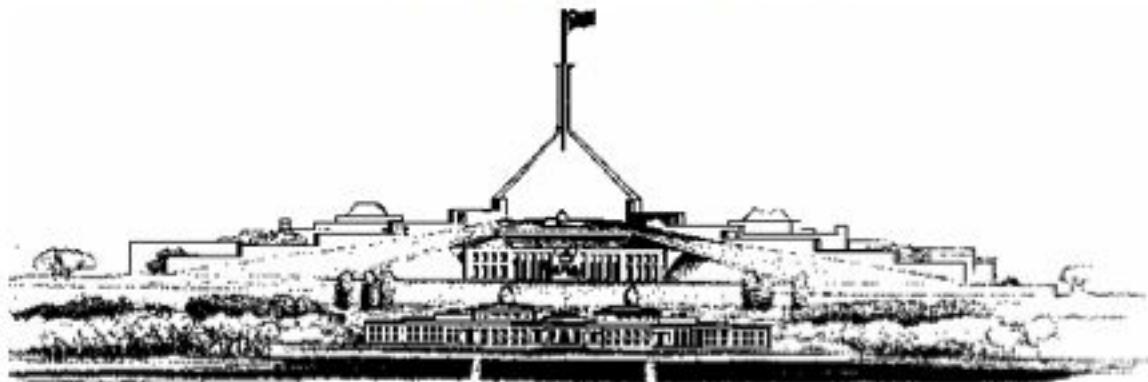




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Main Committee**

**ASSISTING THE VICTIMS OF  
INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM BILL 2009**

**First Reading**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 16 November 2009**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## SPEECH

<b>Date</b>	Monday, 16 November 2009	<b>Source</b>	House
<b>Page</b>	11815	<b>Proof</b>	No
<b>Questioner</b>		<b>Responder</b>	
<b>Speaker</b>	Abbott, Tony, MP	<b>Question No.</b>	

**Mr ABBOTT** (Warringah) (6.55 pm)—Since 11 September 2001, about 300 Australians have been killed or injured in acts of terrorism overseas. There were those killed or injured in the World Trade Centre, there were those killed or injured in the first and second Bali bombings, there were the victims of the London bombings and there were the victims of the two Jakarta bombings. These were not random acts of violence; these terrorist acts were premeditated acts of war in which the West generally, and in some cases Australia specifically, were directly targeted. The Australians killed or injured in these terrorist outrages are civilian casualties of the war on terror, and that is why they deserve assistance and help from the Australian government representing Australian society.

If a soldier is killed in the course of duty, his next of kin receives assistance. If a worker is killed in the course of employment, their next of kin receive assistance. If a citizen is killed in an act of criminal violence, their next of kin receive assistance. Under the state victims of crime schemes, the next of kin of the deceased and the victims under most circumstances of serious crime can receive up to \$75,000 in assistance. So I put it to this parliament: why should someone who is randomly assaulted outside a pub get up to \$75,000 in assistance but someone who is maimed for life by a terrorist attack overseas gets nothing at all other than their medical expenses and perhaps the disability support pension? That is why I have introduced this private member's bill: to help those people to ensure that Australian victims of international terrorism receive some assistance at least on the level of the assistance provided to the victims of crime here in Australia.

This bill provides for the establishment of a scheme to assist the victims of international terrorism modelled on the state and territory victims of crime schemes. In introducing this bill I pay special tribute to the Newcastle victims of the second Bali bombing, many of whom I was with in the time after their injuries and with whom I have stayed in some contact. All of those victims, to their credit, have resumed more or less normal life. To their credit they do not normally think of themselves as victims and have displayed the grit and stoicism that characterises most Australians even under adverse circumstances. Still, some have been bereaved, others have lost their sight, their hearing, their jobs and the expectation of a physically and mentally comfortable retirement. They deserve our help and recognition, and this bill seeks to give it to them.

This bill will also, I understand, be debated next Monday in private members' business. I understand that it will be seconded there by the member for Paterson, who has stayed in close contact with some of the Newcastle victims. I also understand that the member for Newcastle, amongst others, will speak on this bill. I hope that this bill, or something like it or even a better scheme, will be adopted by the government. These people were targeted not because of anything they did but because of who they are—Australians. Australians who have suffered like that certainly deserve our help, which is why I commend this bill not only to this chamber but to the government.

Bill read a first time.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr MJ Washer)**—Order! In accordance with standing order 41 the second reading will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.