



Bail Amendment (Terrorism) Bill.

Mr BOB DEBUS (Blue Mountains—Attorney General, and Minister for the Environment) [12.33 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Bail Amendment (Terrorism) Bill. The threat of terrorism is a modern phenomenon that governments everywhere must constantly monitor and address to ensure that all possible measures are taken to protect the community. In 2002 Australian States and Territories, including New South Wales, referred power to the Commonwealth for terrorists matters. As a result, the Commonwealth enacted broad-ranging terrorist offences in the Commonwealth Criminal Code Act of 1995. These offences deal with every aspect of terrorist activity, including planning, training, membership, financing, and organisation. When persons are charged in New South Wales with these Commonwealth terrorist offences, the New South Wales Bail Act applies to any bail determinations.

On 13 May the Government announced a whole range of counter-terrorist measures, including the amendment of the Bail Act, to create a presumption against bail for persons charged with Commonwealth terrorist offences. This bill delivers the first stage of the counter-terrorism package and inserts into section 8A of the Bail Act all the offences created under divisions 101, 102 and 103 of the Criminal Code of the Commonwealth. Section 8A currently relates to the most serious of Commonwealth and State drug offences, which carry heavy penalties of 20 years imprisonment to life imprisonment. The Act will commence on assent and the presumption against bail will relate not only to any person charged with a terrorist offence after commencement but also to any review of bail under part 6 of the Bail Act. I commend the bill to the House.

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