




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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COUNTER-TERRORISM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (5.46 pm): I rise to address the Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. It is not unsurprising to me that further measures are required with respect to counterterrorism not only here in Queensland but also across Australia and around the world. In Queensland, conservative politicians and their relevant political parties will always defend our liberties, our right to freedom of speech, our cultural heritage and our much cherished democratic institutions.

My previous speech on counterterrorism in 2015 and the wideranging measures and strategies I raised and suggested in our parliament are absolutely worthy of public debate despite the hysterical rhetoric at the time of senior Queensland Labor government ministers and also the Premier. It is worthy to note that since the speech I gave in 2015 there have been some dreadful atrocities in Europe and other parts of the world.

Some elected members of this Queensland parliament are only too well aware of the fact that there has been an escalation of terrorist related activity in Australia during the past couple of years. Australia has had a number of terrorist incidents resulting in fatalities, together with a number of intended or planned attacks that have been disrupted by our intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The vital work such agencies undertake on behalf of all of us needs to be acknowledged. I have been approached on a number of occasions by constituents in my electorate of Moggill seeking assurances that we have in place the most stringent laws to assist our police with preventing terrorist related activities and other atrocities.

Whilst Queensland and Australia have strict automatic and semi-automatic firearm controls, such strategies have no benefit when a terrorist inspired individual can drive a truck into a packed crowd at over 70 kilometres per hour. The Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 will provide stronger safeguards to both deal with and prevent acts of terrorism and keep Queenslanders safe. The legislative amendments contained within the Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 are an essential component to enhance our strategic and operational capacity to face a growing global threat and defeat those who wish to cause us harm and destroy our freedoms, our values and our key democratic institutions.

As a result of the implementation of the legislation before us, our Queensland Police Service will be equipped with all the necessary powers to enable the QPS to respond effectively and quickly to any public emergency. The importance of our police being able to gather information quickly, to utilise such information effectively, to obtain much needed authorisations expeditiously and to exercise other statutory powers will not only improve overall law enforcement agency performance with respect to terrorism, but could be useful in dealing with natural disasters, accidents and other emergencies that occur here in Queensland. There is a significant body of evidence that extremist groups are targeting vulnerable individuals within our community, to initially groom them and then recruit them for the purposes of carrying out attacks on innocent Australians.

I support this legislation as it will provide our relevant law enforcement agencies in Queensland with the necessary tools that allow for early intervention to prevent a terrorist attack. Strengthening police powers to allow officers to force people or organisations to provide information under declared emergency situations, as outlined in the proposed legislation, is fair and reasonable. While I note the concerns of the Australian Medical Association, the Queensland Council of Civil Liberties and the Bar Association of Queensland, it is my view that it is for overall community safety and public benefit that this legislation is passed and implemented. I commend the Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 to the House.