Queensland Counter-Terrorism Strategy
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Introduction

The Queensland Government is committed to a fair, prosperous and equitable society. Safe, vibrant and inclusive communities that thrive underpin this society. We are, however, not immune to the threats posed by those who would seek to attack our peaceful, democratic way of life.

The threat of terrorism in Australia has been elevated since 2014 and this is likely to continue for some time. Since the threat level was raised, we have seen a growing number of attacks and major counter-terrorism disruption operations in response to potential attack planning in Australia. The security environment has become increasingly complex and dynamic. Our efforts to prevent terrorism and its consequences must be well-coordinated, sustained, agile and responsive as the Queensland Government tackles one of our key priorities - keeping communities safe. We are committed to a collaborative approach and will work with local communities, businesses, non-government organisations and other government agencies to protect Queenslanders.

We also recognise that terrorism is not confined to any one world view. Our efforts to detect and disrupt attacks are increasingly supported by work to identify and divert those at risk of radicalisation to violent extremism, regardless of their motivation.

Queensland’s approach to countering terrorism forms part of Australia’s broader multilayered strategic approach to national security. Other critical national security issues including countering foreign interference, cyber security, critical infrastructure, and transnational serious and organised crime all combine to contribute to our overall national security.

As the threats to our security continue to evolve, the Queensland Government remains committed to working together with other Australian governments, businesses, non-government organisations and the wider community as part of a coordinated and cooperative national approach. We are delivering a range of strategies and activities to ensure that we are alert to and well-equipped to prevent, and should the need arise, to effectively respond to a terrorist attack.

The Queensland Counter-Terrorism Strategy reflects our collective, ongoing efforts.

National Threat Advisory System

The National Terrorism Threat Advisory System is a scale of five levels to provide advice about the likelihood of an act of terrorism occurring in Australia. The Queensland Government does not have a separate threat level system, it uses the national system. At the time of writing this Strategy, Australia’s current National Terrorism Threat Level is PROBABLE. PROBABLE refers to credible intelligence, assessed by our security agencies, indicating that individuals or groups continue to possess the intent and capability to conduct a terrorist attack in Australia.

The National Terrorism Threat Level is regularly reviewed in line with the security environment and intelligence. When the threat level changes, the Australian Government provides advice on what the threat level means, where the threat is coming from, potential targets and how a terrorist act may be carried out. This information will be conveyed to the Queensland public as part of national announcements. It is important to be aware of the current threat level and to report any suspicious incidents or behaviour to the National Security Hotline on 1800 123 400.
Our approach

In delivering effective measures to counter terrorism and violent extremism, the Queensland Government’s efforts are underpinned by a number of key principles. These principles constitute our touchstones, ensuring that our efforts are focused to deliver positive outcomes for the people of Queensland.

Community safety is paramount
• The safety and well-being of the community is of paramount importance to the Queensland Government.

Our efforts are evidenced-based and proportionate
• Our actions are based on evidence and led by intelligence. They are proportionate and measured: balancing the rights of all Queenslanders while acknowledging the gravity of the terrorist threat.

We work collaboratively, recognising that we all have a role to play
• Our approach is based on strong partnerships, recognising that building and sustaining resilience to terrorism and countering violent extremism is a responsibility shared between all levels of government, communities, businesses and individuals.

Our arrangements are robust, agile and responsive
• Our security arrangements and capabilities are well-practised and regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective in the evolving threat environment.

Our objectives

To achieve our vision, the Queensland Government is working to:
• promote harmony and social cohesion to support community resilience and reduce the risk of violent extremism
• ensure a strong, contemporary and effective legislative framework
• deliver effective prevention and protection strategies to reduce risk
• ensure comprehensive and robust response capability
• maintain timely and responsive consequence management and recovery arrangements.

The Government conducts a range of activities to deliver this vision for all Queeslanders. Some examples of these activities are highlighted throughout this Strategy; providing a snapshot of key activities we are undertaking.

Our Vision
Keeping Queenslanders safe through effective measures and collaborative arrangements to counter terrorism and violent extremism

Promote harmony & social cohesion to support community resilience and reduce the risk of violent extremism
A strong, contemporary and effective legislative framework
Effective prevention and protection strategies to reduce risk
Comprehensive and robust response capability
Timely and responsive consequence management and recovery arrangements

Prevention Preparedness Response Recovery
Promote harmony and social cohesion to support community resilience and reduce the risk of violent extremism

Violent and divisive events around the world and in Australia in recent years have highlighted how important it is to maintain and build communities that stick together in good and bad times, and where people connect, trust each other and share resources. This is our best defence to counter behaviour and narratives that promote fear and division. We also recognise that preventing feelings of marginalisation and social exclusion can be an important element in the continuum of responses that counter violent extremism.

