




Speech By
Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

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COUNTER-TERRORISM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (9.02 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The objectives of the omnibus bill in relation to the Fire and Emergency Services Act, Weapons Act and Police Service Administration Act have been outlined already, so I will keep my brief comments to the specific objectives of the bill as they relate to counterterrorism and the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005.

The current Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act is designed to protect the Queensland community from imminent or recent terrorist attacks while achieving an appropriate balance between individual rights and freedoms. It is intended to strike the right balance between necessary restrictions and safeguards. I recall the original consideration of the bill back in 2005, when significant debate occurred regarding its operation and the protection of individual liberties and freedoms—and rightly so. The bill included unprecedented powers which enabled police to detain persons for up to 14 days to prevent an imminent terrorist attack or for preserving evidence following a recent terrorist attack. In her introductory speech the minister referenced comments made by the then premier Peter Beattie during the debate of the original bill that he hoped these laws would not be needed in 10 years time. Of course, as members are aware, the current national terrorism alert level is high, and these laws are still needed today perhaps now more than ever as Australia experiences the most significant ongoing threat from terrorism that it has ever faced.

Since September 2014 alone, nationally there have been three terrorist attacks and a further six planned attacks that have been disrupted by authorities. Queensland, like other Australian jurisdictions, has residents who are considered a security concern and who are the subject of investigation. The number of individuals travelling overseas to participate in conflicts and their known supporters are increasing, as is the threat of low-tech lone-actor terrorist attacks domestically, such as was experienced in New South Wales recently with the tragic murder of police employee Curtis Cheng. The advice and experience of our police and intelligence agencies suggest that radicalised persons will often self-initiate and self-determine the location and target of attacks, making it much harder to detect and therefore prevent.

While the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act has not been used in Queensland, it remains a valuable tool for police to prevent an imminent terrorist attack or to preserve evidence following a terrorist act should it be needed. Due to a sunset provision, the act is set to expire at midnight on 16 December 2015. The bill before the House seeks to extend the operation of the act. Preventative detention legislation remains a valuable tool to aid the police response to an imminent or recent terrorist attack. The government is appreciative of the fine line that such legislation walks between protecting individual liberties and protecting the community.

I believe that the bill is a timely and balanced response to the threat of terrorism in Queensland, ensuring that the Queensland Police Service continues to have a broad array of powers to address these issues. As the minister has advised, the bill will be amended to require a review to occur within

two years of the extension of the sunset clause and a report is required to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly within three years, striking an appropriate balance. There is no better example of successful counterterrorism operations in Queensland than the efforts of the Queensland Police Service during the recent G20. Their professionalism, training and expertise was put under immense pressure and on show for literally the world to see. It was no small praise when the acting head of the United States Secret Service praised our Queensland Police Service for their handling of the summit. I take this opportunity to thank our police for their efforts in keeping our community safe, whether from the threat of terrorism or other forms of crime and violence. They do an extraordinary job, often in extraordinary circumstances, and they are a service to be proud of.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the Public Safety Business Agency for their efforts and expertise in reviewing this important piece of legislation. I note that the bill has bipartisan support now, as it did in 2005. I commend the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for providing a thorough report into this legislation, and in closing I echo the Deputy Police Commissioner's words that were referenced earlier by the minister, my colleague and member for Morayfield and many other colleagues in the House that the current threat level means that, when it comes to the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act, it is far better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it. I commend the bill to the House.