

Queensland

Counter Terrorism Response Planning and Administration

- 6.1 In its Submission to the Committee's inquiry, the Queensland Government maintained that it had adopted a proactive stance in developing the State's counter terrorism capability and had cooperated fully with the national program of enhancement under the National Counter Terrorism Agreement.
- 6.2 The Queensland Government tested its response capacity by means of Exercise Fast Ball, held in Brisbane from 29 September to 3 October 2003. The Exercise encompassed a series of integrated deployment exercises and training exercises and involved Commonwealth, State and local government agencies.
- 6.3 In February 2003 the Queensland Government established the Security Planning and Coordination Unit within the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Counter Terrorism Coordination Unit within the Queensland Police Service. The role of the two units is to provide whole of government coordination of security and counter terrorism related matters, to implement counter terrorism projects on critical infrastructure and government agency preparedness, to support counter terrorism training exercises and to liaise with the Commonwealth, other states and local government and the private sector on counter terrorism issues.¹
- 6.4 An overview of the Queensland Government's strategic policy on counter terrorism was provided to the Committee by the Director General of the

1 Government of Queensland, Submission No 14, pp. 4-5

Queensland Department of Premier and Cabinet who drew attention to four particular focus areas:

Integral to Queensland's strategy are four counter-terrorism projects. These projects are critical infrastructure, government agency preparedness, mass gatherings infrastructure and hazardous materials projects. It is worth noting that, while the critical infrastructure work is part of the national agenda, the other three projects represent a proactive stance by the Queensland Government.²

- 6.5 The Department of Premier and Cabinet drew attention to the fact that the Queensland approach to counter terrorism centred on cooperation at the multi agency level and between all levels of government:

Through these projects the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Queensland Police Service, in conjunction with other relevant state government agencies—in particular, the Department of Emergency Services—have engaged multiple stakeholders, including local government and the private sector.³

- 6.6 The involvement of local government in particular has been progressed by local government membership of the steering committee for the State's critical infrastructure protection project.⁴

- 6.7 The Director of the Queensland Department of Emergency Services, provided the Committee with a summary of the planning and administrative structure for emergency services response:

In Queensland the Department of Emergency Services provides coordinated and integrated fire, ambulance, counter-disaster and rescue services, covering all phases of emergency and disaster management. Over the past three years Queensland has reviewed its arrangements and put in place a range of measures to enable it to effectively manage the consequences of a large-scale emergency, including responses to chemical, biological, radiological, incendiary or explosive—CBRIE—incidents.⁵

- 6.8 The Queensland Police Commissioner told the Committee that the Queensland Police Service (QPS) had maintained a sound capacity to prevent, respond to and recover from a terrorist incident under the new National Counter Terrorism Committee organisational structure. In policy terms the Queensland Police Service 'subscribes to the all hazards
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2 L Keliher, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 91

3 L Keliher, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 91

4 L Keliher, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 91

5 M J Kinnane, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 94

approach to emergency management' and its capabilities are being continually tested and subject to a process of continuous improvement.⁶

6.9 The Commissioner also noted the coordinated role played by the Queensland police in the State's counter terrorism strategy:

The Counter Terrorism Coordination Unit has been implemented to manage Queensland Police support and involvement with joint projects; in particular with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Security Planning and Coordination Unit...Interoperability is a key aspect of the QPS approach to counter terrorism. For example, QPS officers have been seconded to the Australian Federal Police joint counter-terrorism team. Arrangements with other agencies for specific categories of incident have been agreed and documented in plans such as the multi agency response to a CBR incident plan.⁷

6.10 Queensland's Chief Health Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the plans and administrative arrangements for responding to a health or medical emergency in Queensland:

Queensland's emergency health system is advised by a joint interdepartmental committee, called the Queensland Emergency Medical System Advisory Committee, QEMSAC. This committee reports to the director-general and the ministers for both the Department of Health and the Department of Emergency Services. The scope of the committee's activities is to achieve a whole-of-government approach to emergency health care. Queensland's emergency health plan is a sub-plan of the state's disaster plan and in turn of course there are sub-plans for various elements of the health, including mental health, public health et cetera. Queensland takes an all-hazards and all-agency approach to emergency health care built on existing resources and everyday practice. Our health response to a terrorism incident would thus be based on this all-hazards approach, although taking into consideration security aspects.⁸

6.11 As in other states, Queensland's counter terrorism administrative machinery is based around principles of high level communication and administrative coordination across all levels of government and involving the private sector where required.