Queensland is renowned for both its resilience and its diversity. Our identity has been shaped by bringing people together, from the rich culture of the nation’s first peoples to the diverse traditions of Queenslanders who come from all corners of the globe. Over the years, in the face of countless natural disasters, Queenslanders have demonstrated both their individual resilience and their strong commitment to their local community. This has also been demonstrated in response to acts of terror overseas. For example, the Queensland community’s response to the terrorist shooting attacks at mosques in Christchurch in March 2019 was immediate and heartfelt, with an outpouring of compassion and support for the Muslim community in Queensland. The Queensland Government recognised the importance of responding quickly to offer tangible support and leadership in the wake of the incident.

**Build social cohesion**

Creating a society where everyone feels that they belong takes effort – a joint effort between all levels of government and local communities. The local work of communities and non-government organisations is the cornerstone of our efforts to protect our successful multicultural society. We support communities across Queensland to lead projects that build and sustain positive relationships between people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities. It is the strength of productive relationship between different groups within society that provide us our resilience.

As part of building resilient communities, we are working with peak bodies to increase the capability, diversity and sustainability of Queensland’s social service and community organisations. We are working with key non-government and community groups to plan for business continuity in the event of a terrorist incident. We will provide our social service partners with the information they need to share responsibility for preparing and protecting Queenslanders. Local, trusted organisations with a deep footprint in their local community are well placed to mitigate fear-based narratives and unhelpful stereotyping and discrimination.

In June 2016, the Queensland Government established the Queensland Social Cohesion Implementation Committee as a step towards enhancing social cohesion in our communities. The Committee provides expert advice to the Queensland Government to shape action plans with a focus on strengthening community cohesion and resilience, reducing social marginalisation and economic exclusion, and addressing behaviour that may lead to violence or physical harm to others.

**Support community infrastructure**

Cohesive communities are connected communities. We recognise the important role that locally-accessible spaces and places have in supporting people to gather and pursue common interests. Local facilities, such as Neighbourhood and Community Centres, provide community members with a safe and welcoming place in which to seek assistance and referral to support services and to reduce social isolation. We will continue to work with local communities and local government authorities to design and deliver social infrastructure for Queenslanders.

**Improve opportunity and reduce economic exclusion**

We are committed to providing all Queenslanders with opportunities for economic mobility and to share in this State’s resources. We know that employment and economic security for individuals and their family increases their life choices, social participation and hope for a positive future. We will continue to work with communities, human service organisations, universities, business and other key stakeholders to identify priority locations where community-government alliances can substantially improve life opportunities. We support productive economic participation and targeted anti-poverty initiatives as protective factors in the prevention of radicalisation to violent extremism.

**Promote civic participation**

We recognise that civic participation is a protective factor for social cohesion. It is important that all Australians understand the rights afforded to them by living in a democratic society, and the legitimate opportunities available to freely express their religion, beliefs, identity and culture. Our young people especially need to know how to express dissent and advocate for change, whilst upholding their democratic responsibilities to other Australians. We will continue to support schools and other groups working with young people to promote critical thinking skills and to educate young people on how they can make an impact on issues they care about. We will continue to engage with refugee settlement and migrant support groups and cultural and faith community leaders to ensure every Queenslander has the understanding and the access to participate in civic society.

**Support for teachers and students**

The Department of Education’s Inclusive Education policy supports our shared vision that all students in Queensland state schools receive the support they need to belong to the school community, engage purposefully in learning and experience academic success. We deliver a range of support and early intervention programs to State school students through specialist staff such as guidance officers, mental health coaches, success coaches, youth support coordinators, school-based police officers, chaplains and student welfare workers.

We also provide support and resources for teachers across Queensland to raise awareness of violent extremism, to identify effective strategies to support students and build resilience, and to report any safety concerns. The Department of Education works in collaboration with Queensland Police Service and security providers to implement best practice in emergency management procedures that prioritise the safety of students and teachers.

**Supporting inclusive, harmonious and united communities**

Multiculturalism is one of Queensland’s greatest strengths. The Queensland Government acknowledges the rich diversity of the people of Queensland and the valuable contribution of diverse groups to our great State. The Multicultural Recognition Act 2016 outlines the Government’s commitment to inclusive, harmonious and united communities and fostering opportunities for people from a range of diverse cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds.

