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The Australian Government's Counter-Terrorism White Paper (2010) outlines the four key elements of the strategy: Analysis: an intelligence-led response to terrorism driven by a properly connected and properly informed national security community; Protection: taking all necessary and practical action to protect Australia and Australians from terrorism at home and abroad; Response: providing an immediate and targeted response to specific terrorist threats and terrorist attacks should they occur; and Resilience: building a strong and resilient Australian community to resist the development of any form of violent extremism and terrorism on the home front. This timely study by CEPS scholars presents empirical evidence on the the community levels of preparedness and resilience in relation to terrorism. It also highlights the perceptions of government preparedness at the federal and local levels. A partnership between the state (at all levels) and the community is needed to thwart and mitigate the threat of terrorism. These data provides important insights on this issue, and will undoubtedly foster further policy debate and stimulate further academic work on this topic.



Professor Simon Bronitt

Director

## Living in Queensland – Preparedness for Terrorist Events

Ms Emma Antrobus, Dr Suzanna Ramirez, and Professor Lorraine Mazerolle

### Executive Summary

The Living in Queensland study (also titled Social Wellbeing survey) is focused on measuring health and social wellbeing in Queensland. This study examines many factors associated with living in Queensland including financial and community wellbeing. This study is conducted by researchers from the Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR), University of Queensland, and led by Professor Paul Boreham, Professor Mark Western, Associate Professor Warren Laffan, and Associate Professor Geoff Dow. This study is funded by the Australian Research Council and the Queensland Public Sector Union (QPSU).

The third wave of this study was administered in October of 2010. Within this third wave, funding from the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security (CEPS) was used to add a new model to the core survey that asked respondents about their experiences in terrorist events. Survey respondents were also asked about how prepared they thought local, state and federal government was to deal with preparing for and responding to terrorist events, as well as their own behaviors taken to prepare for these events.

A random sample of survey respondents (N=2360 in wave 3) was recruited through random digit dialing and data were collected through Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). The random sample was stratified by six regions across the state of Queensland. Regions were defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Statistical Local Area (SLA) boundaries.

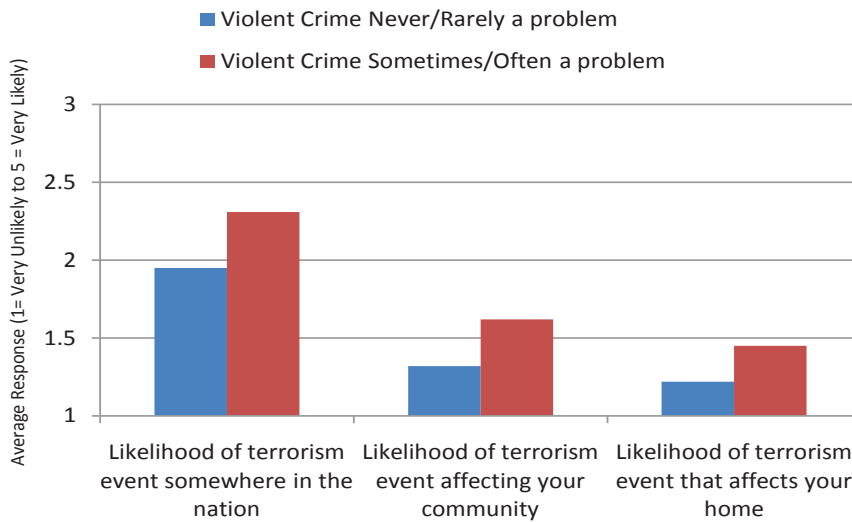
This study offers insight into Queensland resident perceptions of their own and government preparedness to deal with a terrorist event. Preliminary findings show the majority of Queenslanders do not expect a terrorist event to occur within the country, within their community or affect their home in the next 6 months. The impact of community cohesion on feelings of preparedness and trust in government were of particular interest. Community cohesion includes feelings of trust and reciprocity among community residents and may help explain feelings of preparedness, response and recovery in the event of a terrorist attack, particularly a resident's feeling of their own preparedness.

In addition to the relationship between feelings of preparedness and the community this study has a potential to help policy makers understand how Queensland residents feel about the role and preparedness of Local, State and Federal government. These results also have the potential to add to similar work that asks about resident perceptions of preparedness for natural disasters.

