On the eve of the national summit on terrorism in Canberra, Chief Minister Clare Martin says she is confident that the Territory already has comprehensive anti-terror laws in place.

“I, along with all other Territorians, can be assured that we have some of the toughest laws in the country to protect our homes, families and communities,” Ms Martin said.

“The bottom line is we need to protect Territorians against any potential terrorist threat.

“While we need to be tough on terror, we also need to strike a balance to protect our civil liberties.” Ms Martin said.

The Territory wants to see any new measures based on the following principles:

- Judicial oversight
- Access to legal representation and
- A sunset review mechanism

“These will build on our existing counter terrorism laws under the Terrorism (Emergency Powers) Act 2003, which is one the toughest in the country.

“We need to sensibly think about what is proposed in light of our existing powers and ensure we maintain public confidence - otherwise any efforts to deal with terrorism will be hampered.

“It is essential than any steps to toughen our response to terrorist threats, need to be tempered by assurances of judicial oversight along with adequate legal representation for detainees.

New arrangements for airport security will see police security commanders at major airports, including Darwin and Alice Springs. While supporting the concept, Ms Martin noted that the details of the model need to discussed at the forum and new arrangements need to be practical for the Territory.

“While Australians have become increasingly used to searches at major sporting events, concerts and airports we need to ensure this is based on reasonable intelligence.
“We must have the opportunity to examine closely what is proposed and the Commonwealth must fund these new measures,” Ms Martin said.

The forum will also receive an update on a range of security matters, including the use of CCTV, an action plan to improve relationships with the Islamic community and a framework to improve and strengthen identity security for all Australians.

ENDS

Contact: Fred McCue 0401 119 792