researchers note that experimental evaluation designs have their shortcomings and, in some cases and contexts, are not achievable or desirable.³⁰⁹ This further supports the use of a theory-based evaluation based on impact and process typologies. Having reviewed and analysed the research of Brady and RAND authors in considerable

³⁰⁵ Farrington, David P., Doris Layton MacKenzie, Lawrence W. Sherman, and Brandon C. Welsh, eds. *Evidence-based crime prevention*. Routledge, 2003: 14.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid, 17.

³⁰⁹ Bellasio *et al.*, "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): 33.

detail, there are several characteristics, themes and limitations that will support my evaluation model design. The evaluation model will now be articulated and presented in the next chapter.

Chapter five: *Evaluation Design*

This chapter commences by examining the evaluable characteristics of the NZCTVES leading to the evaluation design. It achieves this by asking three primary questions; who, what and how. The 'who' and 'what' pertains to the targeted levels of intervention, types of activities and the implementors - agencies and groups to be evaluated and results attributed to. The 'how' is the central purpose of this thesis—the evaluation model—which is presented in part two of this chapter. In order to articulate the proposed evaluation model, I have broken the model down into composite groupings and evaluation typologies with associated notation describing each section in the model framework by key headings with explanation as to each components purpose and an explanation as to why this component was chosen. This provides the backdrop to the application of chosen evaluation typologies to the National and Enabling Capabilities and the overall model design.

The 'who', the 'what' and the 'how'

Similar to application of a ToC, before we consider what the evaluation model could look like, we must work backwards from considering who and what it is we're trying to evaluate. In my introduction chapter, I analysed the four pillars of the strategy – Mohio, Mahi tahi, Whakahotaetae and Takatu. These pillars contain aspirational, yet broad generalisations accompanied by limited word pictures expounding upon several initiatives which are ultimately not useful endstate(s) to evaluate against. More useful are the National and Enabling capabilities which detail specific activities to be undertaken to realise the fulfilment of the pillars stated aims. The exact commentary in the NZCTVES is thus; "Our capabilities are the things we need to have in place, and be able to do, to implement this strategy and deliver the vision."³¹⁰ Although the entire strategy is to be evaluated, the National and Enabling capabilities will likely present as the most evaluative factors of the strategy. Adopting a similar notion

³¹⁰ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20.

to Brady's levels of evaluation, the four pillars are represented at the meso-level and the capabilities as the micro-level of evaluation in the NZCTVES model.

What: Evaluable characteristics of the NZCTVES

The characteristics of the initiative are important to understand prior to implementing an evaluation design, as it ensures the evaluation meets the mark in terms of assessing what is being asked of it. It is important to note however, that the exclusion of an aim, goal, task, activity or direction in the initiative being evaluated, does not mean that it should be excluded from consideration in the evaluation model. As an example, (and discussed below in the 'who'), the NZCTVES is most detailed when articulating its expectations of government agencies. Communities, Iwi and Hapu, the private sector and local government are all expected to play a role in preventing and countering violent extremism,³¹¹ yet scant detail on how the government expects this to occur is provided in the strategy (62 total words for local government and 70 words for communities, Iwi and Hapu).³¹² However, that does not mean their role, their efforts and their activities should be excluded from evaluation. Rather, the onus is on the evaluation model to be robust and agile, (via its mixed methods design), so that if further detail and therefore further data becomes available, accurate attribution and evaluation can occur.

When considering the type of initiative being evaluated (in this case the entire NZCTVES strategy), Bellasio *et al.*, define strategy as; "A plan of action adopted officially by an organisation, institution or group of people designed to achieve long-term overall aims as regards a particular topic or issue area and whose implementation rests on a number of subordinated policies and programmes."³¹³ With

³¹¹ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 22.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Bellasio *et al.*, "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): 135.

regard to the NZCTVES, the subordinated policies and programmes are heralded under the four pillars and the National and Enabling Capabilities. The paragraphs below describe the characteristics of the strategy, including the typologies of extremism and terrorism countered, the levels of intervention, the types of activities, the groups of focus and the implementation approach. Importantly, the discussion below highlights the evaluable aspects of the strategy, 'what is being evaluated, 'who is being evaluated and 'how' the model proposes to achieve this.

What: Evaluating the threat and the risk.

Regarding the types of extremist ideology addressed by the strategy,³¹⁴ it is important to note that the NZCTVES talks in generalities when specifying the nature of the risk (and largely avoids stating the nature of the threat) other to than to provide broad generalisations over two pages.³¹⁵ The strategy provides limited examples of faith motivated extremism, mainly focusing on the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and identity extremism (predominantly white identity extremism as exemplified on 15 March). Political, and single-issue extremism are listed but not explained at all and cyber-enabled extremism was not mentioned but rather interpreted from statements such as; *The internet continues to be abused by violent extremists*, and *Violent extremists from across the ideological spectrum use the internet to recruit, share knowledge and plan attacks*.³¹⁶ Objectively, broad themes or generalisations at the strategic level allow subordinate agencies the freedom to employ mitigation measures of their choosing, based on their resourcing, priorities and mandate. The upshot for evaluation, is that radicalisation and deradicalisation are incredibly complex topics and a requisite amount of detail such as what the exact threat is, how it may evolve and permeate, and how the government expects the threat to be reduced and prevented (as per its direction on pages nine and 11 of the strategy) is not

³¹⁴ Bellasio *et al.*, "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): 135.

³¹⁵ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 06.

³¹⁶ *Ibid*, 07.

mentioned in the threat component. For this to occur, further analysis, inference and deduction drawn from the four pillars is required to understand the types of activities conducted and at which level these interventions are to occur.

What and who: Levels of intervention, types of activities and the implementors - agencies and groups to be evaluated

Drawn from OIA, limited interviews, and analysis of the NZCTVES, the following activities represent the best available information pertaining to the levels of intervention, (from systems level to community efforts), that may be evaluated. The settings of the level(s) of intervention have been ascertained by various government agencies in response to the 'direction' laid out across the NZCTVES, although again, these limitations are suggestive of an incomplete rationalisation of the risk and threat and instead represent an aspirational holistic approach wherein government agencies are left to determine where their interventions are best placed.

The main organisations or actors responsible for the implementation of the strategy are the 16 New Zealand government agencies mentioned explicitly in the strategy; the New Zealand Police, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the New Zealand Security and Intelligence Service (NZSIS), the Government Communication Security Bureau (GCSB), the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the Ministry of Ethnic Communities, the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), the Department of Corrections, the National Emergency Management Agency (including Civil Defence and Emergency Management), the New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS), the Ministry of Transport (MoT), the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Immigration New Zealand (INZ). In addition, the strategy states an expectation that New Zealand universities have a "key role in building...

understanding and leading constructive dialogue”³¹⁷ but it doesn’t direct who, why or how this is to be achieved.

At the systems level, activities implemented include; the adoption or modification of legislation,³¹⁸ policy and capability development,³¹⁹ Assistance to the Civil Power and Provision of a Public Service in an Emergency,³²⁰ secretariate support to the Collective Impact Board,³²¹ risk identification and mitigation (at the borders),³²² and information sharing and coordination across the National Security System.³²³ At the regional level, activities include; Monitoring of social cohesion,³²⁴ community engagement,³²⁵ and community resilience building.³²⁶ Finally, at the local level, activities include deradicalisation and disruption efforts within New Zealand communities.

Examining the strategy in detail, I have determined there are seven broad thematic areas under which the activities fall that can be evaluated; Educational, Capacity Building, Legal, Communications, Security and Intelligence, Policing and Military. It should be noted there is some overlap, as some activities do not fall neatly into one thematic area. Rather this presents multiple and concurrent lines of effort from a pan-societal and pan-government approach to countering terrorism and violent extremism. The assessed difficulty for agencies (and inherently for evaluation), is that these lines of effort are represented in a confused and inconsistent manner, over ten pages in the strategy. This leads

³¹⁷ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand’s Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 12.

³¹⁸ Ministry of Justice OIA email response dated 14 March 2025.

³¹⁹ New Zealand Ministry of Defence OIA email response dated 14 March 2025.

³²⁰ New Zealand Defence Force (2025). Ref OIA 2025-5275 release dated 19 March 2025

³²¹ Ministry of Social Development OIA email response dated 18 March 2025.

³²² New Zealand Customs Service (2025). Ref OIA 25-125 release dated 10 March 2025.

³²³ DPMC CTCC Chair, formal interview, 12 March 2025

³²⁴ Ministry of Social Development OIA response dated 18 March 2025.

³²⁵ Phone research interview Director of Ministerial Services, Ministry for Ethnic Communities interview dated 21 February 2025.

³²⁶ Ibid

to possibilities of duplication of effort, or possible gaps in our approach which the evaluation model will seek to identify.

A Five Eyes Insights paper published in 2024 by the NZSIS, discusses the concern of the radicalisation of minors (those under 25 years of age), and the rising prominence of young people and minors in counter-terrorism cases.³²⁷ The paper emphasises the importance of early intervention and the role of education and societal support, not only for young people vulnerable to radicalisation, but also parents, teachers and communities.³²⁸ The NZCTVES appears cognisant of this risk and directs; the research and understanding of terrorism and violent extremism through the establishment of a National Centre of Excellence³²⁹ (now defunct), and the research, assessment and reporting of strategic trends.³³⁰ The only other mentioned educational component is 'Te Raranga', where police staff are trained to recognise and record hate-motivated offences.³³¹

Linked to the education theme, capacity building is an area of relative strength in the NZCTVES (in terms of the amount of commentary devoted to the theme). Capacity building activities include; Te Raranga (aligning partner agencies to work towards reducing the harm caused by hate) and supporting at-risk groups to resist radicalisation,³³² the Christchurch Call to Action (seeking to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online)³³³ He Whenua Taurikura,³³⁴ 'Protecting Our Crowded Spaces from

³²⁷ New Zealand Security and Intelligence Service (2024). *Young people and violent extremism: a call for collective action*: 1. Accessed at <https://www.nzsis.govt.nz/assets/NZSIS-Documents/Young-People-and-violent-extremism-a-call-for-collective-action.pdf> 15 September, 2025.