6 R Atkinson, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 93.

7 R Atkinson, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 93.

8 G J Fitzgerald, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 96.

State and Commonwealth Counter Terrorism Legislative Consistency

- 6.12 The Queensland Government's Submission to the Committee noted that the State had undertaken a whole-of-government review of the robustness of the state's legislation relating to preventing, detecting, responding to, investigating and recovering from possible terrorist threats and incidents. The most pressing legislative matters have been addressed with other less pressing outcomes of the review still to be formally considered.⁹
- 6.13 The Submission noted that amending legislation to strengthen Queensland's counter terrorism laws in response to the terms of the National Counter Terrorism Agreement was introduced into the Queensland Parliament on 29 October 2003. The Disaster Management Bill 2003 provides a modern, integrated framework for the structures, functions and powers supporting the disaster management system in Queensland. The Bill encompasses a comprehensive approach to disaster management through disaster mitigation, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Under the Bill, disaster situations could involve terrorist incidents.
- 6.14 *The Chemical, Biological and Radiological Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2003* provides a detailed legal regime to ensure that police and other emergency responders have adequate powers to respond to the most severe acts of terrorism involving CBR substances. The Act provides a power to detain and treat people against their will, decontaminate affected persons, and prevent the spread of a CBR substance. It also provides a power to direct people to stay or leave the incident area.
- 6.15 *The Terrorism (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2002* refers State constitutional power to the Australian Government to support fully the new Australian Government terrorism offences. The Act commenced on 28 March 2003.
- 6.16 The Australian Crime Commission (Queensland) Bill 2003 provides, as do its counterparts in the other states, for the operation of the Australian Crime Commission in Queensland. It was introduced into the Queensland Parliament on 7 October 2003.¹⁰
- 6.17 From a Queensland police perspective, *The Public Safety Preservation Act 1986* provides police powers for managing emergency situations. However this had been amended to take account of CBR incidents:

Whilst the existing powers were considered appropriate for managing most anticipated conventional terrorist incidents, the

9 Government of Queensland, Submission No 14

10 Government of Queensland Submission No 14, p. 7.

Act has been amended to create a new category of emergency for CBR incidents. The wide-ranging powers required by police and emergency service responders to manage a CBR incident created by the amendments are tempered by stringent safeguards and a very high level of authority being required to activate the special powers. The State Counter-Disaster Organisation Act 1975 has recently been reviewed and provides a legislative framework for the management of the consequences of a terrorist act.¹¹

Consequence Management

- 6.18 An overview of the State of Queensland's arrangements for managing the consequences of a terrorist attack was provided to the Committee by the Director General of the Department of Emergency Services:

At the end of 2001, a \$13.2 million, state-of-the-art training facility was opened at White Island here in Brisbane. The construction of an urban search and rescue facility at the training academy was finalised in August 2002. This academy enables the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service to provide its officers with world-class training using state-of-the-art facilities...In summary, Queensland's arrangements are based on a coordinated multi-service and multi agency approach to all phases of emergency management, as well as an all-hazards approach. This allows strong links to exist between the states' crisis management and consequence management arrangements.¹²

- 6.19 The Queensland Police Commissioner summed up the views of the Queensland police with respect to counter terrorism consequence management to the Committee noting that 'whilst acknowledging that the state has sound counter-terrorism arrangements, it is essential that complacency be avoided at all costs and that there be a mindset of continuous improvement...we will strive to further develop our prevention, response and consequence management arrangements in that context.'¹³

Maritime and Aviation Security

- 6.20 In response to questions from the Committee about the capacity of Queensland's police and emergency services to deal with the

11 M Atkinson, Transcript, 7 November 2003, pp. 92-3

12 M Kinnane, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 96.

13 R Atkinson, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 94.

consequences of a terrorist attack at airports or port facilities in the State, the Police Commissioner said:

In my view there is, and there is excellent cooperation between the airline companies, the civil aviation authorities and the management of airports. There is very good capacity to quickly identify the information needed to be of assistance.¹⁴

6.21 The Queensland Government's Submission noted that the Commonwealth was responsible for determining appropriate levels of security at airports. The Queensland Government was actively engaged in consultations with the Commonwealth on specific airport security issues including cost implications through the Secretaries' Committee on National Security review of the aviation security framework.¹⁵

6.22 In answer to a question from the Committee about how effective State and Commonwealth cooperation had been in upgrading the security arrangements at the State's airports, the Police Commissioner replied:

In Queensland we have three major international airports—Cairns, Brisbane and on the Gold Coast—let alone all the other airports that exist throughout this state. I think it has been satisfactory. The ultimate test would be an incident, and none of us wants that to occur. One of our key focuses is on prevention rather than having to respond to an incident. I believe there is a very good level of cooperation between the federal agencies, the state agencies and the private sector such as the Brisbane Airport Corporation.¹⁶

6.23 With particular reference to maritime security the Queensland Government's Submission noted the scale of port operations in the State with 13,000 seagoing vessel movements and 200 million tons of cargo:

