

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Under the 2005 counter-terrorism laws, anyone over 16 can now be detained for up to 14 days without charge, even if they are not suspected of any crime, if they are believed to have information about a potential terrorist offence.

If you are detained in this way it is illegal to let anyone (including family or employers) know where you are or what is happening to you. You are permitted to call a lawyer, but your lawyer is not able to notify anyone else. Contacting someone carries a five year gaol term.

People can be placed under a control order, which can mean house arrest or wearing tracking devices, for up to 12 months without trial or charge if it is believed they trained with a terrorist group.

Counter-terrorism laws introduced since Sept 11 2001 have eroded civil liberties and human rights.

The government allowed only one day of inquiry before passing the laws in 2005, despite the issues involved being complex and far-reaching.

Under the new laws terrorism suspects are not afforded the same basic human rights as other prisoners, such as appropriate access to legal advice and the right to refuse to answer questions.

A UN report into Australia's counter-terrorism laws identified 'a number of actual and potential human rights violations'. (RA)

Most material in this information sheet is drawn from the Uniting Church in Australia's Federal Election 2007 resource kit, *Growing a Nation of Hope*.