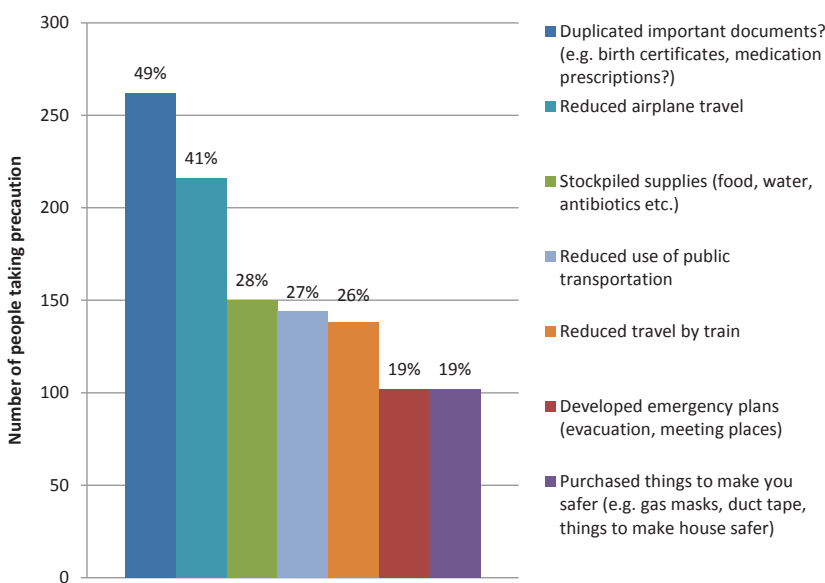
## Key Findings

### Preparedness for Terrorist Event

Overall, 15% of survey respondents thought that a terrorist event occurring in their home, community or the country was likely in the next 6 months. The remaining 85% thought it unlikely that a terrorist event would occur within Australia in the next 6 months. However, those who thought a future terrorist event was likely in the next 6 months were also those more likely to have higher perceptions of violent crime in their neighborhood. This may indicate that those who are more pessimistic about likely terrorism are also those who may feel more vulnerable in their own communities.



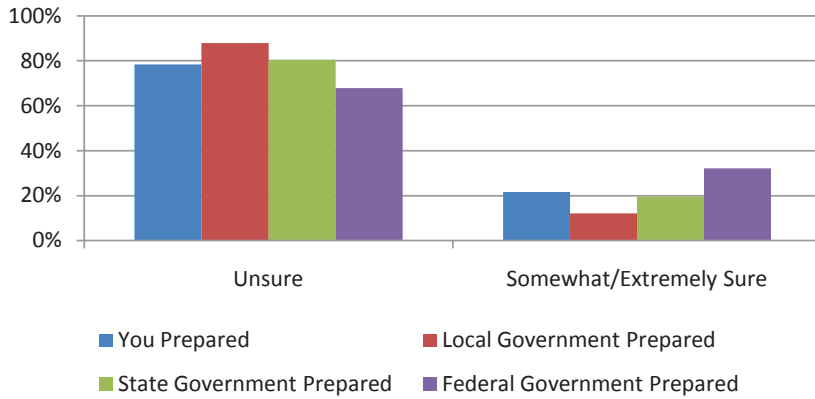
Though the majority of survey respondents believe a terrorist event to be unlikely in the next 6 months, the study shows that 23% (N = 532) of respondents have taken some kind of precaution to prepare for a future terrorist event. Of those 532 respondents, duplicating important documents was the most common precaution taken (49%), followed by reduced airplane travel (41%) and stockpiling supplies such as food, water and medication (28%). 255 of these respondents reported that they took more than one of these precautions.



Overall, the majority of respondents were unsure of their own and the government’s ability to prepare and protect in the event of a terrorist attack. In regards to government response to a terrorist event, those who were sure about their own and government’s ability to respond quickly in the event of a terrorist attack were most optimistic about the Federal

government’s role in response and least sure about the role of local government is their ability to respond quickly to an attack. In regards to their own and governments ability to contribute to recovery from an attack, respondents were most pessimistic about the role of local government.

**How sure are you that [You or Government] could respond quickly to a terrorist attack?**



*Impact of Community*

Survey respondents who came from more cohesive communities were more sure of the Federal and State government ability to protect, respond quickly and contribute to recovery in the event of a terrorist attack. However, people from more cohesive neighborhoods were only more likely to be sure of Local government response and contribution to recovery, not Local government ability to protect them from an attack.

People from cohesive communities were also more likely to be sure about their own ability to contribute to recovery. However, those who perceived higher levels of violent crime in their communities were less likely to be sure about any level of government as well as their own ability to respond quickly and contribute to recovery. This may suggest that residents from high crime communities may feel more vulnerable about the ability of the government to protect them from a terrorist attack as well as their own ability to prepare for, respond to, and contribute to recovering from a terrorist event.

## About the Authors

**Emma Antrobus** is a Research Fellow in the ARC Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security (CEPS) at the Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR). Emma has a background in psychology and jury decision-making, particularly in relation to the special measures involved with child witness testimony. Her current research interests are focused on randomized controlled trials examining the impact of legitimate policing, and interventions for young people at risk.

**Suzanna Ramirezis** a postdoctoral research fellow for CEPS working on the Vulnerable Communities project including the National Household Survey. Suzanna completed her PhD in sociology at the University of Washington in 2011. Her dissertation looked at the relationship between neighborhood collective efficacy and neighborhood collective behavior, particularly for immigrants. Suzanna's research interests include neighborhood crime and collective behavior, ecological theories of crime, and juvenile justice practices for youth delinquency and child dependency cases.

**Lorraine Mazerolle** is an ARC Laureate Fellow and Research Professor in the Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) at the University of Queensland. She is also the Foundation Director and a Chief Investigator in the Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security (CEPS), a Chief Investigator in the Drug Policing Modeling Program, and the ISSR "Policing and Security" Program Director. Professor Mazerolle leads a team of highly talented research scholars with expertise in experimental criminology, urban criminological theories, survey methods, advanced multi-level statistics and spatial statistics. She is the recipient of numerous US and Australian national competitive research grants on topics such as community regulation, problem-oriented policing, police technologies, civil remedies, street-level drug enforcement and policing public housing sites. Professor Mazerolle is a Fellow of the Academy of Experimental Criminology, previous Vice President and now President-Elect of the Academy and author of scholarly books and articles on policing, drug law enforcement, regulatory crime control, displacement of crime, and crime prevention.

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