³²⁸ Ibid, 7.

³²⁹ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 13.

³³⁰ Ibid, 20.

³³¹ New Zealand Police (2025). *Te Raranga (The Weave)*. Accessed at <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/advice-victims/hate-motivated-crime/te-raranga-weave> 30 July 2025.

³³² Ibid

³³³ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 11.

³³⁴ Ibid, 13.

attack' (the strategy to help owners and operators of crowded places to protect people using or working there),³³⁵ He Aranga Ake, (an early intervention programme working with individuals displaying concerning displaying concerning behaviour by providing wrap-around services and support),³³⁶ and the development, support and promotion of social cohesion through resilience programmes.³³⁷

A critical enabler of successful educational and capacity building approaches, is the role of communication as a key instrument in countering extremist rhetoric and positively shaping public perception.³³⁸ The Institute for Economics and Peace, an international independent and non-profit think tank, consider the amplification of various forms of media as a leverage tool for *both* the promotion of social cohesion, enhancing trust among communities as well as an enabler of terrorism, itself considered a violent form of communication.³³⁹ With that in mind, the NZCTVES considers communication to be both a tool and activity, through enhancing government and non-government partners to deter and respond to objectionable extremist content online,³⁴⁰ the generation and dissemination intelligence reporting,³⁴¹ and as a means to manage public expectations through targeted communications.³⁴²

³³⁵ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 15

³³⁶ Ibid, 17.

³³⁷ Ibid, 20.

³³⁸ The Institute for Economics and Peace (2025), *How strategic communication can combat terrorism and violent extremism*. Accessed at <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/how-strategic-communication-can-combat-terrorism-and-violent-extremism/> 15 September 2025.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*, 17.

³⁴¹ Ibid, 20.

³⁴² Ibid.

The security and intelligence agencies, alongside police and the military receive arguably the lion's share of directed activities and accompanied government expectation in the strategy. In addition to involvement in capacity building and education, the New Zealand Police are charged with; engaging with communities,³⁴³ understand terrorist and violent extremist ideologies,³⁴⁴ counter the means that support and enable terrorism, generating and managing leads, conducting security and intelligence investigations, securing events, locations and infrastructure at risk of being targeted, disrupt illegal activity, responding rapidly and proportionally to incidents, and the management of offenders.³⁴⁵ Alongside the Police, the intelligence agencies are to; understand terrorist and violent ideologies, drivers and processes, understand the indicators and implications of radicalisation, counter the means that support and enable terrorism, specify and communicate intelligence requirements, generate and maintain leads, conduct security and intelligence operations, generate and disseminate intelligence reporting, and disrupt threats.³⁴⁶ The military are largely tasked with response functions; the Provision of Assistance to the Civil Power and Provision of a Public Service in an Emergency, the ability to respond rapidly and proportionally to incidents, and supporting decision-makers.³⁴⁷

Finally, as mentioned in the literature review and Chapter one of this paper, New Zealand's legislative approach to terrorism has lagged somewhat in comparison to international partners. The NZCTVES seeks to redress that, through strengthening counterterrorism law,³⁴⁸ and utilising the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism Act (AMLCFT 2009)³⁴⁹ as the primary legislative means to support and enable agencies and ultimately prosecute offenders.

³⁴³ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 23.

³⁴⁴ Ibid, 20.

³⁴⁵ Ibid, 21.

³⁴⁶ Ibid, 20.

³⁴⁷ New Zealand Defence Force OIA response dated 19 March 2025

³⁴⁸ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 17

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

Who: individuals or groups at the centre of the strategy

These are the primary groups of the focus of the strategy, who willingly or unwillingly play a role within the strategy and therefore the evaluation model. From a risk and threat perspective, this looks at subjects that are anticipated to be vulnerable to extremist or terrorist rhetoric and propaganda and that could start a process of radicalisation, potentially leading to their adoption of extremist views to support or carry out violent or terrorist activities to support their views.³⁵⁰ At the higher end of the risk/threat spectrum, it considers already radicalised subjects who have committed criminal offences and/or violent activities in support of their views but have not yet been apprehended by law enforcement agencies.³⁵¹ From a community perspective, this involves subjects that belong to one of the above categories, i.e. vulnerable subjects, radicalised subjects, offenders, prisoners and close networks,³⁵² however it is also inclusive of iwi, hapu, whanau and individuals across New Zealand.³⁵³

The final group of focus for the strategy and evaluation model is the front-line workers within different lines of work (e.g. security and intelligence, education, military, law enforcement, and social work) who engage directly with individuals belonging to the categories of vulnerable subjects, radicalised subjects, offenders and prisoners.³⁵⁴

The passages above have assisted in identifying the most viable areas of evaluation across seven broad thematic areas while also identifying the agencies in government and individuals or groups at the centre of the strategy. This exercise has established that the majority of the tasks or government

³⁵⁰ Bellasio *et al.*, "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): 137.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20.

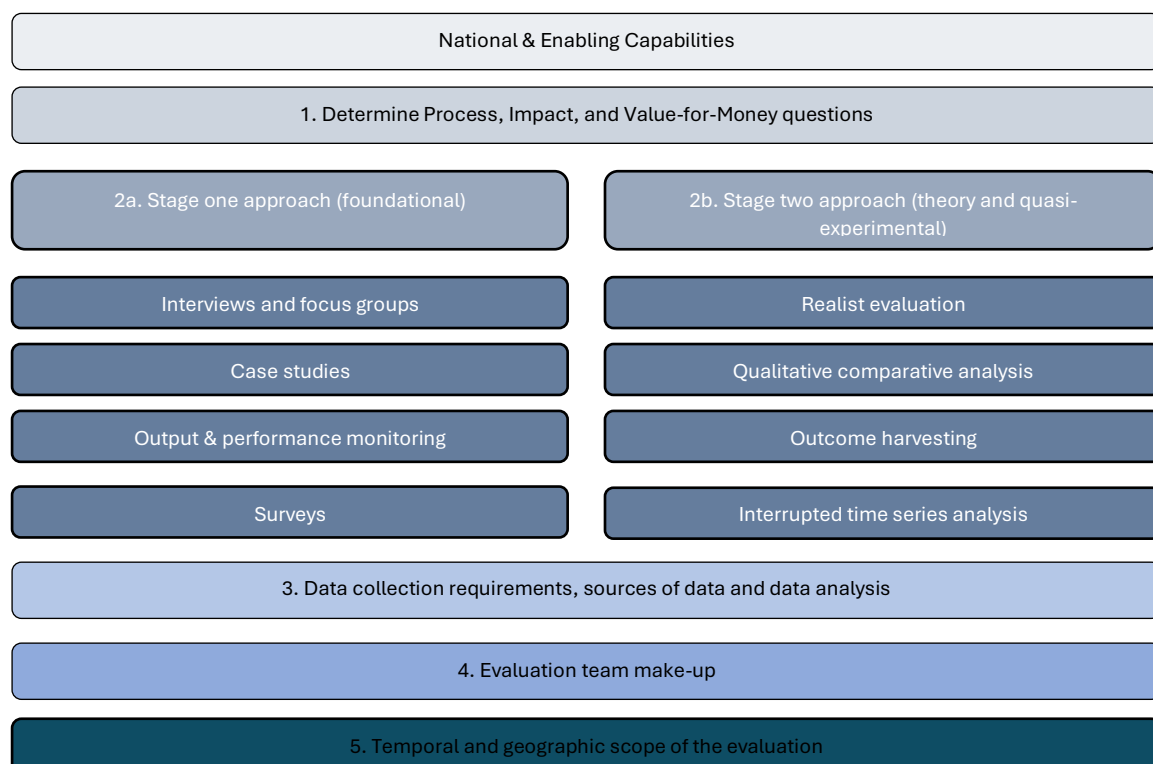
³⁵⁴ Bellasio *et al.*, "Counterterrorism evaluation." (2018): 137.

direction come from the National and Enabling capabilities – further confirmation that the National and Enabling Capabilities are the correct target for evaluation.

Evaluation Design

The objective of the evaluation model is to assist in answering the question: *Is the New Zealand Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy effective and achieving its established aims* via a Mixed Methods Evaluation Model. The purpose of the design is to combine the characteristics of both impact and process evaluation (and to a lesser extent) value-for-money evaluation, in the most effective and accurate possible manner. The following passage considers the types of questions to be asked, the stages of evaluation, the conceptual approach and research methods to be used, data collection requirements and sources of data collection, data analysis methods, typologies of data analysis, the evaluation team make-up, and the timing and scope of the evaluation (as per the diagram below). An executive summary of the Evaluation Model then follows, represented via a table version of the Model.

