




Speech By
Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

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JUSTICE LEGISLATION (LINKS TO TERRORIST ACTIVITY) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (4.05 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Justice Legislation (Links to Terrorist Activity) Amendment Bill 2018. As we have already heard, the objectives of this bill are to support a national framework to ensure there is a consistent national effort to prevent and respond to terrorist threats and to implement the Council of Australian Governments—COAG—agreement that there will be a presumption that neither bail nor parole would be granted to those persons who have demonstrated support for, or have links to, terrorist activity.

These objectives are achieved by reversing the statutory presumption in favour of bail for any adult or child offender who has previously been convicted of a terrorism offence or who is, or has been, subject to a control order under the Commonwealth Criminal Code; creating a presumption against parole for prisoners who have been convicted of a terrorism offence or who are the subject of a control order as well as those who have promoted terrorism; giving the courts the discretion to fix a parole eligibility date rather than a parole release date for offenders with previous terrorist convictions and those who are subject to a control order, or who have promoted terrorism; removing the discretion of a sentencing court to order a release date for a child that is any earlier than after serving 70 per cent of a period of detention; and to require conditions to be imposed on the supervised release of a child.

I note the work done by the committee in its assessment of this bill. I also note that the stakeholders who made submissions to the bill were, in most part, supportive of its objectives and methods of achieving them. The Bar Association of Queensland, the Parole Board, the Youth Advocacy Centre, two academics from the Queensland University of Technology School of Law and the Queensland Law Society each recognise the government's responsibility to minimise the threat posed to the public by terrorism and offered some support to the bill.

On 9 June 2017, COAG agreed to ensure that there would be the presumption against the granting of bail and parole to persons who have demonstrated support for, or have links to, terrorist activity. Later that same year at a special meeting on counterterrorism, COAG agreed that the 9 June 2017 decision should be underpinned by a nationally consistent approach. It was at that meeting that it was agreed that close cooperation between Commonwealth and state agencies is the bedrock of our national counterterrorism effort.

Although we mourn the recent events in New Zealand, where an Australian born terrorist was responsible for unleashing his murderous rage on innocent victims, there is a real need to remain vigilant in our own backyard. We are not immune to this purge on our society—the actions of a few that wreak devastation on the lives of everyday hardworking men, women and children.

These amendments have been a long time coming and it is disappointing that this government has dragged its heels. New South Wales led the way in introducing new laws to provide greater protection to its citizens. It is disappointing that it has taken two years to strengthen laws in this state to protect our communities against terrorism. There is no greater fear in our society than the threat of terrorism and unprovoked violence against innocent individuals.

Queenslanders have a right to feel safe, to live in safe communities and to go about their daily lives without fear. There is no room for complacency in the ongoing battle against terrorism, an ideological warfare in our community. Some of the submissions did raise concerns around balancing the preservation of fundamental legal principles and infringing on individual rights and liberties. Terrorists, by virtue of their actions, forgo these rights and liberties just as they deny the rights and liberties of their innocent victims. The real question is whether or not the law itself is framed in a manner that addresses the ultimate human right to life. This must remain our highest priority.

Given the track record of this government and its lacklustre laws which protect the rights of offenders rather than victims, it is imperative that we strengthen our current legislation to ensure that we protect the community against these sorts of unprovoked and random attacks. Our laws must not only enshrine protection but also ensure swift and decisive punishment to those who threaten the safety of our community. Queenslanders deserve reassurance that their safety and that of their families is this government's No. 1 priority. That is why, as the custodians of our citizens' safety, we must send a very clear message to any would-be terrorist that they will be subject to penalties consistent with the crimes that they are committing. There is no room for sentences that do not meet community expectations or fail to deter would-be or repeat offenders.

Reversing the presumption against bail and parole signals our intent to deal swiftly and with purpose. These amendments are an important step in the process of strengthening the security of our state and its people. For too long this government has failed to listen, to act with purpose, intent and integrity, risking the safety of our communities. We can no longer accept political motivations or excuses. There must be a strong bipartisan approach. We must speak with one voice in order to try to shut down the threat of terrorism completely in this state. The parliament must take a tough stance on terrorism and reversing the presumption against bail and parole is one way to achieve this. Terrorism remains a major security challenge for Australia and that is why the LNP supports this bill which toughens Queensland's stance on terrorism.