




Speech By  
**Dr Christian Rowan**

**MEMBER FOR MOGGILL**

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## **JUSTICE LEGISLATION (LINKS TO TERRORIST ACTIVITY) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (5.11 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Justice Legislation (Links to Terrorist Activity) Amendment Bill 2018. From the outset I would like to place on record my condolences and offer support on behalf of the constituents of the electorate of Moggill to the people of Christchurch and New Zealand following the heinous and frankly unimaginable act of terror carried out just a fortnight ago. I would also like to support the sentiments expressed in this House, particularly by our Speaker in correspondence with the Rt Hon. Trevor Mallard MP, the Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives. While the rivalry between Australians and our friends across the Tasman Sea can often reach historic proportions, particularly on the Rugby field, I am proud to say that it has always been good natured and there is far more that unites the great people of New Zealand and Australia than has ever, or will ever, divide us.

It is a sad reality that we live in a time when terrorism, be it here or abroad, is a constant, ongoing concern. Terrorism does not discriminate. By its very nature it is designed to cause the greatest amount of harm, sow countless seeds of hate and inflict as much pain as possible on victims, families and various communities. As legislators and as citizens we must forever be vigilant and ensure that the darkness of terrorism never receives even a slither of light to allow it to flourish. Particularly as legislators, we must do all we can to ensure that those tasked with keeping us safe from such vile acts of hate have every strategy and tool available at their disposal.

To that end, this bill before the House will support a national framework to ensure a consistent national effort to prevent and respond to terrorist threats, implementing a commitment that was made by the Council of Australian Governments in 2017. By way of further background, following the commitment that was reached at COAG in 2017, the Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee developed nationally consistent principles in consultation with each Australian jurisdiction. Principle 1 is that the presumption against bail and parole should apply to categories of persons who have demonstrated support for, or links to, terrorist activities. Principle 2 is that high legal thresholds should be required to overcome the presumption against bail and parole. Principle 3 is that the implementation of the presumption against bail and parole should draw on and support the effectiveness of the joint counterterrorism team model. Principle 4 is that implementing a presumption against bail and parole should appropriately protect sensitive information.

Under this legislation, the policy objectives are achieved by a number of mechanisms. Given the time remaining, I will not outline all of those. In achieving these objectives, I note in report No. 30 of the parliament's Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee that—

Advice from the Department was that stakeholders that responded generally recognise the responsibility of government to minimise the risk to the community posed by terrorism, but consider such laws must be balanced against the preservation of fundamental principles of law and infringe on rights and liberties only to the extent that is necessary.

Such reservations by stakeholders have been canvassed well, both in the committee's report and by many members who have contributed to the debate already today. However, I will say this. I agree that it is never easy to propose or enact laws that may infringe on citizens' rights and liberties. We

rightfully take pride in our great institutions and freedoms that ensure our state and nation is one of the great free societies and democracies the world has known. However, as I said earlier, terrorism does not discriminate and the constant threat and challenges it poses means we must be ever vigilant.

That is why we on this side of the House support this bill, which toughens Queensland's stance on terrorism. Equally, the Liberal National Party will always support tough measures which guard against the risk of a terrorist incident in Queensland. We make no apologies for holding those who seek to do us the greatest harm to account. In fact, I must highlight that it was the Liberal National Party that took a policy to the last state election which included a presumption against bail and a presumption against parole which, pleasingly, we see in this bill today. That was in 2017. As I said at the start of my speech, this bill implements a commitment that was made by COAG in 2017. We are now in 2019 and so Queenslanders have every right to demand why it has taken nearly two years for the Labor Party to act—two years in which Queenslanders have had to wait for the Palaszczuk Labor government to ensure Queensland honours its commitment to support a national framework and ensure a consistent national effort. When it comes to community safety, national security and, ultimately, combatting terrorism, we cannot afford to have a government that suffers from inertia.

In closing, I want to restate the LNP's unapologetic commitment to protecting our community and doing all that we can to extinguish terrorism. My views on terrorism and terrorism related offences since first being elected in 2017 have been clear and consistent. I would like to thank the members of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, including my colleagues the member for Southern Downs and member for Lockyer, for their consideration of this bill; the LNP's shadow Attorney-General and shadow minister for justice and the LNP's shadow minister for police and counterterrorism for their contributions; and, of course, the fine men and women of our national security agencies, our counterterrorism units, our police, and federal and state law enforcement agencies for their continued efforts in keeping all Australians safe from the threat of terrorism.

In my remaining time can I also say that, in order to tackle terrorism and some of the violence that we are seeing in relation to people from various faiths and cultures, we certainly need leadership, and we need bipartisan leadership. It was a pleasure to attend the Harmony Day reception on Tuesday night that was held here and see the leadership from both sides of politics. The event was hosted by the Premier and attended by the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs as well as the Leader of the Opposition and many other members of parliament. Unless we have respect and tolerance, particularly for people of various faiths and backgrounds, unless we work together as legislators in this place and as community leaders and work with community organisations and those groups as well to foster that respect, that compassion and that tolerance, we run the real risk of having further disharmony and issues that arise not only in communities here in Queensland but also across Australia. I believe it is very important that we collectively and collaboratively work together to do that. I pay respect to the Harmony Day reception that was held the other night and the many people from different faiths and backgrounds who attended it.

In conclusion, I support the bill that is before us today. I am sure that it will contribute, in part, to keeping our communities safe right across Queensland.