




Speech By
Hon. Bill Byrne

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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COUNTER-TERRORISM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (9.51 pm), in reply: I thank members for their bipartisan support for the bill. This is about as warm and fuzzy as it gets in this House, apparently.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr BYRNE: Sometimes. All members here this evening appreciate the need to stay on the front foot with the development of laws that enhance a professional and timely response to terrorism and other emergent situations in this state. I thank the Queensland Police Service for their vigilance and expertise in addressing the persistent threat that terrorism poses to our community. Resolving terrorist incidents is a difficult and dangerous task, and we must make every endeavour to ensure our police officers have the right tools to complete that task.

The least desirable circumstance in a time of crisis is to have any delay or procrastination that may affect the safe resolution of an emergency incident. As an emergency incident unfolds, the identity of the person, their motivation and whether any accomplices are involved is often unclear. Rapid information exchange in these early stages is vital. Of course, intentional incidents such as terrorist related emergencies are not the only circumstance to which the information requirement provisions will apply. Gathering information during a cyclone or flood event about vulnerable persons who may reside in an area or who need priority evacuation is just one example of where the exchange of information between agencies will prove valuable. I acknowledge Queensland Corrective Services for having the foresight to progress a number of efficiencies including the collection and storage of biometric information of prisoners for the purposes of identification and the enabling of registered nurses to examine certain prisoners to ensure their medical needs are met.

I will now address a couple of specific issues raised by members during the debate. I note concerns of the member for Coomera about the potential influence that people who hold extremist views can exert over vulnerable persons and specifically how this might flourish in correctional facilities. Queensland Corrective Services works closely with various law enforcement agencies in this state, nationally and internationally regarding this significant concern. Prisoners, whether charged with terrorism related offences or otherwise identified as holding violent extremist beliefs, are proactively managed by QCS according to specific risk factors. We are currently managing two prisoners charged with terrorism related offences. QCS maintains dedicated intelligence portfolios to ensure relevant information and intelligence is readily sourced and considered in the management of these prisoners.

This government has shown, through two tranches of counterterrorism legislation in less than 12 months, that it is committed to providing our law enforcement agencies with all the tools necessary to combat terrorism. We will continue to do this through a number of measures. An integral part of the government's strategy includes developing effective relationships within our diverse community to promote solidarity and thereby reduce the effects and influence of extremist views. A strong but

measured approach has been taken to protect Queensland to the greatest extent possible through the effective management and resolution of any type of emergency. The Palaszczuk government has responded quickly to the ever-changing landscape of the terrorism threat, enhancing our state's reputation as a safe and secure place to live and visit.

I take this opportunity to emphasise that this bill is essential in ensuring our law enforcement agencies can respond rapidly to a terrorist incident. Acting quickly has the potential to reduce the impact of terrorist acts and prevent further terrorist activities. In saving lives, minutes matter and seconds count.

I conclude by acknowledging one enlightening part of the debate, which was the member for Currumbin talking about asymmetric threats. I thought that was fantastic and I cannot wait for her to illuminate us further on fourth-generation warfare.