




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR OODGEROO

Record of Proceedings, 28 March 2019

JUSTICE LEGISLATION (LINKS TO TERRORIST ACTIVITY) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (5.04 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Justice Legislation (Links to Terrorist Activity) Amendment Bill 2018. I want to start by putting on record my condolences to the people and families of Christchurch who have suffered terribly in the recent terrorist attacks on local mosques. No individual should ever have to suffer such a violent act. No family should ever have to suffer the loss of a loved one through such a violent act. No-one should ever have to witness such a violent act. No house of faith should ever be the site of such a violent act, whether a mosque, church, temple or other sacred site. Through social media, the world should never have to view such a violent act.

I was approached by TV media for an interview about my view of the Christchurch terrorist act. I was approached in several capacities—as a politician, as someone who has worked professionally with Muslim people in Muslim majority countries and in Australia in my capacity in aid and development overseas, as a lecturer and academic in multiculturalism and intercultural relations, as a postgraduate researcher of Christian-Muslim relations, and as a Christian leader and a friend of Muslims. My response was this. We should ‘mourn with those who mourn’, quoting the Bible, Romans 12:15. Our first response should be to mourn the loss of human life and to mourn the suffering of individuals and families, and I do mourn with those who have suffered greatly and I continue to mourn. Now the work is underway to more fully understand what has happened in New Zealand, to learn lessons from it and for governments to review and strengthen legislation. In this regard, we support this legislation today as it moves toward making us safer here in Australia.

The policy objectives of the bill include: to support a national framework to ensure that there is a consistent national effort to prevent and respond to terrorist threats; and to implement the COAG agreement that there will be a presumption that neither bail nor parole will be granted to those persons who have demonstrated support for, or who 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 a court the discretion to fix a parole eligibility date rather than a parole release date for offenders with previous terrorism convictions, and those who are the subject of a control order or who have promoted terrorism; and 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.

Terrorism remains a major security challenge for Australia, which is why the LNP supports this bill which toughens Queensland’s stance on terrorism. We will always support tough measures to guard against the risk of a terrorist incident here in Queensland. This is why we took a policy to the last state election which included a presumption against bail and a presumption against parole. COAG agreed to the presumption against bail and the presumption against parole back in 2017. I note that as others have.

The parliament must be seen as taking a tough stance on terrorism, and reversing the presumption against bail and parole is one way to achieve this. I note that comment has been made about the impact on FLPs and, in my view, in the context of terrorism it is warranted, but a word of caution. In terms of applying strong laws, we must always be careful that what we do and how we do it is just and appears to be just. I say that because our enemies—those who would radicalise others—look for opportunities to claim that Western democracies do not treat Muslim people fairly. They seek to exploit the appearance of any form of injustice and to use that appearance to propagate their radical and violent messages.

Strong laws, even ones that may breach FLPs, could be used to tip the scales in favour of jihadists who seek to radicalise two particular groups of people. The first are second generation young Muslim Australians who can feel sometimes that they have missed out on the opportunities that a Western democracy should have brought them. Their parents have come from often Muslim majority countries with a great hope of opportunity here in Australia, and they have not sometimes seen the full opportunities flow to their children, to the second generation. That is a problem. Poverty, a lack of jobs and a whole range of other areas feed into that. They may get the appearance that the system is unjust towards them.

The second group is young non-Muslim Australian converts to radical jihadist violent forms of Islam. Radical groups target young non-Muslim Australians in the juvenile and adult justice systems in particular. They present their simplistic, idealistic, violent form of faith as a lifestyle that will help these already often violent young offenders. They are two areas of warning and two areas where we need to be careful to be seen to be just. I am grateful for the opportunities that I have had over the last several years to work with Islamic councils and to talk with them about how we work with those who are being radicalised in our justice system, and that is an ongoing issue.

Terrorism in all its forms is a scourge on our society, whether from white supremacists or jihadi Islamists, whether mass events or lone wolf attacks. Violence is no way to solve the problems between people and societies. I call on all people of goodwill to work harder to resolve differences in a peaceful manner. We must also protect the freedoms of our way of life. Having travelled the world and worked in many countries, I have come to the conclusion that we have one of the best multicultural societies in the world. Our Judaeo-Christian foundation of loving one's neighbour as oneself, friendship and mateship, acceptance, forgiveness and the strength of the family unit among other Christian values have made our nation great. In our tolerance and acceptance of others we must still keep our guard up to fend off and thwart the actions of extremists and terrorists, whether homegrown or from outside, who mean us harm. I support the bill.