Figure 8: Simplified representative NZCTVES model



Types of evaluation

Process Evaluation: Process evaluations are employed to interrogate the actions and activities of the strategy as they're implemented. They seek to answer if there were enough resources, to what extent has and have the intervention(s) reached its target audience, what is working well or less well, where improvements are to be found, and what can be learned from how the interventions are delivered and how the environmental context (political, social and economic) influenced the delivery.³⁵⁵

Primary Process questions for the NZCTVES Evaluation Model:

- Was and is the strategy delivered as expected?
- Have the directed agencies been provided enough resources to achieve their directed outcomes?
- What are the issues facing delivery (by agency)?
- Does the agency prioritise delivery of the NZCTVES?
- Is the agency confident it is reaching the intended audience of the strategy?
- Is information access and sharing across agencies efficient?
- Does the agency modify and evolve processes based on delivery outcomes?
- What is working well, less well and why?
- What could be improved?
- Is the delivery sustainable?
- How do internal and external factors influence delivery?
- Is the strategy transparent?

³⁵⁵ *The Magenta Book*, 31.

Impact Evaluation: Impact evaluations are utilised to address attribution, from tasked agency to outcome. This may prove challenging due to the fact that there will be other influences beyond the directed intervention, which may skew the data and therefore the evaluation.³⁵⁶ As mentioned previously, Impact Evaluation analyses the causal effects of a programme or policy, examining foreseen and unforeseen changes, and whether those changes may be viewed through a positive (successful) or negative (unsuccessful) lens.

Primary Impact questions for the NZCTVES Evaluation Model:

- Did the directed activities and actions of the NZCTVES achieve the desired outcomes?
- Did the interventions cause a difference?
- To what extent can agency actions be attributed to the change?
- What confidence is there that the interventions caused an observable change?
- What causal factors resulted in the observed outcomes?

Value-for-money: Value-for-money (VFM) evaluation compares benefits as it relates to the cost of various interventions. This has taken a lesser level of focus as the evaluation model does not ask if the NZCTVES presents best economic outcome, instead seeking to assess whether the delivery is effective when assessed against the process and the outcomes. However, some VFM questions will be included.

Primary VFM questions for the NZCTVES Evaluation Model:

- Is the agencies' role in the strategy the best use of its resources?
- What was the cost (per agency) of delivering on its expected tasks and activities?
- Have the agencies' interventions been cost-effective when compared against doing nothing or what other partner nations/like agencies are doing?
- Has the agency explored more cost-effective options?

³⁵⁶ *The Magenta Book*, 32.

It should be noted the questions posed above are not exhaustive and have multiple applications.

They can be employed as literal questions in interviews and focus groups, thematic avenues to address during case studies or as benchmarks in output and performance monitoring. Ultimately, the questions can be viewed as the guiding principles of the approach, be they process, impact or VFM.

The approach to the evaluation including where and how to collect and analyse the data.

Conceptual approach (Supporting Diagram at Annex B)

For the NZCTVES evaluation model, a synthesised two –stage approach will be presented. Combined, the two stages offer rigour, analysis, fidelity and surety of evaluation process. However, given time and resourcing constraints alongside evaluation expectations, stage one is considered suitable at answering the evaluation objective. A Realist Synthesis³⁵⁷ (which uses literature reviews) was considered as this incorporates elements of Realist Evaluation. However, this method relies on extensive researcher knowledge of the intervention context³⁵⁸ and so was discounted given the multiple researchers required to support the evaluation. Stage one is based on well-known research methods for both impact and process evaluations while stage two methods primarily involve a theory-based conceptual approach alongside elements of a quasi-experimental conceptual approach. Annex B Provides a diagram comparing the suitability of the selected conceptual approaches set against the National and Enabling Capabilities.

Foundational research methods (stage one).

Interviews and focus groups. These were chosen as they enable the in-depth examination of particular government agencies' views on their delivery against the strategy. It is important to have a cross-

³⁵⁷ *The Magenta Book*, 52.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

section of practitioners represented, with anonymity assured to avoid bias. Interviews and focus groups are relatively resource intensive but not insurmountably so. They also have the added benefit of providing detail where surveys may not. Considered applicable to an impact and process evaluation of all NCs and ECs, with the exception of NC02 (Understand the threat environment to inform prevention efforts), NC04 (Detect and investigate threats, to enable effective prevention action) and NC06 (Respond to incidents, to protect lives and support victims), where it is deemed viable as a process only evaluation.

Case studies. These were chosen as they support both qualitative and quantitative findings. As an example, findings from case studies based on communities targeted under resilience programmes (NC01),³⁵⁹ individuals deradicalised (NC04)³⁶⁰ and lessons learned and assessments from responses to terrorist events (NC06)³⁶¹ can be analysed to determine the efficacy of agency actions. Considered applicable to an impact and process evaluation of all NCs and ECs, with the exception of NC02, where it is deemed viable as a process only evaluation and EC01 (Coordinate the system, to ensure our efforts are integrated, effective and reflect our values) where it is deemed non-viable as an effective evaluation method.

Output and performance monitoring. This method was chosen as continuous measurement supports process evaluation. Agency input and output is monitored and evaluated at select times (i.e. quarterly). This requires relatively low resource intensity but will need independent evaluation to ensure objectivity and to avoid bias. Performance criteria will be developed once/if the overall evaluation model is adopted. Considered applicable to an impact evaluation for NC01, NC03, NC07, EC01 and

³⁵⁹ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

EC02. Applicable to a process only evaluation for NC04, NC05, and NC06, while being considered less suitable for NC02.

Surveys. Surveys were chosen as data can be collected from key stakeholders; both practitioners delivering on the strategy and ‘customers’ – members of the public and potentially those deradicalised or undertaking deradicalisation programmes. Surveys offer generalised findings but can be corroborated when used in conjunction with interviews and case studies. Surveys are considered applicable to an impact and process evaluation of all NCs and ECs, with the exception of NC02, where it is deemed viable as a process only evaluation, and NC06 (Respond to incidents, to protect lives and support victims) where it is deemed non-viable as an effective evaluation method.

Theory-Based research methods (stage two).

These methods were chosen due to the complex operating environment (the New Zealand terrorist and violent extremist landscape). Theory-based methods tend to support process evaluations more so than impact evaluations as they explicitly focus on how and why an intervention is supposed to work, mapping causal pathways and assessing the process of change. The research methods in stage two are applicable to evaluate fewer NC and EC than the foundational research methods in stage one yet offer depth of knowledge.

Realist evaluation. Realist evaluations can identify causal mechanisms rather than just describe effects. Evidence will be gathered based on outcomes assessed as linked to the national and enabling capabilities. An example of where a realist approach will be valuable is considering any changes in

human behaviour³⁶² (deradicalisation as an example), as realist evaluations are suitable for understanding complex programs where outcomes are not consistent and are influenced by specific contexts and the responses of participants to resources. A realist approach is time consuming but answers what works, for whom and why.³⁶³ Realist evaluations are considered applicable to an impact and process evaluation for NC01 and NC03.

*Qualitative Comparative Analysis.*³⁶⁴ QCA was chosen as a method as it will consider multiple interventions (directed in the national and enabling capabilities) to understand desired and undesired outcomes based on qualitative knowledge (utilising case studies and surveys as an example). QCA incorporates data analysis that employs theory to examine the relationship between conditions and outcomes. Once the relationship is understood, insights such as causality become clearer which is useful in complex evaluations. An advantage of QCA is that it handles complexity and provides systematic rigour to the analysis of complex qualitative data. This method is considered applicable to an impact and process evaluation for NC01 and NC03 and as part of a process evaluation only for NC02 and NC04.

*Outcome harvesting.*³⁶⁵ This method identifies evidence of change and then works backwards to identify the key contribution(s) that led to this change. As an example, key decision-maker stakeholders may consider themselves further informed based on intelligence reporting (National Capability 04) leading to policy development, resourcing decisions or directed activity. Outcome Harvesting is useful in validating, testing and adapting a Theory of Change model. As examples, through harvesting observable outcomes, the assumptions in a ToC can be validated with real-world examples. Outcome

³⁶² *The Magenta Book*, 43.

³⁶³ Contandriopoulos, Damien, and Astrid Brousselle. "Evaluation models and evaluation use." *Evaluation* 18, no. 1 (2012): 61-77.

³⁶⁴ *The Magenta Book*, 45.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Harvesting also catches or identifies unintended consequences of an intervention, that were not considered in the original ToC. Unlike some of the methods above which excel at evaluating process, outcome harvesting is particularly useful for impact evaluation through identifying and investigating outcomes to determine the extent of an intervention's influence. Considered applicable to an impact and process evaluation for NC03, NC05 and NC07 and as part of a process evaluation only for NC04, EC01 and EC02.

Quasi-experimental research methods (stage two).

One method was selected in order to support impact evaluation as offset by the (majority) process evaluation of the Theory-based approach. A full experimental conceptual approach was discounted as randomised control groups would not work in this setting. This conceptual approach will be employed in select circumstances – as an example evaluating the effectiveness of interventions targeting stakeholders such as those at risk of radicalisation and those who are in de-radicalisation programmes thereby evaluating NC03 (Prevent and counter violent extremism to safeguard and build resilience in our communities).³⁶⁶

Interrupted time series analysis. This quasi-experimental approach uses time-series data to test for a causal change in a trend following an intervention.³⁶⁷ As an example, a control group would be those in He Aranga Ake (HAA) (deradicalisation / disengagement pathway and framework), when assessed against those identified as persons of interest judged at risk of radicalisation. This would attribute activity undertaken by New Zealand Police to either a positive or negative outcome which could then

³⁶⁶ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20

³⁶⁷ *The Magenta Book*, 48

inform policy and programme changes. Considered applicable to an impact and process evaluation for NC01 and NC03.

Data collection requirements and sources of collection.