Queensland Transport and the state's eight port authorities are working closely with the Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Services in the implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code through the proposed Maritime Transport Security Act 2003.¹⁷

6.24 The Submission commented that although the Government had 'some concerns' with aspects of the proposed security framework they were being worked through and there was a 'strong willingness to have the system operational by 1 July 2004.'¹⁸

14 R Atkinson, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 109.

15 Government of Queensland, Submission No 14, pp. 11-12.

16 R Atkinson, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 109.

17 Government of Queensland, Submission No 14, p. 11

18 Government of Queensland, Submission No 14, p. 11.

- 6.25 The Director, Ports Planning, of the Queensland Department of Transport told the Committee that ‘the Queensland port network is working with the Commonwealth and with the Queensland Department of Transport to be well positioned to have [the new national security standard] in place before July next year.’ He also made note of the operation of the x ray container screen program by Customs: ‘An X ray facility was established at the port of Brisbane in the last six to nine months, which is now being used for both counter terrorism and other aspects of detecting illegal imports.¹⁹ As well as x ray screening the new security code will require screening of cruise ship passengers and ship visitors.

Critical Infrastructure Protection

- 6.26 A list of critical infrastructure in the State of Queensland was prepared in late 2002 in which infrastructure was identified across 10 industry sectors. Information sessions were held for the owners and operators of critical infrastructure during June and July 2003 outlining their roles and responsibilities under the *Commonwealth Principles for a Counter Terrorism Strategy for Critical Infrastructure Protection*. Criteria for the selection of sites were the potential economic and social impacts to Queensland, the impact of redundancy and the level on interdependency with other essential sites or services.
- 6.27 The Queensland Government Submission noted that a counter terrorism risk framework had been developed to enable Queensland Government Departments to integrate terrorism related risks with their existing risk management arrangements. These cover issues such as; information security, general security, on-site emergency management, information disaster recovery and business continuity. In August 2003 the counter terrorism risk framework was incorporated into the performance agreements of all Directors-General. Departments were required to implement the framework by 29 February 2004.²⁰
- 6.28 In response to an issue raised by the Committee about the capacity to counter threats against technological infrastructure the Police Commissioner told the Committee that:

Under the auspices of the Australian Federal Police and with the support of the jurisdictions, the Australian High Tech Crime Centre has been established. It is based in Canberra and all jurisdictions are contributing to that. Certainly my understanding

19 P J Quirk, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 123

20 Government of Queensland Submission No 14, pp. 8-9.

is that there is again good cooperation between the federal agencies more broadly and the state agencies in terms of national information technology infrastructure protection.²¹

Mass casualty response capacity

6.29 The Queensland Government's Submission noted the configuration of medical resources available for use in emergencies. Queensland Health is a single state wide service divided into three zones, each based on a tertiary teaching hospital, and further into 39 districts. There are over 215 public hospitals and 55 private hospitals in Queensland with a total of about 16,000 beds of which 10,000 are in public hospitals. These hospitals have 270 intensive care beds, 20 specialty burns beds and over 300 isolation beds. Major hospitals throughout Queensland have a limited number of CBR protective suits. While most hospitals have capacity to decontaminate a small number of patients, two major hospitals in Brisbane have CBR decontamination equipment suitable for larger scale incidents.²²

6.30 The Chief Health Officer told the Committee that medical and hospital resources throughout Queensland had been effectively networked to provide a state wide emergency and consequence management response:

The cornerstone of Queensland Health's emergency health arrangements is of course the emergency departments of our major metropolitan and provincial hospitals. In addition, these hospitals supply medical outreach services, known as the medivac program, whereby medical and, at times, nursing staff may respond to pre-hospital incidents in support of the ambulance service and manage the transfer and retrieval of critically ill patients from smaller institutions. These outreach services can be provided from up to 70 hospitals around the state. A network of senior doctors, known as clinical coordinators, supervises the medivac and retrieval service.²³

6.31 Transport to specialist facilities from remote areas of the State is facilitated by 'a large fleet of aeromedically configured aircraft available to support major health incidents. This includes 10 fixed-wing aircraft which are operated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service and 12 helicopters which are operated by both government and community providers that are configured for the treatment and transport of patients'. The Chief Health Officer told the Committee that the arrangements had been recently tested by the State's response to the Bali bombings when Queensland agencies

21 R Atkinson, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 113.

22 Government of Queensland Submission No 14, p. 16.

23 G J Fitzgerald, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 97.

liaised with the Commonwealth 'to ensure the seamless provision of medical care to those affected'. In his opinion:

