




Speech By  
**Mark Furner**

**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 November 2015

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

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (7.53 pm): I rise this evening to speak in support of the bill before the House, the Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I thank the minister for her consideration of the four recommendations that were put to the government. As chair of the committee, I believe they are sensible recommendations that will enhance the operation of the bill and make sense in the current climate that we face in our communities. This is an omnibus bill that deals with a number of objectives. I do not intend to go to each and every one of those. There was a provision in the bill that provided preventative detention powers up to three nautical miles. That will be extended to 200 nautical miles. That is consistent with the combined effect of the Queensland and Commonwealth acts in respect to crimes at sea.

In relation to fire safety, the bill amends the definition of 'occupier' in the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 to ensure all providers of accommodation provide a fire-safe environment. There was evidence provided to the committee whereby committee members expressed concerns about the current situation dealing with fire safety. We support those provisions. The committee heard from witnesses who gave evidence and responded to questions on the bill at public hearings on 14 October. The committee recommends that the bill be passed. The committee put forward four recommendations that will be dealt with this evening, including proposing statutory review time frames.

I thank the submitters to the bill, particularly the participants at the committee's hearings. I also thank the Public Safety Business Agency, the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Queensland Police Service for their support and the expert evidence that they provided to the committee. I also thank the committee members. At times we dealt with controversial issues. There was bipartisan support for this bill. The committee supports the recommendations across-the-board and also the passage of the bill through the chamber. I also put on record our thanks to the Parliamentary Library for the research services it provided and also the secretariat staff for their commitment to our committee.

I want to touch briefly on some of the evidence provided to the committee. Deputy Commissioner Barnett spoke about the current threat of terrorism that is not only faced by Australia but also faced around the globe. He stated that the security situation facing Australia is not likely to improve in the near future and the security implications of the Syrian and Iraq conflict will likely impact on Australia for a number of years. So it is not just purely imminent situations; it is beyond. This bill is about forecasting support and protection for our community beyond the inception of the bill. Nationally, since September this year there have been three terrorist attacks and a further six planned attacks that have been prevented. The commissioner said—

We must engage with the vulnerable to build resilience to the propaganda and grooming undertaken by terrorist groups and supporters. We must also assist vulnerable persons and those who have been radicalised to disengage and deradicalise from violent extremism.

While the preventative detention legislation has never been used in Queensland, it remains a valuable tool for police in response to imminent and recent terrorism attacks. Conversely, Mr Keim from

the Bar Association of Queensland, also in response to that issue, gave evidence that the Commonwealth provisions have been used six times but perhaps four times in the last six years. One can see a build-up to the particular issues that have been identified by the evidence that was provided to the committee.

In respect to fire safety, Superintendent Nunn, the executive manager of the Investigation and Compliance Section of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, indicated that in July of this year the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner won a Supreme Court injunction to shut down a budget accommodation building in the Lockyer Valley. The building had housed six itinerant fruit pickers. An inspection of the building revealed that it had no smoke alarms or emergency lighting and travel distances to exits were of such a length that, in the event of a fire, residents would have had difficulty in escaping the premises. The injunction was made permanent, preventing the potential serious injury or death of persons using that accommodation. That is another rational objective of the bill, backed up by evidence before the committee.

When asked why it is necessary to extend the complementary preventative detention laws for 10 years in Queensland when the Australian government is only seeking to extend its legislation for two years and other jurisdictions are seeking to extend theirs for lesser periods, Deputy Commissioner Barnett said—

Obviously the first issue on our horizon, apart from the deteriorating national and international security environment, is the Commonwealth Games—

a real and present concern for Queenslanders and this nation—

which will be with us in April 2018. That is our next significant challenge. If you read all of the general expert analysis about our current serious and deteriorating situation it is generally accepted that the situation is unlikely to improve in the next five years, and people are saying that it is up to a decade or longer that we will be in this current state.

Notwithstanding the evidence of the Police Service, Ms Pink from the Law and Justice Institute Queensland also suggested that the current laws are covered by our police powers. She stated—

One of the most compelling arguments against the continuation of this law is that our existing police powers and criminal laws provide sufficient scope for dealing with the threat of terrorism and again this is supported by the fact that these laws have not been used in the last 10 years.

Notwithstanding that point of view, we do not go out there and create laws or staff a police service on the basis of not knowing where crimes may be committed. Putting those powers in place is a preventive provision, as is the staffing of the Police Service to prevent crimes such as these.

In my previous career in the Senate and as chair of the defence and law committees, I received high-level briefings about real and present threats to our world. Unfortunately, the general public is not made aware of those threats. I am sure that if people knew of the issues that are out, they would have serious concerns about them. Of course, another reason that that information is not readily available is the sensitivity around the intelligence that is provided in those briefings.

Regardless of the evidence the committee heard at its hearings and in submissions received, since the Bali bombings and 9/11 no-one could argue against the fact that our world has really changed. We must provide our communities with all available protections from the threat of terrorism, whether perceived or real. This bill clearly demonstrates the government's commitment and our position as being tough on crime. I commend the bill to the House.