These are the types and sources of data required to answer the evaluation questions. For the purposes of this segment of the model, an analysis of the National and Enabling Capabilities was undertaken – identifying stakeholders involved (key decision-makers, persons involved in implementation and delivery), key roles and responsibilities, and what existing data and documentation is already available. Some administrative and monitoring data³⁶⁸ already exists. This includes data held as a byproduct of the strategy and its implementation and delivery. Monitoring data is the data collected throughout the delivery of the Strategy. (An Asterix denotes new forms of data considered likely available).

Data available

- CTCC Workplans.
- CTCC Minutes.
- CT Strategy Implementation Plans.
- CT System Capability Reviews.
- Documentation pertaining to the 'Christchurch Call'.
- National Security Intelligence Priorities (NSIP) documentation.
- Crowded Places Strategy
- Major Events Security Committee (MESC) minutes.

³⁶⁸ *The Magenta Book*, 56.

- NatSec leads (POIs)
- POI in Te Raranga programmes
- CT legislative review documents.
- Immigration National Security Screening³⁶⁹ (INSS) project documentation.
- AML/CFT documentation.
- National Security System lessons learnt management system.³⁷⁰
- Key agency readiness documentation (NZP, NZDF for example).
- Key government agency and non-government stakeholders – leadership position holders, programme leads, delivery supervisors, security and intelligence academics, community and faith leaders, legislative leads.
- Intelligence products (reporting, briefs, templates).
- Risk, threat and Hate Crime products (reporting, briefs and templates).
- Existing surveys.
- Existing academic literature pertaining to the NZCTVES.
- Product pertaining to the cessation of HTW.

Data likely available

- Desk-based research (academic articles).*
- Surveys*

³⁶⁹ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). Accessed at <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-06/Counter-Terrorism%20Work%20Programme%202022.pdf> 10 February 2025.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

- Questionnaires*
- Focus groups.*
- Case studies.*
- Social media data.*
- Ethnographic reviews*
- Where an output has been deemed complete, closure reviews or programme assessments (if they exist).*

Data Analysis Methods.

These are the techniques employed to interrogate and analyse the data collected. Access to quality data is of critical importance. One limitation to the NZCTVES Evaluation Model is that a number of data sources and information are protected under national security classifications and personal privacy laws (Intelligence reporting generated by NZSIS and psychology reports on those in Te Raranga as two examples). Related, data handling, storage, processing and deletion (if applicable) must be undertaken under Protective Security Requirements (PSR) – Information Security (INFOSEC).³⁷¹ The upshot is that those chosen to undertake the NZCTVES Evaluation Model must have the appropriate national security clearances (NSC) and training. This may add a limitation to the model because, as discussed below, academics and non-governmental researchers are considered a critical part of the evaluation team make-up. These individuals will require a NSC which may take time to be approved, thereby delaying the commencement of the evaluation

³⁷¹ New Zealand Security Intelligence Service. (2025). *Information Security (INFOSEC)*. Accessed at <https://www.protectivesecurity.govt.nz/policy/information-security> 29 July 2025.

Typologies of Data Analysis. Due to the scale and complexity of the strategy, one analysis method is not considered suitable. Rather, a variety of analysis methodologies will be required to interrogate and interpret the data. These include:

- Stakeholder analysis (identifying and understanding who are impacted by the NZCTVES).
- Theory of Change (understanding how and why a specific intervention has led to the desired outcome). As mentioned in Chapter three, a mock ToC was undertaken based on limited available information. It is suggested that with further insight and access to data, a more informed ToC could be undertaken to aid in analysis.
- Cost benefit analysis identifies all known costs associated with the implementation and delivery of the strategy set against identified benefits. (A disadvantage of this analysis technique is that determining 'benefit' is largely subjective).
- Descriptive analysis (summarises the basic facts of the strategy's delivery and answers 'what happened').
- Diagnostic analysis (used in conjunction with Descriptive analysis to explain why an intervention has been effective or not).
- Attribution mapping (linking action to outcome).
- Literature review(s).

Composition of the evaluation team

Due to the scale and complex nature of the strategy it is deemed essential to have a number of evaluators with subject matter expertise reporting through to one chief evaluator/manager. In addition, a multi-disciplinary evaluation team is recommended, in order to employ the evaluation model to the fullest degree, avoid or mitigate bias such as groupthink and ensure objectivity and

integrity. It is considered likely that the evaluation team will be embedded within DPMC in order to prioritise access to the CTCC and other government agencies, alongside access to sensitive or classified data.

Chief Evaluator. It is recommended the evaluation is led by a subject matter expert (SME) within the Security and Intelligence or Policing realm but external to DPMC. Although it is likely that the Chief Evaluator (alongside the evaluation team) is seconded to DPMC for the duration of the evaluation, having an external chief evaluator offers objectivity and validity to the process.

Ethnographic evaluator (communities) (x2). Given that the strategy seeks to support communities, especially working with at-risk and vulnerable persons, it is deemed suitable to have practitioners with an ethnographic and anthropological skillset leading the evaluation of community-related measures and data.

Security and Intelligence evaluator (x2). An experienced security and intelligence practitioner is recommended to lead surveys, focus-groups and questionnaires relating to their field of expertise.

Researcher (x2). Due to the assessed large numbers of documents, products and other government and academic artefacts to consider and evaluate, having two researchers attached to the team is considered necessary. It is preferable that at least one of these researchers is a trained Data Analyst – a professional with the requisite skillset to examine and analyse both qualitative and quantitative data.

Academic (x2). There is a well-published schism/lacuna between security and intelligence practitioner and academia.³⁷² This presents an opportunity to bridge that gap and allow for critical challenge and critical thinking to emerge in the evaluation. Indeed, by involving suitable academics in the evaluation

³⁷² Battersby, John. 2025. *A determination to learn nothing: terrorism and counter terrorism in New Zealand*. Unpublished draft submission provided to the author. pp 3-6.

team, a key tenant of the former Prime Minister’s foreword in the NZCTVES is met; the contribution of academia “...is a key opportunity to build expertise, networks, and resilience”.³⁷³

Temporal, Geographic and subject scope.

The temporal scope of the evaluation is in relation to the life cycle of the NZCTVES³⁷⁴ (embedded as discussed in Chapter four, or an ex-post evaluation). As the strategy has been implemented without a clear evaluation model, the evaluation will focus from 2024 – present day. This decision was based on three full years of data (workplans 2021, 2022 and 2023) to set the baseline for the evaluation and then two years of activity to retrospectively evaluate and add monitoring criteria to. The geographic scope; both stage one and two will evaluate at the national, the regional and local levels.

Subject Scope. (The scope of the evaluation, compared to the subject).³⁷⁵

Stage one. Multiple interventions. Priority will focus on government agencies input, output and outcomes. Secondary focus will look at non-governmental organisations and community providers’ input, output and outcomes.

Stage two. Entire evaluation of all facets of the strategy.

Timing of the evaluation.

This relates to the timing of the evaluation in relation to the NZCTVES.

Embedded. (Stage one). The evaluation will occur in conjunction with the delivery of the strategy.

³⁷³ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand’s Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 01.

³⁷⁴ *The Magenta Book*, 131.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Embedded and Ex-post evaluation (Stage two). This would occur at the cessation of the current strategy and prior to the commencement of a new strategy or updated version.

This chapter commenced by interrogating the tasks and directions issued by the government in the NZCTVES to their agencies in particular, while considering the somewhat vague and all-encompassing tasks and direction to non-governmental agencies and the wider New Zealand community. It identified the key evaluable characteristics of the strategy, attributing activities to agencies. The chapter then built on the research contained in the preceding chapters to articulate the proposed Evaluation Model for the NZCTVES. It considered the stages of evaluation, the conceptual approach and research methods deemed most suitable for evaluation, data collection requirements and sources of data collection, data analysis methods, typologies of data analysis, the evaluation team composition, and the timing and scope of the evaluation. The next chapter will focus on the limitations and advantages in the application of the model. Below is an executive summary of the NZCTVES Evaluation Model.

Table 1. Proposed NZCTVES Evaluation Model

NZCTVES Evaluation Model

1. Evaluation Model Overview

Dimension	Focus
Process Evaluation	How the strategy is being implemented.
Impact Evaluation	What changes have occurred due to the strategy and how are they attributed.
Value-for-Money	Efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability of the strategy.
Transparency	Clarity, openness, and accountability of the strategy.

2. Evaluation Questions

Process Evaluation Questions

- Was and is the strategy delivered as expected?
- Are agencies provided sufficient resources?
- What delivery issues exist per agency?
- Is delivery prioritised by each agency?
- Is the intended audience being reached?
- Is inter-agency information sharing efficient?
- Are processes evolving based on outcomes?
- What's working well, less well, and why?
- What could be improved?
- Is delivery sustainable?
- How do internal/external factors influence delivery?

Impact Evaluation Questions

- Did the directed activities achieve the desired outcomes?
- Did the interventions cause a difference?
 - Can agency actions be attributed to change?
 - What confidence exists in causal links?
 - What causal factors led to outcomes?
- What generalisable lessons can inform future strategies?

Value-for-Money Questions

- Is the agencies' role in the strategy the best use of its resources?
- What is the cost per agency?
- Were interventions cost-effective compared to alternatives?
- Has the agency explored more cost-effective options?

Transparency Questions

- Is the strategy transparent in its design, delivery, and reporting?

