




Speech By
Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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COUNTER-TERRORISM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (5.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. As we have heard this afternoon, there were only two submissions to the inquiry. However, the committee did receive a written briefing on the bill and a public briefing from the PSBA, the QPS and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. That provided the committee with valuable information about the real and present danger we face on a regular basis. As you would know, Mr Deputy Speaker, when you turn on your television, on a weekly basis you hear of a terrorist act somewhere in the world. We hope that those types of acts do not come to our shores in the future, but it is important that we have the mechanisms and laws in place to ensure our good men and women of the Queensland Police Service, who serve our community with dignity and with fearless conduct, can protect our communities any time of the day or night, seven days a week.

The bill achieves its objectives by amending four acts: the Public Safety Preservation Act 1986; the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005; the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000; and the Corrective Services Act 2006. The committee was able to reach a decision on not only the report but also the bill in recommending the bill's passage through the House. I do welcome the new era of bipartisan support that the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee is experiencing. I look forward to a continuation of that bipartisan support in the future—a bright and fresh endeavour as we welcome the new members to the committee. I am strongly looking for a continuation of that bipartisan support.

I put on record my appreciation of the former police minister, Mrs Jo-Ann Miller, and the current police minister, the Hon. Bill Byrne, in introducing the legislation that makes it possible to ensure our communities are protected. Community safety is an objective of the Palaszczuk Labor government that we take seriously. That is why we are here today debating this particular bill. In 2015 the then police minister introduced the Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As a result, the committee sought submissions in reviewing that particular legislation. That informed our consideration of this piece of legislation as it amends the four acts I mentioned.

We are in a changed world. As I indicated earlier, on a regular basis we see acts of terrorism carried out around the world. I sincerely hope we never see those acts occurring on our shores. The Queensland Police Service advised the committee of terrorism related attacks that had occurred internationally, including recent acts in France and Belgium, in the past 18 months. It advised that nationally there had been a major escalation of terrorism related activity, with three terrorist attacks resulting in fatalities. With an ever-increasing threat of low-tech terrorism, police often need to intervene early to prevent a terrorist attack or act on less information than would be the case in more traditional policing responses. At the public briefing we heard from Queensland Police Service Deputy Commissioner Condon, who said—

Terrorism has become a global issue and Queensland is not exempt from this threat ... The exercise of powers used to disrupt and stop planned terrorist attacks and to prosecute offenders engaged in terrorist related activities, whether as a facilitator or assailant, is an integral part of the Queensland Police Service's multifaceted approach to counterterrorism and protecting the Queensland community.

He went on—

This financial year, ASIO has issued adverse security assessments recommending the cancellation or refusal of over 150 passports for Australians who are linked to extremist groups. This has increased from 93 adverse security assessments in 2014-15 and 45 adverse security assessments in 2013-14.

As members can see, there is a growing influence on those in our community who would do us harm.
He continued—

Many have returned from conflict areas and are considered a security threat within this country, and attacks committed within Sydney and Melbourne have demonstrated the capability of lone actor extremists to invoke fear, injury and death within our communities.

The legislative amendments within this bill are an essential component to enhance our strategic and operational capacity to face this growing global issue and defeat those who wish to cause us harm.

The QPS went on to indicate—

But where we struggle in Queensland, and this bill has highlighted it, is our ability to move quickly and to access that necessary information quickly when an incident is declared. I think that we would be criticised perhaps in an inquiry or coronial if it was found that red tape, for want of a better word, slowed our ability to protect the community.

And rightly so. It is important to ensure the QPS and its officials are well trained and are provided with legislation that meets their needs when those needs arise. The bill provides a number of additional powers, but these powers are not lightly used. Police must be satisfied 'on reasonable grounds'. We heard from the QPS that the powers are not taken lightly; they are exercised on the basis of need when it arises. The QPS did respond to issues raised by the Australian Medical Association, the Queensland Council of Civil Liberties and the Bar Association of Queensland to allay some of the concerns they had raised in consultation with the department.

The bill does provide the power to search a person and the power to search a vehicle without a warrant. Our police men and women do that on a regular basis now; however, this bill will close some loopholes relating to where a vehicle is about to enter or is reasonably suspected of having left a declared area of a terrorist emergency. That ensures the police have the capacity to inspect those vehicles. There are further amendments to the legislation about which I will not go into too much further detail.

We know that the risk profile of the state and the nation has been elevated as a result of international events. The Palaszczuk Labor government has moved quickly to ensure Queenslanders' safety, with more than \$16 million in the budget for police to improve counterterrorism capability and capacity in response to sustained national threat levels. This includes \$788,000 for operational equipment and vehicles. An amount of \$5 million has been allocated to develop a business case for a contemporary counterterrorism and community safety centre at the Westgate police academy.

I come from a policing family. My father was a policeman and I know that he never faced the current threats, and I am pleased he did not. He went through a period of time where the greatest threat that he had was picking up a crim and putting him in the back of the car and perhaps being engaged in a bit of fisticuffs when taking him in cuffs to the watch house. That was the type of terror and threat that he faced, but we are in a different world these days and that is why we need legislation like this before us. I must put on record, as I always do with respect to policing, the honour, the dignity and the ethical standards that the men and women of the Ferny Grove Police Station in my electorate of Ferny Grove show on a regular basis. Last week I was privileged to be at the headquarters representing the minister in giving bravery awards, particularly for Sergeant Rob Colthorpe who was presented an award for bravery in dealing with his operations as a serving police officer. I commend the bill to the House.