
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

WATCHING BRIEF ON THE WAR ON TERRORISM

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

June 2004
Canberra

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Foreword

The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States changed the global strategic security environment in fundamental ways. Governments throughout the world, including Australia, are responding to these threats to security.

Australia's response included a new national framework for counter-terrorism arrangements. Under the framework responsibility for national terrorist situations rests with the Commonwealth. The new arrangements were formalised in an intergovernmental agreement signed by premiers, chief ministers and the Prime Minister on 24 October 2002, in the aftermath of the Bali bombing.

As a priority the Government strengthened coordination arrangements for counter-terrorism policy and brought the coordination of policy issues under the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The States and Territories were to remain responsible for first response to emergencies occurring within their jurisdictions.

On 22 May 2002 the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade (JSCFADT) announced that it would conduct a Watching Brief on the War on Terrorism. The purpose of the Watching Brief was to enable Parliament to monitor, consider and report on Australia's ongoing commitment to the War on Terrorism. In the wake of the Commonwealth's new counter-terrorism policy and co-ordination arrangements the Watching Brief focussed on an examination of Australia's ability to manage the consequences of a terrorist attack with particular emphasis on the capacity of each state and territory to respond effectively.

Senator A Ferguson
Chair
June 2004



Membership of the Committee

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Senator A Eggleston

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Terms of reference

In accordance with paragraph 1 of its resolution of appointment, and without limiting its ongoing Watching Brief on the War on Terrorism, the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade resolves to inquire into and report on the preparedness of Commonwealth, State and the Territory governments and agencies to respond to and manage the consequences of a terrorist attack on Australia.



List of abbreviations

ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AFP	Australian Federal Police
APS	Australian Protective Service
CBR	Chemical, biological and radiological
CBRN	Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear
CCTC	Commonwealth Counter -Terrorism Committee
DIMIA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
DOD	Department of Defence
DOTARS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
EMA	Emergency Management Australia
IRR	Incident Response Regiment
NCC	National Crisis Centre
NCTC	National Counter-Terrorism Committee
NCTP	National Counter-Terrorism Plan

NSC	National Security Committee of Cabinet
PM&C	The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
PSCC	Protective Security Co-ordination Centre
PSM	Protective Security Manual
SCC	State or Territory Crisis Centre
TAG	Tactical Assault Group



List of recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Government review the rationale for emergency response equipment allocations to the States and Territories under the National Counter Terrorism Agreement, taking into account the relatively more significant requirements of the larger jurisdictions.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that DOTARS should carry out a security risk assessment of Hobart airport to determine whether 24 hour surveillance capacity is required.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the National Counter Terrorism Committee ensure, by means of a National Agreement if necessary, the interoperability of communications for police and emergency services across Australia.

The Committee also recommends that EMA negotiate with the states to pursue memoranda of understanding with commercial broadcasters to provide emergency messages to the community similar to those being arranged with the ABC. The Committee urges the completion of memoranda of understanding as a matter of priority.

Recommendation 4

The National Counter Terrorism Committee should assess and report on the arrangements put in place between state and territory authorities and the private owners of critical infrastructure within each jurisdiction to ensure the adoption of best practice security principles for infrastructure protection.

Recommendation 5

The committee recommends that the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) should review the security arrangements in place at all airports subject to its regulation on a regular basis and report on them in DOTARS annual report.