STRONGER POLICE POWERS IN FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

Northern Territory Police will be given stronger powers in the fight against terrorism under new legislation to be introduced into Parliament tomorrow, Police Minister Paul Henderson said.

The Terrorism (Emergency Powers) Amendment Bill will introduce a strengthened national regime to deal with terrorism threats and acts agreed to by COAG.

“The changing focus of terrorism means we must continue to look at new ways to protect Territorians against potential terrorism threats,” Mr Henderson said.

“These amendments are designed to give Police stronger tools to effectively prepare for, prevent and respond to a terrorist act or threat.

The Bill includes a number of new measures including:
- New Preventative Detention Orders – under the Act, Police will be able to apply to the Supreme Court for an Order approving the detention of a person for up to 14 days if they are suspected of preparing for or engaging in a terrorist act.
- New police powers to declare a public place a special area when Police believe there is a reasonable threat of a terrorist act occurring, giving police the power to stop, search and detain people in that area.
- Allowing police to make an application to a Judge for a covert search warrant for locations where they believe a terrorist act has or may be committed.
- Expanding police powers to allow them to enter and search the premises of a person suspected of being involved in planning or committing a terrorist act even if that person is not present.

“These new measures and are designed to strike the balance between ensuring the freedom of Territorians and the need for law enforcement to counter terrorism and will be strictly controlled,” said Mr Henderson.

“The amendments, along with existing counter-terrorism laws, will equip police with special investigative and preventative tools to help protect Territorians in the fight against terrorism.”

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