




Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH**

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**COUNTER-TERRORISM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.29 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. Before I speak in detail in relation to the bill before the House this afternoon, it is hard to believe that it has been 16 years since that infamous night—I can recall that around 10 o'clock that night I was watching *The West Wing*.

**Mr Mander:** Great show.

**Mr MINNIKIN:** I take that interjection from the member for Everton. It was indeed a great show. On a serious note and tone, I remember that around halfway through that episode of *The West Wing* Jim Waley came on the news with a news-breaking item. Apparently a light plane had crashed into one of the twin towers in New York City. It went back to *The West Wing*. Then about 10 minutes later it went back to the tragic events that had unfolded in New York that particular morning. My first thoughts were in relation to the whole issue of what terrorism meant to the Western world. The next day I was working as a shopping centre manager at Albany shopping village—it is something that has stayed with me all of these years later. Literally hundreds and hundreds of customers were like the living dead. They were like zombies. Not one person was saying a word. It was indeed quite surreal. Fast forward 16 years later to 2017 and here we are, sadly, debating this bill, although it is not really a debate because I note that the LNP will not be opposing the bill. The committee has done good work on this particular piece of legislation and the bill will receive support today, as it should do. Nonetheless, I would still like to make my contribution given that background.

I note that the primary objective of the Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is to amend the Public Safety Preservation Act 1986, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Terrorism (Protective Detention) Act 2005. Those amendments go to the very heart of enhancing public and police officer safety and to ensuring that police are able to respond rapidly and indeed effectively to terrorist acts and other critical incidents which pose a serious risk to our present way of life. The further objectives of the bill are to enhance the operational effectiveness of surveillance device powers under the PPRA and to amend the PSPA and the PPRA to provide power for police to destroy explosives.

Sadly, Australia, like all Western nations, is facing at the moment a significant ongoing threat from terrorism. Indeed, it is a scourge on our democratic freedoms and our very way of life. I note that from September 2014, nationally, there has been an escalation of terrorist related activity with four terrorist attacks having been committed, with three very tragically resulting in fatalities. A further 12 imminent planned attacks have been disrupted. As a result of 27 separate counterterrorism operations, 62 people have been charged. This increased threat is expected, very sadly, to endure for the foreseeable future; hence the importance of this particular bill that is being discussed this afternoon.

Contemporary terrorism methodology has seen a shift from hierarchical cells making detailed plans for mass casualty and infrastructure attacks to low-tech, lone actor, terrorist attacks—lone wolf perpetrators, so to speak. These low-tech attacks perpetrated by an individual or small group are

exponentially harder to detect and therefore to disrupt. There may be no visibility of planning and little or no direct communication between the terrorist group and other attackers within that particular evil network. The most likely scenario for a terrorist attack, very sadly, in this great country is a low-tech attack perpetrated by an individual or possibly a small group. This may involve the use of readily available weapons such as knives, vehicles, firearms or improvised explosive devices.

The details of the bill drill down and go a long way to combat these particular measures. In relation to the Public Safety Preservation Act 1986, the proposed amendments, amongst many being debated this afternoon, include clarifying that the police search powers include the power to search devices such as mobile phones or tablet computers in a declared emergency situation or a declared terrorist emergency; giving police the essential power to require a person to provide assistance to access a person's electronic device in a declared emergency situation or a declared terrorist emergency; and, furthermore, clarifying that an emergency situation area can surround a moving activity such as a person or vehicle.

The amendments before us this afternoon in relation to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act include a number of very important provisions. They include, amongst several, clarifying that a surveillance warrant or emergency authorisation can authorise the use of an existing device as a surveillance device; enabling a commissioned officer to authorise the installation and use of a tracking device to assist in taking persons into lawful custody in certain circumstances; and removing the requirement for a surveillance device warrant to specify neighbouring premises over which police may cross to gain access to the target premises, unless covert entry into a building is required to gain access to the target premises.

The extent of recent international attacks that have been tragically projected on our TVs over the last six to 12 months, with particular reference to the tragedy of what has occurred in Europe in the last six to nine months—and a lot of attacks have been foiled in some cases—means that we can never, ever take anything for granted. We must remain as vigilant as we can against any possible threat to our wonderful way of life. In doing so, we need to listen to the trained law enforcement experts—the Queensland Police Service, the Australian Federal Police, the Crime and Corruption Commission and our intelligence agencies—to ensure that our laws enable a swift response that either defuses an attack or responds to one in a manner that prevents loss of life and, indeed, catches the perpetrators.

We do hope that all the powers that are being implemented in this legislation are never, ever needed in this great state, but, like anything, we also need to be completely realistic. These are extensive powers and they are needed at this particular point in time. It goes without saying that we must always ensure, where we can, that judicial oversight and monitoring of these particular powers acts to ensure that they are used effectively and appropriately and balance one's individual liberties at all times. We must trust that the advice from the Queensland Police Service that has informed this bill justifies the necessity of these additional powers and they will be reviewed in the future to ensure relevance and correct application.

This bill is very pertinent in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast next year. I have to make this comment though. It is disappointing, as some other speakers on this side of the chamber have said, that the Labor Party have not used this great opportunity to update bail and parole laws that they agreed to as part of the COAG agreement on 9 June this year.

At the end of the day, the price of freedom is constant vigilance. There is no way in the world that it gives anyone great delight in having to get up here this afternoon and speak on a topic such as this. At the end of the day, we can never, ever take our basic freedoms for granted. I am pleased to be able to contribute to this debate.