




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2016

COUNTER-TERRORISM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.20 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bill. For my government, public and community safety is paramount. The national terrorism threat level in Australia continues to be 'probable' and, in light of the increased frequency of terrorism attacks overseas, in Nice and elsewhere, we need to ensure that Queensland's laws continually evolve to keep pace with an ever-changing environment and to provide our police with the best and most effective tools for countering violent extremism.

As Premier, I am conscious that the security environment is increasingly complex and challenging. It is a priority for this government to ensure that our law enforcement agencies are able to respond effectively to the threats of terrorism now and into the future. The laws proposed in this bill today will expand the capability of the Queensland Police Service when responding to acts of terrorism and natural disasters. Not only will these laws sharpen the tools available to police in handling an emergency, they will also ensure that our laws are consistent with the national approach to countering terrorism. Importantly, there are also appropriate limitations and additional safeguards to ensure these powers are used appropriately.

Significant improvements contained in the bill include enabling a preventative detention order to be made for a person where that person's real name may not be known to police. A police officer will also be able to apply for a preventative detention order electronically, rather than having to physically go before a court or provide a written application prior to making the application. This will save crucial time when a suspected attack is thought to be imminent or when evidence is urgently required to be preserved following an attack. The amendments will also provide police with more effective powers during a declared emergency situation, and this will be particularly critical when lives are at risk. These changes represent a step forward in countering criminal terrorist behaviour. However, the additional powers come with appropriate limitations and additional safeguards to ensure that our fundamental legal principles are upheld.

This important legislation was developed in consultation with other departments and the broader legal community. Once the bill was introduced, it was referred to the parliament's Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for detailed consideration. In considering the bill, the committee invited written submissions from the public and from stakeholders. The committee also received a written briefing from the Public Safety Business Agency as well as oral briefings provided by the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. The committee also considered the policy behind the bill and the application of fundamental legal principles. Following this consultation and after giving the bill detailed consideration, the committee has provided bipartisan support for the bill. The only recommendation made by the committee was that the bill be passed without amendment.

This legislation is in line with Queensland's national obligations to achieve consistency in legislation with the Commonwealth and the other Australian states and territories. This government supports the current raft of proposed changes to Commonwealth legislation which are due to be reintroduced into the Australian parliament in the next parliamentary sittings.

At COAG in April this year, I gave in principle support to a range of other Commonwealth measures currently being developed to better prevent and deal with terrorist activity on our shores. My government has been working alongside the Commonwealth government and has been actively involved in a national committee tasked with developing the most consistent and effective way forward. Queensland is committed to playing its part to ensure that Australia's counterterrorism framework remains responsive to the evolving national security threat and hopes to continue in a collaborative approach to tackling the risk of terrorism. That said, I also recognise the importance of balancing the need to protect Queenslanders with the need to protect basic legal rights. Queensland will continue to ensure that our Public Interest Monitor has an oversight role in national and state level counterterrorism preventative regimes. Queensland was the first state in Australia to introduce a Public Interest Monitor whose role is to ensure that our state has one of the most accountable and transparent police services in Australia.

The Queensland government will also be ensuring that appropriate safeguards and limitations are placed on the laws without compromising the operational effectiveness of these measures. It is important that the right balance be reached between effective counterterrorism laws and effective protection for citizens, and these laws continue to strike this balance. Such laws are only effective if the agencies using the powers are effectively resourced. In addition to the government's existing commitment to resource counterterrorism operations in Queensland, in this year's budget the government allocated additional funding of \$16.2 million over four years for sworn officers and contracted specialists, as well as for operating, training and ancillary costs. This will strengthen the current capability of the Queensland Police Service to profile and assess persons of interest, source intelligence and conduct surveillance and monitoring of those people who are at risk of committing acts of violence, who are proposing to travel to support ISIL or who are returning from these war zones.

My government will also provide \$5 million to develop a business case for a new counterterrorism and community safety centre at the Westgate police training facility. This facility, with its necessary equipment, will boost the counterterrorism capability of police—a necessary step given the increasing number of incidents and operations across Australia. Queensland's counterterrorism arrangements are well entrenched and regularly exercised to ensure they meet the needs of the current threat environment. The Queensland Police Service works closely with the Australian Federal Police and ASIO to identify and investigate security concerns.

Queensland is currently collaborating with the experts in the field on nationwide counterterrorism strategies and effective policies to best manage potential terrorist threats in Australia. My government is also actively implementing initiatives with other Australian jurisdictions. This includes a nationally consistent intervention program initially led by the Queensland Police Service to identify and divert people at risk of violent extremism to intervention services. These laws are an important part of the fight to combat terrorism. The government is also conscious of the need to proactively prevent extremism from occurring in the first place. My government is therefore also committed to enhancing the social cohesion of our communities which, among other things, will contribute towards ensuring Queensland remains a welcoming and safe place. That is something that as Premier I am very conscious of. I want to make sure that we have a respectful debate in Queensland, that we respect one another, that we respect religions. I believe that we have a very diverse community in our state, but better measures targeted towards enhancing social cohesion will make Queensland an even better and safer place to live.

Queensland has allocated \$5 million over three years to deliver a coordinated approach to build social cohesion and reduce the risk of antisocial behaviours and associated violence. To that end, I have appointed the member for Townsville as chair of that committee. That committee is meeting regularly. He is doing an outstanding job, bringing people together from across the state from different backgrounds—

Mr Mander: What is the relevance?

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is extremely relevant because we are talking about social cohesion.

Mr Mander: It is not relevant to the counterterrorism bill.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Absolutely it is.

Mr Mander: It has nothing to do with it.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member for Everton is showing his complete ignorance. As I attend COAG meetings and raise issues about counterterrorism, I know that building social cohesion in the state is fundamental. That is what will make sure that Queensland stands in good stead with the other states as we move forward on this very important issue. As I said, the amendments proposed in the bill before the parliament today will complement Queensland's suite of social cohesion initiatives by ensuring that our laws are effective, balanced and robust. I commend the bill to the House.