3. Evaluation Methods

Stage One: Foundational Methods

- **Interviews & Focus Groups:** Offers perspectives; ensure anonymity.
- **Case Studies:** Mixed-method analysis of specific capabilities (e.g., NC01, NC04, NC06).
- **Output & Performance Monitoring:** Tracking of inputs/outputs.
- **Surveys:** Broad stakeholder engagement (practitioners, community, deradicalised individuals).

Stage Two: Advanced Conceptual Methods

- **Theory-Based Evaluation:** Understand mechanisms in complex environments.
 - **Realist Evaluation:** What works, for whom, and why.
 - **Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA):** Compares multiple interventions.
 - **Outcome Harvesting:** Trace outcomes back to contributing actions.
- **Quasi-Experimental Methods**
 - **Interrupted Time Series Analysis:** Assess impact over time (e.g., HAA vs. control group).

4. Data Sources & Collection

Sources	Type	Purpose
Agency reports, reviews and meeting minutes	Mixed	Performance monitoring, cost tracking, readiness.

Sources	Type	Purpose
Stakeholder interviews	Qualitative	Process insights, identify delivery opportunities and challenges.
Community and agency surveys	Mixed	Public perception, reach, and impact of interventions.
Case study documentation	Mixed	Real-world examples of intervention implementation.
Intelligence & policy data	Mixed	Outcome harvesting, identify causal mechanisms.

5. Analysis & Reporting

- **Corroboration** of data sources to ensure validity.
- **Thematic Analysis** for qualitative data.
- **Theory of Change Analysis** for understanding how and why a specific intervention has led to the desired outcome.
- **Descriptive and Diagnostic Analysis** to answer, 'what happened' and 'was it effective'.
- **Comparative Analysis** across agencies and interventions.
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis** for value-for-money assessment.
- **Attribution Mapping** to link actions to outcomes.

6. Proposed Evaluation Outputs

- **Interim Reports** (Quarterly/Bi-annual).
- **Final Evaluation Report.**
- **Lessons Learned Brief.**
- **Recommendations for future strategy design.**

Chapter six: *Advantages and limitations*
within application of the model.

At the conclusion of chapter five, a multi-stage, Mixed-Methods Research evaluation design was presented, with the purpose of providing rigour, accountability and transparency to the delivery of the NZCTVES. However, this purpose can only be truly realised if the evaluation model is applied in an appropriate and deliberate manner. Leviton writes of one of the tensions inherent in any evaluation practise, existing between interested stakeholder and evaluation conductor; the evaluation must be useful enough to fit within the stakeholder's decision context, while retaining enough integrity that any findings will be used legitimately and not employed symbolically to confirm pre-determined conclusions.³⁷⁶ Contandriopoulos and Brousselle term this 'issue polarization', where a stakeholder's understanding of the implications "of a given piece of information runs contrary to his or her opinions or preferences, this information will be ignored, contradicted or... subjected to strong scepticism and low use".³⁷⁷ The consequence from both statements is that an evaluation must be useful – the more useful it is, the higher the likelihood of a receptive stakeholder and therefore the higher the chances of implementation of any findings. However, limitations without mitigation will likely negate successful application and use of any findings. In order to mitigate issues of use, this chapter focuses on the limitations and advantages inherent in the application of the evaluation model.

Advantages

Referencing Kirkhart, Leviton posits that evaluation "operates within multiple domains and serves a variety of functions at the same time".³⁷⁸ This fits the proposed NZCTVES Evaluation Model. The evaluation model design is built from multiple components, targeting multiple stakeholders and seeking to evaluate multiple interventions. The NZCTVES evaluation model has been deliberately designed in a multi-stage format. Stage one is based on well-known research methods for both impact

³⁷⁶ Leviton, Laura C. "Evaluation use: Advances, challenges and applications." *American Journal of Evaluation* 24, no. 4 (2003): 525

³⁷⁷ Contandriopoulos, Damien, and Astrid Brousselle. "Evaluation models and evaluation use." *Evaluation* 18, no. 1 (2012): 61-77.

³⁷⁸ Leviton, 525

and process evaluations and stage two builds on the findings of stage one and involves a theory-based conceptual approach alongside elements of a quasi-experimental conceptual approach. The discussion below examines the higher-level advantages inherent in the evaluation model design and application.

One of the advantages of the evaluation model is the sequencing of the evaluation approach. By design, the stages would be employed consecutively to one-another. That is to say, evaluations employing case studies, surveys and output and performance monitoring would assist in generating the data that becomes the basis of stage two evaluation. As an example, case studies based on He Aranga Ake (the New Zealand Police-led disengagement framework) outcomes in stage one, could be evaluated through a Qualitative Comparison Analysis in stage two. QCA could identify causal pathways between variables in individual case studies that may have been missed in stage one when looking at He Aranga Ake case studies in isolation.

Complimentary but separate to the sequencing of evaluation, again, by design, the evaluation model has been constructed in a manner that multiple evaluation typologies can be utilised to evaluate the National and Enabling Capabilities. The mixed methods approach offers both a form of redundancy and adds rigour to the process. As an example (although less than ideal), if only one individual was available to apply the evaluation model, the evaluator could commence with interviews and focus groups targeting security and intelligence practitioners, seeking to identify findings from NC04 *Detect and investigate threats to enable effective prevention action*, (inclusive in which is a charge to conduct security intelligence and criminal investigations).³⁷⁹ The Evaluator could later conduct outcome harvesting focusing on NC05 *Protect people and places and keep them safe from harm*, in which a

³⁷⁹ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20

specified output is to; 'Disrupt threats and illegal activity'.³⁸⁰ The evaluator then combines the two, by employing a comparative analysis of the findings of disruption operations and considering whether the interventions undertaken during intelligence and criminal investigations (NC04) had any causal impact to the outcomes of NC05. The advantages of this approach are twofold. Firstly, causal connections between National Capabilities are identified, alongside an understanding of the influence, either intentional or unintentional, of the tasks and activities of one capability to another.

A second advantage of the redundancy that the mixed methods of evaluation methodologies offer, is that not all evaluation typologies in the model are able to assess both process and impact. (As a brief reminder, impact evaluation looks at what has happened after an intervention implementation, seeking to apply attribution, whereas process evaluation looks at what is working well or less well and why, what could be improved and how the context has influenced delivery). Evaluation of NC02 *Understand the threat environment* almost exclusively involves process evaluation; how the security agencies are able to understand terrorist and violent ideologies, what is working well in identifying the indicators of radicalisation, and what is inhibiting the ability of security and intelligence agencies to research threat trends – as three examples. However, the *impact* of these activities can be evaluated and attributed when evaluating other NCs. An output of NC04 *Detect and investigate threats, to enable effective preventive action* is the generation and dissemination of intelligence reporting, and this output is assigned to the same agencies responsible for NC02.³⁸¹ Success in achieving this output (NC04), can be measured in terms of whether policy and decision-makers feel informed and enabled, which can be corroborated and confirmed via interview. A critical enabler of intelligence reporting is sustaining an accurate understanding of the threat environment, an output of NC02. As a result, there is a direct correlation between achieving results in the delivery of NC04 and successful attribution to

³⁸⁰ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

the actions undertaken in support of NC02. In this way, the model demonstrates rigour and an ability to articulate and attribute outcomes through the use of multiple evaluation typologies.

Goodman and Thompson write that there is a critical difference between “the empty ritual” of obtaining stakeholder feedback and giving stakeholders “the real power needed to effect... outcomes”.³⁸² In their research, Goodman and Thompson identify stakeholder engagement as to falling broadly into three categories; non-participation, symbolic participation and engaged participation.³⁸³ In the non-participative category, the evaluator is seeking to educate the stakeholder about a topic, and in the symbolic participation category, the stakeholder is afforded ‘a place at the table’ but ultimately the power is held by the researcher.³⁸⁴ This evaluation model subscribes to neither non-participative nor symbolic participation as active stakeholder participation is a critical requirement, and indeed an advantage, to the success of the application of the evaluation and ultimately, the *use* of the evaluation findings.

As an example, QCA (an evaluation methodology that enables the analysis of multiple cases in complex scenarios)³⁸⁵ fits the requirements to evaluate small to intermediate cases ($n < 50$) such as those found in the evaluation of NC03 *Prevent and counter violent extremism, to safeguard and build resilience in our communities*.³⁸⁶ Under this NC, social sector agencies are charged with supporting individuals with violent extremist ideologies to disengage.³⁸⁷ Employing QCA, the evaluator (or evaluation team) can

³⁸² Goodman, Melody S., and Vetta L. Sanders Thompson. "The science of stakeholder engagement in research: classification, implementation, and evaluation." *Translational behavioral medicine* 7, no. 3 (2017): 486.

³⁸³ Ibid, pp 486-487.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Simister, Nigel., and Scholz vera. “Qualitative Comparative Analysis” Accessed at <https://www.intrac.org/app/uploads/2024/12/Qualitative-comparative-analysis.pdf> 02 September 2025.

³⁸⁶ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand’s Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

look for patterns across multiple cases to understand why change occurs in some interventions and not in others.³⁸⁸ Stakeholder participation and collaboration, in the form of case officers, social workers and even NGO providers, is critical to the successful application of the QCA. In turn, engaged stakeholders will receive valuable insight into why their interventions may or may not be working, with the added benefit of adapting their processes and programmes iteratively leading to positive outcomes for both their clients and the deradicalisation programmes more generally.

