

MEDIA RELEASE
30/1/06



Lawyers slam ACT anti-terror Bill

Embargo: Tuesday 31 January, 2005

A peak legal body has slammed the ACT's proposed anti-terror law.

The Australian Lawyers Alliance says the *Terrorism (Extraordinary Temporary Powers) Bill* curtails the most fundamental of rights by allowing for the detention on an arbitrary basis of people who have not been charged with an offence.

Lawyers Alliance ACT president Mark Blumer will today tell a parliamentary inquiry into the Bill that there has been "no satisfactory public justification for this grave breach of human rights".

"This Bill is unnecessary as the relevant authorities already have significant powers to arrest people reasonably suspected of having committed an offence," Mr Blumer said.

"While there may be some justification to hold a person for a short period to prevent an imminent terrorist attack, it's hard to understand why anyone should be detained without being charged to preserve evidence of a terrorist act, especially for 14 days."

"However, it's heartening that the ACT Bill, unlike some in other jurisdictions, recognises that acts of advocacy, protest, dissent or industrial action are not terrorist acts and that it allows for a court to review preventative detention orders," he said.

Note: Copies of the Lawyers Alliance submission available at <http://www.lawyersalliance.com.au/public.php?id=36>

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