




Speech By
Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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COUNTER-TERRORISM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (8.45 pm): I rise this evening to speak to the Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill before the House. Perhaps as a newcomer to this parliament, I am oblivious to some of the history and reasoning behind some of the legislation that exists in our society. However, I am acutely aware of the justification and reasoning behind the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005, which is the aspect of the bill I wish to speak to tonight. Ten years ago the then premier of Queensland, Peter Beattie, stood in this House and introduced the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act in response to the 7 July 2005 bombings in London. We have heard the stories already of that event, of how 52 civilians were killed and over 700 more were injured in those attacks. It was the United Kingdom's worst terrorist incident since the 1998 Lockerbie bombing, as well as the country's first ever Islamic suicide attack.

My family and I have lived in Townsville for almost 17 years now, and our house is less than one kilometre away from Lavarack Barracks, which is the largest Defence barracks in Australia with approximately 6,500 Defence personnel working there every day. In that 17 years, we have seen the impact of the 9/11 terrorist attack. In that 17 years, we have seen our Defence friends get posted to Timor Leste, Iraq and Afghanistan. Our neighbour, a captain in the Army, completed two tours of Afghanistan as a Chinook chopper pilot and recounted the number of times he would return back to base with numerous bullet holes riddled in his aircraft. My daughter's partner is also a captain who served two tours in Afghanistan, first in the Combat Signals Regiment and then in intelligence. He does not speak about what he saw over there or what went on during his tours. The impact on these two men I hear again and again with the women and men who serve our country.

But why do they do it? Why do they put their lives on the line every time they go overseas with the Defence Force? They do it to fight the war on terror. They do it to defend our country and our freedoms and to keep the innocent safe. Given today we acknowledge Remembrance Day in our calendar, the debt that we owe our men and women of the Australian Defence Force can never be repaid. Our police do exactly the same. They put their lives on the line every day they go to work to protect the vulnerable and to keep our community safe. I thank the police for their role, whether they are protecting us from the threat of terrorism or they are protecting us from other forms of crime and violence.

As members of this House, we should be under no illusions as to the threats that terrorism presents in our communities and our state. The national terrorism alert level is high. However, there is no specific threat to Queensland, which is comforting. Both domestically and abroad, we have continued to see serious incidents of terrorism in a wide variety of forms. None of us will ever forget the recent murder of the New South Wales police worker Curtis Cheng, which was a callous and disturbing act. Similarly, I am sure members of this House can remember the siege at the Lindt cafe and the number of terrorism related operations occurring throughout Australia and, more specifically, in Melbourne recently. We are thankful that we have never had to exercise these powers that were introduced 10

years ago. However, I am satisfied that recent terrorism links across Australia warrant the extension of these powers in Queensland. I hope and pray that we never get to use these in any circumstance. I commend the bill to the House.