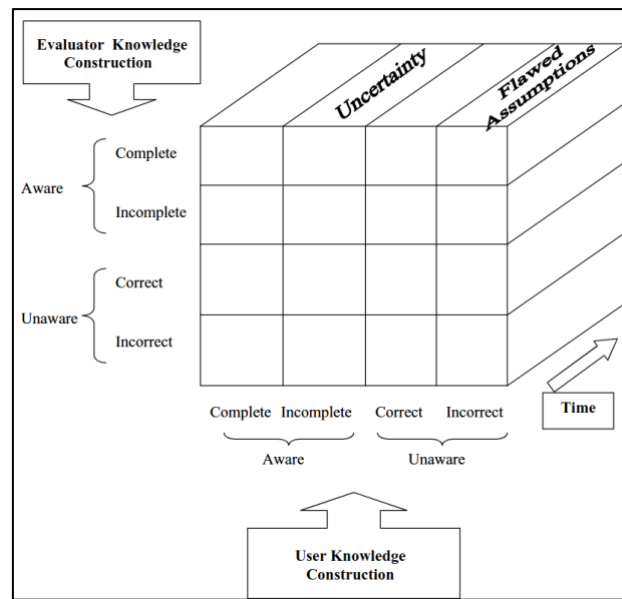
Limitations

Despite the advantages of the evaluation model represented and discussed above, it must be acknowledged that there are some limitations. The first limitation considers the question; are the evaluation typologies and methodologies represented in the model the most appropriate with which to assess and evaluate the NZCTVES? When researching and designing the evaluation model, a recurring challenge became apparent; the dearth of data and information pertaining to the strategy (arguably reflective of the shallow nature of the strategy overall), meant that when assigning best-fit evaluation method to National and Enabling Capabilities, a series of hypothesis and assumptions had to be entered into. I have adapted what Leviton calls “bodies of evidence”.³⁸⁹ ‘Bodies of evidence’ relate to users’ correct or incorrect and complete or incomplete, knowledge regarding the policy or programme being evaluated. Leviton argues that successful evaluation will not rely solely on one study to judge if a programme or policy works. Rather, access to multiple information streams – the body – will assist in a more accurate interpretation.

³⁸⁸ Simister, Nigel., and Scholz vera. “Qualitative Comparative Analysis”

³⁸⁹ Leviton, 528.

Figure 9. Laura Levinton's matrix to assess constructed knowledge of a programme³⁹⁰



The body of evidence with regard to my thesis, largely centres on the NZCTVES itself. Due to the assessed shallowness of the strategy, there are elements of incompleteness in my knowledge construct, with which assumptions have had to be made. As an example, an output of EC02 is to 'build internal system awareness and understanding'.³⁹¹ A working assumption was then generated that data regarding individual agency process monitoring exists and is available with which to conduct outcome harvesting, in order to undertake process evaluation of contributing agencies. Under OIA, the most recent work programmes (2023 and 2024) were redacted with regards to milestones, while the 2025 work programme was redacted in full (as discussed on page 14 of chapter one). Having the milestones (and associated data) available would have confirmed the validity of outcome harvesting as a viable evaluation method for this EC. However, due to OIA reactions, this cannot be ascertained. Therefore, a hypothesis that outcome harvesting would fit as an appropriate evaluation method in stage two was made. There is a form of mitigation in that stage one evaluation methods, including output and performance monitoring, will provide some process evaluative capability.

³⁹⁰ Leviton, 528.

³⁹¹ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20.

An additional limitation is that both immediate impact (attribution) and process evaluations, are likely to take a minimum of twelve months to confirm findings. This assumes four quarters of accurate and available reporting, from which to draw both generalisable and specific conclusions. The result is that there are no 'quick wins' to be found if this evaluation model is to be utilised. In turn, this may not be palatable to a political audience and government agency stakeholders, who as mentioned in chapter three, are subject to a three-year election cycle. In this regard, it is likely that the evaluation model will be subject to external political pressure, coupled with issue polarization where stakeholders may pick and choose what they wish to acknowledge in the findings. Mitigation options included considering whether shorter-term reviews such as a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) would be viable. An REA is a short-term, structured literature review that provides a general overview of a specific topic through the critical analysis of existing research. However, due to the scale, scope and complexity of the strategy, alongside a scarcity of academic discourse pertaining to the efficacy and application of the NZCTVES, an REA was discounted as being too limited to offer meaningful findings for decision makers. Arguably, given that the NZCTVES is an enduring strategy, timeliness of findings (quick wins) are secondary to determining the effectiveness of the strategy, however, political machinations and operating realities demand acknowledgement of the limitation of timeliness.

A final limitation acknowledges that the majority of the evaluation methods incorporated into the model are qualitative in nature. Stage one involves largely qualitative findings over quantitative (a 3:1 ratio), and as consequence of this, there are several disadvantages to consider. These include, a lack of statistical generalisability,³⁹² the potential for bias on the behalf of the evaluators, the time-intensive nature of qualitative evaluation and analysis, and the possibility of an over-reliance on small, non-

³⁹² Rahman, Md Shidur. "The advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in language "testing and assessment" research: A literature review." *Journal of education and learning* 6, no. 1 (2016). 105.

randomised samples and case studies from which to draw findings. In addition, and especially critical when considering the *use* of the evaluation findings, Rahman's research has demonstrated that policy-makers may give low-credibility to results from qualitative findings.³⁹³ However, there is a plausible defence of a majority-qualitative evaluation model. As mentioned in chapters three and four, the requirement for qualitative evaluation is primarily due to the fact that the focus of the evaluation model – the micro level represented by the National and Enabling Capabilities – is written in such a way that qualitative evaluation is the best method to determine outcomes and attribute interventions. Verbs such as 'understand', 'engage', 'develop', 'support', 'research' and 'counter' are employed throughout the National and Enabling Capabilities,³⁹⁴ denoting a required emphasis on meaning, function and context – all elements of a qualitative evaluation. In addition, qualitative research and evaluation considers "a person's lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions and feelings as well as... social movements and cultural phenomena".³⁹⁵ These summarise the complexities and realities of the operating threat and social environment in which the NZCTVES is undertaken and are therefore deemed a prudent justification for the primary use of qualitative evaluation.

In conclusion, the design and application of the model yields many advantages, while acknowledging some inherent limitations. The evaluation model demonstrates agility, through the multiple evaluation methods offered. It is scalable, able to adapt from single evaluator application to concurrent team evaluation. It is also rigorous and thorough in nature, with internal redundancy offered so that both impact and process evaluation can be completed, while stakeholder engagement is not just considered, but rather a fundamental requirement in the application and use of the strategy. Identified limitations within the application of the model include limitations in data available with which to

³⁹³ Rahman, Md Shidur. "The advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in language "testing and assessment" research. 105.

³⁹⁴ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 20.

³⁹⁵ Rahman, Md Shidur. "The advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in language "testing and assessment" research. 103.

design the strategy, timeliness of the evaluation (an assessed minimum of 12 months to obtain usable findings), and the heavy dependence on qualitative over quantitative evaluation methodologies. *If* this evaluation model is implemented, the evaluation team will have to contend with mitigating the limitations, while enhancing the advantages integral in the model. The next and final chapter will look at the key conclusions and findings from my research.

Chapter seven: *Conclusion*

Overview

This thesis set out to address a critical vulnerability in New Zealand's national security system, by designing an evaluation model with which to critique and strengthen New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy. Authored by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) and released in 2020 (with further updates in 2021 and 2022), the strategy was released as one of many policy decisions alongside the establishment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terror attack. Criticism of the strategy was swift. Single-line assertions, confused priorities, contradiction of terms, vague claims and sparse detail left the reader, including those government agencies charged with fulfilling the intent and aims of the strategy, with more questions than answers.

Conscious that the NZCTVES had already been critiqued by academia, and in part spurred on by a lack of a framework with which to do so myself, I determined there was a gap in terms of understanding the efficacy and overall approach of New Zealand's counter-terrorism strategy through evaluation. I sought to bridge this gap through the design and development of a Mixed Methods evaluation model. Unlike other evaluation models which focus on one area of a programme or a piece of policy in isolation, this model has been designed in a multi-stage format utilising foundational (traditional) evaluation methods alongside theoretical and quasi-experimental methods. The objective of the evaluation model is to assist in answering the question: *Is the New Zealand Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy effective and achieving its established aims?*

Summary of findings

In setting the scene, I established the research gap within the historical, political and social context of New Zealand's complicated relationship with the phenomena of terrorism and violent extremism, identifying a number of causal factors and characteristics that explain to some extent, the shaping of

the shallow nature of the NZCTVES. A historical overview of terrorism within New Zealand identified that New Zealand society struggles to comprehend that terrorist attacks, albeit temporally infrequent, have occurred here, and are a characteristic of the domestic threat environment, not a phenomenon constrained to events occurring overseas. In parallel to this naive societal perspective, successive governments over several decades failed to adapt, implementing limited and seemingly haphazard terrorism-related legislation. An initial finding was that this paucity of appropriate legislation, combined with a lack of media coverage contributed to an apathy towards the risk of terrorism from the New Zealand public and crucially, from successive New Zealand governments. Interestingly, this apathy was not shared by multiple eminent New Zealand academics. Prior to 15 March, Battersby, Ball, Rogers, Nelson and Greener-Barcham among others, all contributed considerable effort to the identification and articulation of risk within New Zealand's national security system. I find it unlikely that a more determined bridging of the gap between politicians and security academics would have resulted in a different outcome to what occurred on 15 March; however successive governments cannot say they weren't warned of the risk of terrorism within New Zealand.