The Multicultural Queensland Charter was established under the Multicultural Recognition Act 2016 and sets out principles articulating our vision. The Queensland Multicultural Policy, ‘Our story, our future’, and three yearly action plans, set out how the Queensland Government will deliver on its commitment to building inclusive, harmonious and united communities. An outcome under this policy priority is connected and resilient communities, where all people feel a sense of belonging.

If community harmony is threatened, Queensland Government agencies will work together to respond and support those affected.
Ensure a strong, contemporary and effective legislative framework

Robust and proportionate legislative tools

We maintain a contemporary legislative framework to ensure that our criminal justice system is well positioned to prevent, and respond to, terrorist acts. While we recognise that the strongest defence to terrorism is to prevent people from becoming radicalised, it is critical that we have well-adapted and robust legislation in place to enable swift and effective responses to emerging and present threats.

Queensland’s existing legislative tools such as the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, Public Safety and Preservation Act 1986 and Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005 ensure that our police have appropriate powers to counter-terrorism and to protect the community. In addition, the Transport Security (Counter-Terrorism) Act 2008 provides for the planning and protection of the communities that use surface transport systems to go about their daily activities in a safe and secure environment.

Nationally consistent legislative framework

Importantly, we also work collaboratively with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions, recognising that Queensland’s legislation is part of a broader national legislative framework, including the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) and the Crimes Act 1914 (Cth). Queensland continues to demonstrate our commitment to ensuring a strong and consistent national approach to terrorism laws to protect our community.

Deliver effective prevention and protection strategies to reduce risk

The Queensland Government recognises that efforts to prevent terrorist incidents from occurring are vital to effectively safeguard Queenslanders. We all have a role to play in reducing that risk.

Our police and other frontline agencies work together with all levels of government, business and the community to deliver a range of programs, activities and initiatives to help keep everyone safe. We regularly and proactively engage with the diverse communities of Queensland to establish and maintain contact and develop strategic partnerships.

To meet the challenges of the current and evolving threat environment, we have established the Queensland Police Service Security and Counter-Terrorism Command, dedicated solely to overseeing our police counter-terrorism capability. The Command enhances and expands existing police capability to investigate links to terrorism, identify persons of interest, detect and disrupt attacks, conduct threat assessments and partner with business and industry to build resilience to, protect against, and respond to, contemporary threats.

Tough new bail and parole laws are now in force in Queensland. The passage of these laws implemented a 2017 commitment of the Council of Australian Governments that there will be a presumption that neither bail nor parole will be granted to those persons who have demonstrated support for, or have links to terrorist activity.

Protection of the Queensland community is the primary priority for the Queensland Government. By ensuring there are appropriate legislative tools available, the values that underpin our free and democratic society are also protected through Queensland’s legislative framework by the Human Rights Act 2019. The Human Rights Act 2019, requires every action taken and decision made by the Queensland government, from policy development to service delivery, to be compatible with human rights.
Intelligence-sharing, investigation and disruption capabilities

Through the Queensland Police Service, we have the capability and tools needed to identify, collect and analyse information and evidence to assess threats and risks, and to implement effective pre-emptive measures to prevent terrorist threats and attacks.

Our police work in close partnership with other law enforcement and intelligence agencies in Queensland and nationally to effectively undertake proactive security and criminal investigations focused on preventing acts of terrorism and terrorism-related offences. Gathering information and intelligence from online environments and partner agencies also support police investigations to identify, respond to and disrupt any emerging threats related to security and/or terrorist activities. Intelligence-sharing, investigation and disruption capabilities are also enhanced through partnership with Queensland Corrective Services to effectively manage terrorist offenders.

In addition, the Joint Counter Terrorism Teams regularly engage with members from the Australian Federal Police, other State and Territory police and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) to ensure we have a coordinated and collaborative national approach to identifying and investigating terrorist activities in Australia and offences committed by Australian foreign fighters who return to Queensland from overseas conflict zones.

Protecting Crowded Places

We recognise that crowded places will continue to be a potential target of terrorist attacks and that protecting the lives of people working in, using and visiting these places is a shared responsibility. As part of a national approach set out in Australia’s Strategy for Protecting Crowded Places from Terrorism by maintaining a strong and sustainable partnership between the Queensland Government and the private sector, through better access to threat and protective security information.

By accessing this information, the owners and operators of crowded places will be in a better position to protect their crowded places against terrorism. A well-considered and tested protective security plan reduces the likelihood of a terrorist attack and the consequences of such an attack.