The capacity of the Queensland health system to cope with any major incident obviously depends on the location and extent of the incident and the number and severity of casualties. Whilst we have considerable capacity across the state, generally it is largely committed. The capacity will be and may be extended in any major incident by a range of strategies, including the cessation of non-elective surgery...the support of private facilities, the utilisation of other accommodation and, of course, the use of interstate assistance as required.²⁴

Chemical, Biological and Radiological Incident response capacity

6.32 In Queensland a CBR Steering Committee established in 2000 for enhanced multi-service collaboration and cooperation between agencies responsible for responding to CBR incidents, with representation from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Health, the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Emergency Services.²⁵

6.33 The Director General of the Queensland Department of Emergency Services told the Committee that with respect to the coordinated management of a response to a CBR incident:

Effective working relationships have been established with all major agencies. The CBR steering committee also ensures that close links are maintained between the national counter-terrorism plan and the disaster management system in Queensland.²⁶

6.34 He also indicated that the physical resources available to Queensland Emergency Services to deal with CBR incidents were being imminently upgraded:

To facilitate improved coordination in our ability to respond to CBRIE [Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Incendiary and Explosive] incidents, a special operations unit was established earlier this year within the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and the department. The special operations unit includes the hazardous materials—hazmat—and safety equipment unit, the technical rescue unit, response vehicles and the state supplies of equipment for urban search and rescue, CBR and hazmat. This

24 G J Fitzgerald, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 97.

25 Government of Queensland, Submission No 14, p. 13

26 M J Kinnane, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 95.

unit is to be located in a special operations facility representing all the emergency services and is to be constructed in Brisbane in 2004.²⁷

- 6.35 With respect to the issue of Commonwealth additional resourcing of CBR response equipment under the National Counter Terrorism Agreement, the Queensland Police Commissioner suggested to the Committee that the rationale for allocating such equipment be adjusted:

the current model for equipment is based on an equity model. All the policing jurisdictions receive the same amount [of] equipment. For example, with ammunition, a smaller jurisdiction receives the same amount of ammunition as New South Wales. We think that should be reconsidered and the equipment allocated, to some extent, on the basis of the size of the jurisdiction.²⁸

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.

Intelligence and Threat Assessment

- 6.36 The Committee asked the Queensland Police to comment on the effectiveness of the current intelligence sharing and threat assessment arrangements between the State and the Commonwealth. The police Commissioner told the Committee:

the proof of this will only be known in the fullness of time. We have a daily liaison here with the Australian Federal Police and with ASIO. The cooperation between the state and federal authorities is excellent. That was underpinned in terms of the training and preparation that went into the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and it has continued. So I am very comfortable with the arrangements. Having said that, information comes from a variety of sources and what is critical is our processes to ensure that the information is progressed—in other

27 M J Kinnane, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 95.

28 R Atkinson, Transcript, 7 November 2003, pp. 127-8.

words, passed to the right people—and is correctly analysed and acted on. They are the fundamental things in terms of intelligence gathering.²⁹

- 6.37 The view that there were clear and effective communications with respect to terrorism threat assessment matters between State and Commonwealth Governments was supported by the Department of Premier and Cabinet:

We work within the national counter-terrorism framework. We have our two Queensland government representatives on the National Counter-Terrorism Committee...We have established communication protocols between us and the PSCC and, through that arrangement, through the Queensland Police, with ASIO and so on. Working from there, we have a high-level working group with a key person representing each Queensland government agency. They then have key contacts in the industry sectors that their portfolio relates to. So we have communication coming through from our industry partners. They know to whom to feed any information that they are aware of—either to the Queensland government or through the local police. There is a number of ways it can be captured.³⁰

- 6.38 On the issue of analysis of available intelligence, the Queensland police Commissioner told the Committee that it was subject to a risk management process and to a process of evaluation. Intelligence sharing was facilitated by 'daily liaison here between the three key agencies – the Queensland Police, ASIO and the AFP.'³¹

Preparedness

- 6.39 The Queensland Police told the Committee by way of summary:

enhancement of the QPS counter-terrorism capability is a process of continuous improvement given impetus by recent world and regional events such as the Bali incident. The service demonstrated its capacity to plan for protection from terrorism for major events during the 2000 Olympic torch relay and preliminary events, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held at Coolumb in Queensland. Preparations for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting were interrupted, and later postponed, by the September 11 attacks, and the QPS, together with other agencies, subsequently provided security for the largest

29 R Atkinson, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 109.

30 C M Taylor, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 110.

31 R Atkinson, Transcript, 7 November 2003, p. 111.

meeting of its type in the new security environment within a very compressed time frame.³²

- 6.40 The Queensland Government Submission stated that the Government was 'satisfied that significant measures are in place in response to the current threat of terrorism. Vigilance and continual improvement will drive this capability into the future'.