



Speech by

**JO-ANN MILLER**

**MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA**

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Hansard 19 August 2003

**CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL AND RADIOLOGICAL EMERGENCY POWERS AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (6.11 p.m.): Our great state needs to be prepared to deal with potential acts of terrorism and other critical incidents. Terrorism as we know it has manifested itself in the form of hijacked aircraft slamming into buildings in New York and also the massive bombs in Bali that killed many innocent Australians. But terrorism can also come in the form of the release of chemical, biological and radiological agents. Such acts of terrorism could cause widespread devastation to our people, perhaps having even more sinister effects than a bomb. Any act of terrorism is possible in the world today and we have to be prepared for the worst.

In the preparation of the Chemical, Biological and Radiological Emergency Powers Amendment Bill, consultation was undertaken with all relevant government agencies, including the Department of Health, the DPI, the Department of Transport, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Chief Justice, the Public Interest Monitor and the Crown Solicitor. Proposed section 12 outlines circumstances in which a chemical, biological and radiological emergency may be declared. A state police officer who must hold the rank of at least assistant commissioner may declare an emergency if he or she is satisfied that something has happened. For example, an incident has occurred in which a CBR substance is involved and the substance poses a serious risk to the life or even the health of people; the substance may spread if it is not contained; a significant and coordinated effort is necessary by emergency responders to respond to the incident; and, finally, where the various powers available to an incident coordinator in an emergency situation or to someone else pursuant to other legislation would not enable emergency responders to effectively deal with the incident. If a CBR emergency is declared, it is very serious.

The chemical, biological and radiological emergency coordinator must make a written record of the time and date the emergency was declared and inform the minister promptly. If the minister cannot be contacted, the Premier must be contacted to inform him of the emergency. It is important to note that the CBRE coordinator is responsible for the overall management and control of emergency responders responding to the emergency. Ambulance officers, fire officers, police officers and veterinary officers may be authorised to exercise powers under the bill in relation to the declaration of a CBR emergency. For example, a CBRE ambulance officer may exercise the treatment power. A fire officer may exercise the decontamination power and the property destruction power. A CBRE police officer may exercise the detention power, the property seizure power and the identity power. CBRE health officers may exercise the decontamination power and the treatment power amongst others.

Proposed section 29 outlines powers in relation to medical examinations and treatment and section 30 outlines the powers of a CBRE ambulance officer or a CBRE health officer if a person refuses to undergo treatment. Section 43 outlines the reporting mechanism of the minister to this parliament. Within six months after the end of an emergency the minister must table a report in the Legislative Assembly that includes details such as the nature of the emergency, the emergency powers relied on and other matters. The report may also include anything else that the minister considers appropriate.

Modern terrorists are modern-day criminals. These terrorist acts are criminal acts. They have no regard for humanity, no regard for people and no regard for the destruction they cause. They certainly have no regard for the law. They are, in my view, lunatics and nutters on death and destruction

missions. It is better for our state to be prepared and to be ready to deal with such terrorist acts than to be wise in hindsight. Hopefully, the 'retrospectroscope' will not be needed in Queensland with this legislation. I congratulate the minister and officers of the Public Service who have worked so diligently on this bill. I commend the bill to the House.