Transport Security

Under a national Council of Australian Governments agreement on surface security, consisting of the National Surface Transport Surface Transport Security Strategy, the national Crowded Places Strategy, and the Transport Security (Counter-Terrorism) Act 2008, the Queensland Government works with the transport industry to help plan to prevent and prepare for responding to security incidents that may affect the travelling public and Queensland transport industries.

This includes provision of advice on security threats and the management of security risks; regulation, engagement and support to transport operations for their counter-terrorism preparedness and planning; and significant security operations. By engaging in forums and workshops, owners and operators increase their awareness and preparedness for mitigating risks, implementing appropriate plans and arrangements, such as the ESCAPE, HIDE, TELL principles, to ensure the safety of the public.

The Queensland Police Service has enhanced the counter-terrorism capacity of our police by establishing the Security and Counter-Terrorism Network of specialist officers across the State. These officers support the objective of the National Strategy for Protecting Crowded Places from Terrorism by maintaining a strong and sustainable partnership between the Queensland Government and the private sector, through better access to threat and protective security information.

By accessing this information, the owners and operators of crowded places will be in a better position to protect their crowded places against terrorism. A well-considered and tested protective security plan reduces the likelihood of a terrorist attack and the consequences of such an attack.

Critical Infrastructure

The infrastructure that provides goods and services essential to our State’s economic and community wellbeing is broadly referred to as critical infrastructure. The Queensland Government has examined the potential terrorism risks associated with major infrastructure sectors - such as energy, water utilities, transport, communications and health services - and identified individual critical infrastructure assets within each sector. Because of the potential consequences that can arise from the disruption to our critical infrastructure assets, the Queensland Government has plans and programs in place to ensure its protection.

We are continuing to further enhance the security and resilience of our critical infrastructure assets and systems by working in partnership with owners and operators. This includes engaging with sectors to promote a security culture and a shared understanding of risk and to raise awareness of emerging issues and threats.

We are also engaging with the Australian Government’s Critical Infrastructure Centre. This Centre has been established to manage the complex and evolving national security risks from foreign involvement in Australia’s critical infrastructure. The protection of critical infrastructure from terrorism is part of the broader national strategy aimed at enhancing critical infrastructure resilience, and is closely aligned to the complimentary strategies aimed at countering foreign interference and cyber security.

Reduce and minimise use of weapons and explosives

The Queensland Government recognises the importance of strong regulation around weapons and explosives to limit the opportunity for terrorism by these means. In Queensland, the possession and use of firearms and dangerous weapons is legislated under the Weapons Act 1990 (Qld). The overriding objective of the Act is securing public and individual safety by controlling the possession and storage of weapons and to better monitor and prevent misuse of weapons.

The QPS Weapons Licensing Unit are authorised to process weapons applications under the Weapons Act 1990. They also have the authority to suspend, revoke or disqualify any person’s licence to acquire and/or own a weapon and with the legislated powers to further investigate to ensure the safety of the public. The QPS are also actively involved and work collaboratively with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission in relation to the registration, licensing and movement of firearms coming into Australia and moving between our states and territories.

Queensland has a range of measures in place as part of a nationally consistent approach to limit the use of hazardous materials and/or explosive devices for terrorism purposes. This includes working with industry to ensure appropriate reporting of suspicious behaviour to police throughout the supply chain. Owners and operators work collaboratively with government to assess the national security risks associated with chemicals of security concern, adhere to the National Code of Practice for Chemicals of Security Concern and assist in reporting to the authorities to prevent identified chemicals from falling into the wrong hands.

To help maintain community safety our first response and designated investigating police officers have legislated powers and procedures to investigate offences involving explosives. The Queensland Police Service Explosives Ordnance Response Team (EORT) has the specialist expertise and equipment to respond to imminent threats and post-blast investigations involving vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, improvised explosive devices, homemade explosives and chemical, biological and radiological devices.

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Ensure comprehensive and robust response capability

Highly trained and equipped police and emergency services

Our emergency response agencies are well-trained and equipped and have plans and arrangements in place to ensure an effective, timely and coordinated response to a terrorist incident. Queensland Government agencies, in partnership with key stakeholders, regularly develop, maintain and exercise our capabilities, skills, systems and processes to ensure we remain vigilant and prepared for effective coordination and response arrangements for both state and national level.

The Queensland Police Service (QPS), the Queensland Government is building a $52.8 million over four years for the construction of a state of the art Counter Terrorism and Community Safety Centre at the Wacol Police Complex in Brisbane. The new facility will include indoor firearms ranges, a scenario village and specialist training areas to strengthen the capability of our frontline and tactical specialist police officers to respond to terrorism and other critical incidents.