I then examined the result of decisions made by the Labour Government in the immediate aftermath of Brendon Tarrant's attack, namely the establishment of an RCOI and the direction of the NZCTVES. Drawing on interviews with senior members of DPMC's counter-terrorism committee, alongside a careful critique and analysis of the strategy, I identified several shortfalls pertaining to process, clarity, direction, responsibility, review and substance. In short, the strategy is a veritable melange of ambiguity. As one of many examples, I identified that over corresponding pages the authors cannot seem to articulate whether the strategy is preventative in nature ("prevention is our priority") denoting a total elimination of the risk, or one based on reducing the severity of the risk ("our framework is focussed on reduction") denoting an acceptance of the risk where threat mitigation takes primacy.

However, helpfully this analysis did identify the aspects of the strategy that may prove useful in terms of future evaluation – the National and Enabling Capabilities. These capabilities can be viewed as the verbs, those actions undertaken by tasked and responsible government agencies and are the area of greatest use for any person interested in conducting an evaluation as the capabilities (relative to a sparse strategy) contain arguably the most detail. Finally, I considered that the concept of evaluation within western governments is not new, and that the purpose of evaluation—learning and accountability—assists decision makers to manage risk and uncertainty, while gaining an understanding of what works, for whom and under what circumstances. The ultimate determination I made in my initial review was that by not evaluating the NZCTVES, we cannot foresee and therefore mitigate, substantial national security risk arising from future terrorism.

Following Chapter one, an in-depth literature review was undertaken. The review commenced by reflecting on the historical and current contextual relevance of New Zealand’s approach to terrorism. The apathy mentioned in chapter one is drawn out through the literature, suggesting that three distinct and overlapping themes are responsible; a paucity of academic discourse accompanied by some questionable international commentary and analysis leading to a lack of domestic public awareness, a dearth of appropriate New Zealand-specific terrorism legislation similarly discounting terrorism as a possibility here, and a domestic intelligence and counter-terrorism apparatus hamstrung by a balancing act of perception versus reality. I concluded my literature review by looking at other approaches and frameworks for evaluation that have been employed internationally, specifically a 2018 RAND study of counter-terrorism evaluation models in the Netherlands and Dr Erika Brady’s mixed-methods research approach to designing an evaluation tool with which to assess the UK’s counterterrorism strategy. The RAND study was useful from a meta perspective – it was an evaluation of successful evaluations, while Brady’s research was generated from a similar position as my own – how could the UK government profess satisfaction at the status of its counterterrorism strategy, when

there was no formal evaluation model in place? Both reviewed studies established a baseline of plausible evaluation methodologies with which to pursue in my own research. The key takeaway from the literature and what became starkly clear early on, was that there were literally no academic articles pertaining to evaluation models for practical application in the New Zealand counter terrorism and violent extremism context. It appeared as though my hypothesis was not only a gap within the national security system but a gap that has eluded New Zealand's own national security academics.

My methodology established the research hypothesis, hierarchy of concepts and research questions and the aim of the research. The hypothesis contended that a model for evaluating the NZCTVES does not currently exist and therefore there remains significant gaps and vulnerabilities within our national security system. The hierarchy of concepts looked at three focus areas; does our current strategy work and how is it evaluated, how do other nations, agencies or bodies evaluate their CT and VE strategies, and how to design, build and implement a NZ-centric CT and VE evaluation model. Initially, an approach centred in Critical Terrorism Studies, utilising action research was considered. My reasoning here was threefold. Firstly, there are many excellent security and intelligence practitioners within the New Zealand system, and if I could employ their collective expertise and critical thought, then that would ultimately strengthen the proposed evaluation model. Equally important, I felt that action research would result in buy-in from DPMC and other concerned agencies. With a stake not only in the research but also the outcome, these organisations had the opportunity to shape and strengthen future iterations of the strategy. Finally, the cyclic methodology of action research meant that as evaluation typologies were identified and considered relevant or appropriate, the internal stakeholders themselves could start to implement change. This would strengthen not only my research but also internal evaluation mechanisms within DPMC and contributing agencies. However, this methodological approach quickly ran into difficulty when the majority of government agencies

declined to interact or participate in the research, identifying the first of many vulnerabilities within New Zealand's national security system.

My thesis did not originally consider in-depth as to why agencies were reluctant to participate, interpreting the lack of input to a lack of evaluation models and processes. I suspected and later confirmed to be true, that no evaluation model exists for the NZCTVES. This then inferred that none of the 16 tasked agencies formally evaluate their contribution to the NZCTVES, either ad hoc or on a regular basis. Upon reflection, the further following commentary is offered. The majority of agencies that responded to OIA deferred to DPMC on the proviso that as lead coordinating agency, they would be best placed to answer questions of performance measures and evaluation. On one hand, this may be a genuine perspective – if any agency was best placed to answer from a systems perspective, then this would be the Counter Terrorism Coordination Committee (CTCC), established by DPMC in 2015:

“to bring together the significant pieces of work to counter terrorism and violent extremism being led by different agencies across government, and to collectively deliver improvements to the counter-terrorism system at a national level”.³⁹⁶

Following this line of logic, it makes sense that agencies deferred to DPMC. On the other hand, is the conclusion that agencies' lack of response conceals something more disingenuous and decidedly more dangerous. Did agencies choose not to respond because they actively wished to avoid evaluation out of a concern that any such activity would display evidence of a confused system, one tenuously coordinated by the centre but lacking any measures of self-regulation and improvement? To avoid conjecture, I submit that Occam's razor offers the clearest answer – that neither tasked agency nor DPMC, put any effort into developing an evaluation model for the NZCTVES as it either did not occur to the designers to do so or that it simply wasn't a priority. That regardless of reason, agencies simply

³⁹⁶ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022). *New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy*: 10.

chose not to engage with this study because they don't have formal evaluation models with which to assess their contributions. Accordingly faced with a lack of participation from agencies, the research approach transitioned to an iterative process from hypothesis, to answering a cascading series of research questions (based around the three focus areas), undertaking thematic and comparative analysis, leading to a methodologically sound evaluation model design.

Chapter three was the first of two chapters where I considered the methodological approach to evaluation model design. Initially, I focussed on the Theory of Change (ToC) methodology, before considering broader evaluation methods. My analysis of the general characteristics of ToC identified that a critical opportunity was lost when a ToC was not undertaken during NZCTVES design, and that opportunities will continue to be missed if this oversight is repeated in the next iteration of the strategy. Looking to the future, I argue that incorporation of a ToC (undertaken and implemented correctly ahead of an updated or new CT/VE strategy), will lead to clearer evaluation measures and opportunities for network analysis, participative network mapping and predictive modelling. This can only strengthen the NZCTVES, as network mapping will allow for better understanding of the interrelationships between supporting agencies, identifying areas of strength and areas of risk. Predictive modelling (i.e. the future of CT and VE within New Zealand) is sorely missing from this iteration of the strategy, and while ToC in and of itself is not a panacea that will answer all of the future-facing intelligence and information gaps pertaining to the strategy, the application of a ToC will enable successive adaptations and evolutions within the strategy's ecosystem, mitigating areas of concern while leveraging areas of strength.

Pivoting, I then ask the question: what type of evaluation is most suitable for the NZCTVES? Incorporating insights captured in *The Magenta Book*, the concepts of Process Evaluation (which

considers what can be learned from how the intervention was delivered), Impact Evaluation (which asks what difference an intervention has made) and Value-for-Money evaluation (which looks at whether the intervention is a good use of resources) were introduced. Following this, I made the determination that elements of both Impact and Process evaluation should be incorporated into the final model design, leading to the conclusion that a Mixed Methods Research approach is best fit for the purposes of my evaluation model. An MMR approach in the New Zealand CT and VE context will employ both quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate the programmes contained within the strategy (and arguably those outside of the strategy also). The provision of human input and feedback from stakeholders and practitioners will help make sense of cultural, organisational and societal contexts, while the provision of numerical data will assist in identifying relationships and patterns. (A key challenge that I address later is whether or not these forms of data exist or not).

I then sought to balance the findings in chapter three by presenting a comparative analysis of the approaches taken by academic, Dr Erika Brady in her MMR approach to the British CT strategy, CONTEST, and that of the private non-profit company RAND, in their analysis of the Netherlands CT strategy (with a secondary focus on other Western nations' evaluation of CT and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) policies). This approach effectively took the generalised findings of chapter three and then sought to offer fidelity in detail to my model, sharpening the picture by zeroing in on two distinct pieces of research. This comparative analysis proved fruitful as relative strengths and opportunities for application in the New Zealand context were determined. These included findings such as the utilisation of an 'embedded' evaluation model as opposed to an 'ex-post' model as preferable (one is enduring, while the other is retrospective), recognition that a multi-stage evaluation across multiple levels (micro through to macro) was necessary to effectively evaluate the dimensions of the strategy, and confirmation that there is a viable and recognised relationship between MMR and impact and process evaluations.

The findings of chapters one through four including those of the literature review were then collated. Having looked at what works for CT strategies in international contexts, I sought to apply that to the New Zealand perspective during the creation of the evaluation model, which is the central purpose of this research. The findings of earlier research, which identified the National and Enabling capabilities as the most evaluable aspects of the strategy, was built on through a thorough interrogation of the other evaluable characteristics of the strategy – agencies, people, tasks and responsibilities – across seven thematic areas. Having confirmed the evaluable characteristics of the strategy, I then broke down the evaluation model into its functional components. The overarching purpose of the design is to combine the characteristics of both impact and process evaluation (and to a lesser extent) value-for-money evaluation, in the most effective and accurate possible manner. It did so through a multi-stage approach, with a sequential evaluation approach based on a mixed methods approach - foundational methods, followed by theoretical and quasi-experimental methods. The model also considers the types of questions to be asked, how the stages of evaluation support and enable one another, the conceptual approach and research methods to be used within the stages, data collection requirements and sources of data collection, data analysis methods, typologies of data analysis, the evaluation team make-up, and the timing and scope of the evaluation. One challenge I encountered that I did not expect, was how to represent or articulate the strategy. Initially, I attempted to do so through a diagrammatic model, visually depicting the evaluation model. I soon determined that to do so this way, would paper over the intricacies of the model, failing to communicate the detail. I sought to resolve this in a twofold manner. Firstly, a written description of the functional components of the model, followed by an 'executive summary' outlining the stages of evaluation.

