




Speech By  
**Dale Last**

**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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### **COUNTER-TERRORISM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (8.50 pm): I rise to speak to the Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. There can be no doubt that we live in a vastly different world from that of 10 years ago. As a former police officer, I know full well how important effective legislation is to enable police officers to effectively perform their duties. When our safety and the security of our state is under threat it is imperative that our police officers have the tools in the form of legislation to deal with that threat in a timely manner. There can be nothing more frustrating for a police officer than to watch a criminal walk free or to fail to prevent an offence from occurring because they do not have the necessary legislative powers. As members of the Queensland parliament it is our obligation to ensure that our police officers have the required powers to effectively perform their duties.

We are not talking about minor offences here. We are talking about offences which potentially could cause large-scale loss of life or damage to property. I have coordinated large-scale community events involving up to 80,000 people and have been responsible for the protection of dignitaries from the Governor-General and Prime Minister to the Premier of our own state of Queensland. I cannot tell honourable members the pressure police officers are under at these events to ensure the safety and wellbeing of community members.

On a daily basis we witness terrorism related events occurring around the world and never has the security of our country been under greater threat. I think it is imperative that legislation such as this bill is in place to meet the threat of international and domestic terrorism. Our safety and security should not be compromised because police officers have insufficient powers when investigating an offence. This particularly applies to terrorism related incidents. We know that there have been two terrorist attacks in Australia and a further six planned attacks disrupted by authorities. Whilst Queensland's preventative detention legislation and terrorist emergency powers have never been used, the fact that we have those powers in place is crucial going forward.

The prevention of terrorist attacks is difficult and in many cases extremely complex. We know that terrorist organisations throughout the world are becoming increasingly sophisticated and that Australia can no longer think it is immune from these attacks. We now have credible evidence that high-risk Australian citizens are returning from conflicts in the Middle East, posing a significant threat to our domestic security. As a parliament it is important that we give our law enforcement agencies the capacity to respond to an incident in circumstances where the Commonwealth does not have the ability to respond in time or where they require the state to assist. Whilst Queensland police have the powers under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act and the Public Safety Preservation Act, there are limitations in terms of extraterritorial application. The bill provides a broader extraterritorial application of the Public Safety Preservation Act to ensure that, in addition to the maritime environment, the various emergency powers under the act may be exercised in other Australian jurisdictions.

It would be nice to think that our police officers may never need to exercise their powers under the counterterrorism legislation, but unfortunately there will come a time when they will be required to

do so. Having this legislation in place will give comfort not only to our police but to the broader community, and we should not shy away from the fact that the powers in this act will allow our police officers to detain potential terrorists in order to prevent a possible terrorist attack.

I know that every law-abiding citizen in Queensland will support us in approving these amendments tonight to ensure that our safety and security and that of our children and their children will be protected into the future. I commend the bill to the House.