The Martin Government today announced that it would introduce a new Anti-Terrorism Act during the first sittings of next year, strengthening police powers to deal with potential terrorist risks.

Following the horrific events in Bali and the general warning on terrorist threats issued by the Federal Government, the Territory Government has been reviewing all aspects of its security arrangements including strengthening Territory laws.

"The Northern Territory’s capacity to deal with any terrorist threat or event will be improved by consolidating existing police powers into one act and broadening those powers," Ms Martin said.

"This will involve legislative changes allowing police to deal with specific terrorism conditions and the emerging threats of chemical, biological and radiological incidents.

"While the Territory currently has a number of laws which deal broadly with emergency situations, these laws were developed in a different era when the greatest threats faced were floods, cyclones and fires – not acts of senseless and random terrorism.

"We will introduce specific legislation to help prevent or crack down on terrorist threats and events."

Ms Martin said that recent security warnings highlighted the need to ensure police and emergency services have the best tools at their disposal to maximise the security and protection of Territorians.

"Existing powers are contained in a number of different Acts and are subject to certain limitations," she said.

"The Territory Government wants to see a strong, uniform national approach to tackling terrorism – with a focus on effective local powers.

"We will continue to work closely with the Federal Government to ensure our new anti-terrorism act works seamlessly with the new national terrorism laws being developed by the Commonwealth.

"The new Act will focus on counter terrorism and cover a number of issues such as search and seizure powers and amendments to better respond to chemical, biological and radiological incidents.

"We will carefully draft a new package of measures which will strike the right balance between giving our emergency services the tools they need to fight terrorism as well as protecting the personal rights of Territorians."


to the top