Together with the establishment of a dedicated Security and Counter-Terrorism Command within the Queensland Police Service (QPS), the Queensland Government has the responsibility for the protection of persons, property and the environment from fire and hazardous materials emergencies under the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 and the establishment of effective disaster management arrangements under the Disaster Management Act 2003.

Our police also work closely with other emergency services including the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) who are the primary provider of fire, rescue, emergency and disaster management programs and services throughout Queensland. QFES provides advice to building owners about building fire safety and safety elements in building design and undertakes fire investigations post-incident in a landscape and building environment.

While the Queensland Police Service has the operational responsibility for preventing and responding to terrorism in Queensland, QFES has the responsibility for the coordination of disaster management arrangements under the State of Queensland Multi-Jurisdictional Arrangements Plan under the Disaster Management Act 2003.

Effective planning and exercising

To ensure we remain ready to respond, we maintain and exercise our incident response plans and crisis management arrangements. In addition to our counter-terrorism plans and procedures, the Queensland Government maintains the State of Queensland Multi-agency Response Plan which sets out the planning and management arrangements for responding to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents. Queensland Health also maintains a range of plans that set out how they respond to mass casualties and other incidents.

Queensland Government agencies, in partnership with key stakeholders, also undertake a range of exercising and training activities to test the effectiveness and interoperability of our response arrangements. This includes participating in multi-jurisdictional exercises coordinated through the Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Queensland also maintains and exercises crisis management arrangements to support effective whole-of-government response and coordination. These arrangements align with national and other jurisdictional arrangements to enable timely deployment of any assistance required.

In the event of an incident, we also have well-practiced arrangements in place to keep the community informed about what has occurred and how we are responding. This includes providing integrated warnings and information to meet the needs of affected people and businesses through a range of channels, including social media. Arrangements are also in place to rapidly activate a call-centre service on behalf of the Queensland Government, as a first point of contact for public enquiries about a crisis.
Maintain timely and responsive consequence management and recovery arrangements

Well-practiced recovery arrangements

As a result of our regular exposure to natural disasters, Queensland has robust, effective and well-practiced recovery arrangements in place. Our capabilities and experience in recovering from these events provide a strong platform from which to support recovery from a terrorist incident.

However, while we are well-placed to leverage our existing emergency management and recovery governance arrangements, we also recognise that the recovery from an act of terrorism presents particular challenges. A guidance document - Planning for Recovery from Terrorist Events or Acts of Extreme Violence - has been developed as an addendum to the Queensland Recovery Plan and identifies the specific impacts of these events and their influence on community recovery.

Working in partnership to manage impacts

We know that the effects of terrorist incidents can result in complex, acute and prolonged community and social impacts and recognise the importance of working in partnership with all levels of government, NGOs, community leaders, and the private sector to support recovery, restore business continuity, promote public confidence and maintain community cohesion and connectedness in the wake of such an incident.

We have plans in place to ensure that recovery operations are integrated and coordinated; reflecting the role of local level agencies and their location-specific intelligence and knowledge. Our arrangements are scalable and flexible to ensure that they best meet the immediate and longer-term needs of those both directly and indirectly affected, including those providing response, relief and recovery services. This includes the capacity to rapidly establish local recovery hubs and deliver targeted outreach services. Our community recovery planning arrangements also reflect the importance of ways for people to express their individual and communal grief.

What can you do?

Suspicious activity or information relating to security or terrorism national threat advisory system

By being alert and reporting suspicious activity, the community plays an essential role in thwarting and disrupting attacks. Police and security agencies are working hard, but all of us need to help them complete the picture. Even small pieces of information reported by Queenslanders can help keep our State and country safe from terrorism. In recent years, Australian agencies have successfully disrupted a number of attacks through our collaborative efforts to prevent acts of terrorism.

You can report suspicious activity relating to security or terrorism behaviour by calling the 24-hour National Security Hotline on 1800 1234 00. This is a free call from any phone in Australia and you can remain anonymous. Trained operators take every call seriously and information is passed on to Australia’s police and security agencies for analysis and further investigation.

Also, if you work with chemicals you have an important role to play in keeping Australia safe. Members of the Australian community can also help by being aware and reporting suspicious behaviour.

You can also report online material that is extremist or promotes terrorism. Reports can be made anonymously at www.reportextremism.livingsafetogether.gov.au

For information on suspicious behaviour specifically for owners and operators of priority critical infrastructure sites, contact your local Queensland Police Service Security and Counter-Terrorism Network officer or email counter.terrorism@police.qld.gov.au

Anyone who sees anything suspicious should contact Policeline on 131 444, Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or Triple Zero (000) in an emergency.