Having described and represented the strategy in two different formats, I wanted to critique the advantages and limitations inherent within the application of the model. The tension between evaluator and stakeholder was explored; any evaluation must be useful enough to fit within the

stakeholder's decision context, while retaining enough integrity that any findings will be used legitimately and not employed symbolically to confirm pre-determined conclusions. The key takeaway, an evaluation must be useful – the more useful it is, the higher the likelihood of a receptive stakeholder and therefore the higher the chances of implementation of any findings in a non-partisan manner. Other advantages I determined included the complimentary sequencing of the evaluation with findings from foundational methods informing theoretical methods, the inherent redundancy intentionally built into the model through the use of mixed typologies, and the intentional involvement of key stakeholders through the evaluation process.

I also considered the limitations contained within my own research and that of the final evaluation design. One of the key limitations focused on an adaption of Leviton's 'bodies of evidence'. That is to say, what information was available to me as the evaluation designer (inclusive of knowledge deficits or gaps), when considering the methodologies for the model? As mentioned earlier, I was confronted with a lack of data pertaining to the strategy (and a lack of engagement from government agencies). This meant that a series of assumptions had to be undertaken in order to progress both the research and the evaluation design. I am pessimistic that this may continue, not only for future academics, but also for those seeking to apply an evaluation model to the NZCTVES, either my own or one of a different design. Other limitations reflected on the timeliness aspect, with an assessed minimum twelve months to confirm initial findings from the evaluation. In reality, governments of the day (and by proxy the agencies that work for them), are loath to commit to longitudinal studies. In the New Zealand context, this is largely due to a combination of political, financial and logistical barriers that clash with short-term electoral cycles and the need for immediate, actionable data. My concern, is that an evaluation that requires time and resource to fully investigate and analyse the problem set will be of little interest to DPMC, thereby perpetuating the cycle of fundamental vulnerabilities and weakness within our national security system.

The final limitation acknowledged that the majority of the evaluation methods chosen are qualitative in nature, which could potentially lead to issues of bias, a lack of statistical generalisability and the possibility of an over-reliance on small, non-randomised samples and case studies from which to draw findings.

Concluding statement

This thesis has contributed to the field of New Zealand's national security by identifying and then filling a critical gap. The literature review, backed up through interviews and returns on OIAs confirmed that there has been little to no consideration regarding the evaluation of our countering terrorism and violent extremism strategy. Any consideration of evaluation that occurred prior to publishing in February 2020, did not make it past final edits as the strategy fell short in many regards. Under the guise of preventing future attacks, and to bring "our nation together to protect all New Zealanders from terrorism and violent extremism of all kinds", the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet released a rushed, confused, inconsistent and incomplete strategy. Rather than be satisfied in critique of the strategy, I identified a gap in both academia as well as in practical government application and sought to drive significant change through the research and design of an evaluation model, with which to assess and ultimately strengthen the NZCTVES.

The research quickly led to findings that neither quantitative nor qualitative evaluations on their own would achieve thorough, rigorous and adaptable evaluation. A mixed methods approach was researched, and its practical application and advantages were determined to be the most suitable way to address the research gap. I aspire that this evaluation model is considered by DPMC for practical application to assess the strengths and identify the inherent weakness within our current strategy. Whether this model or an adapted model is used, I believe evaluation of the strategy is a fundamental

necessity to strengthen our national security system. However, evaluation is only the first step, and it is equally 'what comes next' that similarly matters. If the New Zealand government expects our national security system to be adaptive, responsive and resolute to a changing and dynamic operating environment, then it must also be flexible and adaptive when recognising (via evaluation) where interventions are and are not working. There is an oft-quoted axiom "hope is not a course of action". If DPMC and other tasked government agencies do not commit to a deliberate evaluation of the NZCTVES, rather choosing to hope that things will work out as they are, they are letting down the citizens of New Zealand and ultimately failing to protect New Zealanders from terrorism and violent extremism of all kinds.

Epilogue

On 17 December 2025, DPMC quietly released a new NZCTVES.³⁹⁷ There was no public announcement of the new strategy's release, nor was there any mainstream media coverage or recognition in academia. The new strategy emerged after the conclusion of my research, and I do not intend on engaging with it at this time beyond offering the following observations.

There are some notable differences to the previous strategy, namely a transition away from the thematic four 'Rs' of Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery to new objectives; Prevent, Protect, Disrupt and Respond. Upon examination, these new verbs are essentially that of the previous strategy, albeit in a different order and with a less detailed explanation. An additional difference, and in contrast to the former strategy, is that this iteration is accompanied by a "comprehensive action plan" to ensure New Zealanders are aware of, understand, and challenge violent extremism and radicalisation.³⁹⁸ Contained within the action plan is a note that the 'CT system' is responsible for "developing and **evaluating** system capability", "undertaking cross-system **reviews** to inform continuous improvement" and "regularly **reviewing** tools and capabilities to ensure they are fit for purpose and responsive to changing threat environment [sic]".³⁹⁹

The major difference, however, is that the new 2025 NZCTVES and accompanying action plan together... are two pages long.

³⁹⁷ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2025). *Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism National Strategy*. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) Te Tari o te Pirimia me te Komiti Matua, December 2025. Accessed at <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/national-security/counter-terrorism/new-zealands-countering-terrorism-and-violent-extremism-strategy> January 2026.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid, <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2025-12/nz-2025-counter-terrorism-violent-extremism-action-plan-dec2025.pdf>

There is little mention of when, where, with whom, least of all to mention *how*, this new strategy and action plan will achieve its stated aims of evaluation and review. Early in 2025, I engaged with the Chair of the CTCC as part of my research. He expressed interest in my study, despite not participating further than one formal interview. I wonder if this is an indication that DPMC were intent on ignoring evaluation from the outset. To be clear, thorough evaluation is not easy. It takes resources – time, money, and investment from those associated with the programme or policy under evaluation. Successful evaluation will also deliver findings, some which may not be palatable to key stakeholders. It appears far easier to talk of evaluation, and review and continuous improvement, than it is to actually commit to such an undertaking.

I also wonder, if the calamitous events of 15 March have shrunk in the memory of the public consciousness. Since 15 March, New Zealand has witnessed a worldwide pandemic, war in Europe, economic uncertainty, destructive weather events and a new coalition government. All the while, the perceived risk of terrorism fading in the background. With the release of this new strategy, I don't observe any signs that the vulnerability identified – how we will *know* if our CT and PCVE is working – has been addressed, let alone mitigated.

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Annex A – Attribution of conceptual research approach to National and Enabling Capabilities. (Author)

Stage One		Interview and Focus Groups		Case Studies		Surveys		Output and Performance Monitoring	
National Capabilities	Address the cause of violent extremism and promote social cohesion	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable
	Understand the threat environment, to inform prevention efforts	Process Evaluation only	Applicable	Process Evaluation only	Applicable	Process Evaluation only	Applicable	Less so	
	Prevent and counter violent extremism, to safeguard and build resilience in our communities	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable
	Detect and investigate threats, to enable effective prevention action	Process Evaluation only	Applicable	Less so		Process Evaluation only	Applicable	Process Evaluation only	Applicable
	Protect people and places, and keep them safe from harm	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Process Evaluation only	Applicable
	Respond to incidents, to protect lives and support victims.	Process Evaluation only	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation		Not Applicable		Process Evaluation only	Applicable
	Recover from terrorism incidents, to support a return to wellbeing	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable
	Coordinate the system, to ensure our efforts are integrated, effective, and reflect our values	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Not Applicable		Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable
Enabling Capabilities	Collaborate and communicate, to enable us to work together as a nation to reduce the risk.	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable

Stage Two		Interrupted Time Series		Realist Evaluation		Qualitative Comparison Analysis		Outcome Harvesting	
National Capabilities	Address the cause of violent extremism and promote social cohesion	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Less so	
	Understand the threat environment, to inform prevention efforts	Not Applicable		Not Applicable		Process Evaluation only	Applicable	Not Applicable	
	Prevent and counter violent extremism, to safeguard and build resilience in our communities	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable	Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable
	Detect and investigate threats, to enable effective prevention action	Not Applicable		Not Applicable		Process Evaluation only	Applicable	Process Evaluation only	Applicable
	Protect people and places, and keep them safe from harm	Not Applicable		Not Applicable		Not Applicable		Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable
	Respond to incidents, to protect lives and support victims.	Not Applicable		Not Applicable		Not Applicable		Not Applicable	
	Recover from terrorism incidents, to support a return to wellbeing	Not Applicable		Not Applicable		Not Applicable		Impact + Process Evaluation	Applicable
Enabling Capabilities	Coordinate the system, to ensure our efforts are integrated, effective, and reflect our values	Not Applicable		Not Applicable		Not Applicable		Process Evaluation only	Applicable
	Collaborate and communicate, to enable us to work together as a nation to reduce the risk.	Not Applicable		Not Applicable		Not Applicable		Process Evaluation only	Applicable