

**National Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear
Security Strategy
Summary**

INTRODUCTION

1. At its Special Meeting on Counter-Terrorism held on 27 September 2005, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) directed the National Counter-Terrorism Committee (NCTC) to develop a National Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Security Strategy (the Strategy).
2. The Strategy complements the *National Counter-Terrorism Plan*. The Plan outlines responsibilities, authorities and mechanisms to prevent, or if they occur, to respond to and recover from acts of terrorism and their consequences within Australia.
3. The Strategy provides a framework to strengthen and enhance existing national counter-terrorism arrangements by:
 - describing the security environment;
 - identifying eight principal elements of Australia's approach to CBRN security;
 - describing the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery framework in which these elements will be addressed; and
 - identifying areas of responsibility for governments, business, industry and the community.

What are CBRN materials?

4. A CBRN attack is defined as a combination of circumstances or conditions involving CBRN materials intended to cause damage or harm to people, animals/plants, property or the environment. CBRN materials in general terms can be divided into four distinct groups:
 - a. **Chemical** - substances, including military chemical warfare agents or legitimate but harmful household or industrial chemicals;
 - b. **Biological** - dangerous bacteria, viruses or fungi, or biological toxins (for example, ricin, a natural toxin occurring in plants);
 - c. **Radiological** - intentional release of harmful radioactive materials; and
 - d. **Nuclear** - this may include incidents where stored nuclear material is released, such as power plants, or the detonation of a nuclear device.

What is a CBRN incident?

5. The Strategy addresses CBRN threats or incidents which are terrorist-related. This includes acts involving serious harm to persons or property, where the offence potentially has a political, religious or ideological objective (as defined in Part 5.3 of the Commonwealth *Criminal Code Act 1995* and *Anti Terrorism Act 2005*).
6. The overall approach to dealing with the consequences of a terrorist CBRN incident in some circumstances may be similar to an accidental hazardous material or

dangerous goods incident. As a general rule, however, such incidents do not require national coordination and are instead handled by responsible agencies in the relevant jurisdiction or through other established national authorities, and utilising existing plans.

7. CBRN terrorism incidents are unique as they have implications relating to Commonwealth and State and Territory responsibilities, public safety, health, public confidence, national security and international relations.

AUSTRALIA'S CBRN SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

8. The threat from CBRN terrorism should be considered in the context of the global terrorist threat and the threat to Australia. Since 2000, there has been a successful, aborted or disrupted terrorist attack each year against Australian interests. In the successful attacks, improvised explosive devices have been used.

9. While conventional explosives remain the favoured weapon of terrorists, al Qaeda and some associated groups have an interest in acquiring a CBRN capability.

10. CBR attacks, particularly a crude small-scale attack, or incidents involving the deliberate malevolent use of CBR materials in Australia are possible.

AIM

11. The aim of the Strategy is to protect Australians and Australian interests from CBRN threats and incidents and minimise the impact of an incident should one occur.

AUSTRALIA'S APPROACH

12. The eight principal elements of Australia's CBRN Security Strategy are: intelligence; risk management; international cooperation; limitation of access to, and misuse of, CBRN materials; response capability; CBRN research and development; relationships with business and industry; and a CBRN prepared community.

13. Extensive consultation with stakeholders will occur as part of the implementation of the Strategy.

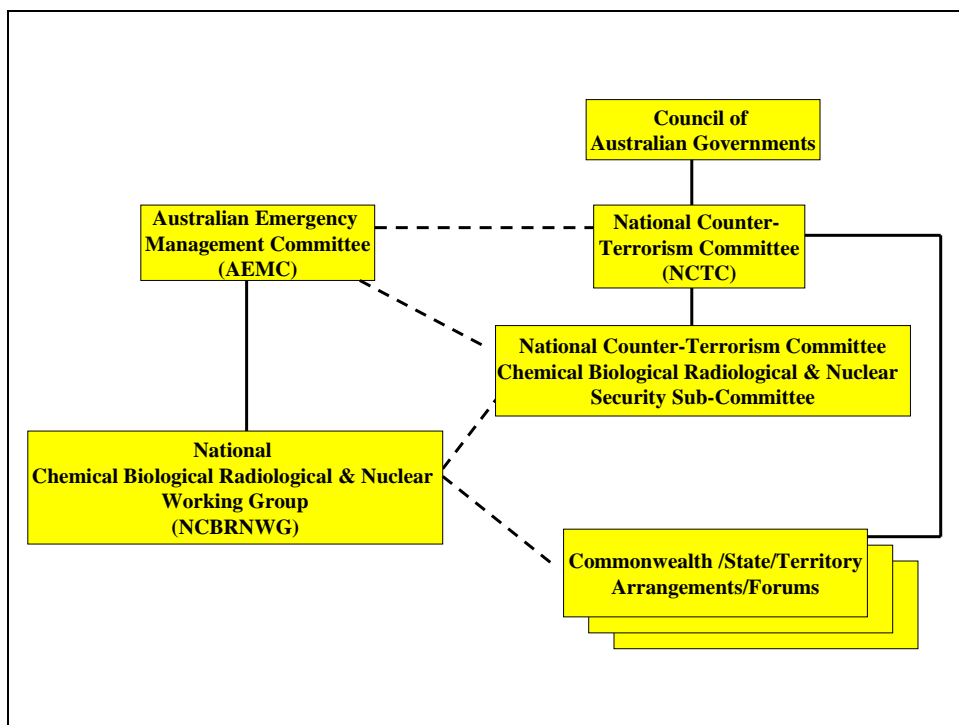
DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

14. The Strategy complements national counter-terrorism and emergency management arrangements and provides the basis for the delivery of the eight principal elements of Australia's Approach. As outlined in the *National Counter-Terrorism Plan*, when a CBRN terrorist event occurs, the affected State or Territory government has the main responsibility to manage its consequences. They are also responsible for working with local governments. If needed, a State or Territory government can request additional assistance from the Commonwealth Government. Commonwealth support to local government is provided through the appropriate State or Territory.

15. The Strategy covers prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR):

- **Prevention** – measures to prevent or reduce the likelihood of CBRN incidents;
- **Preparedness** – plans, arrangements and training to respond to CBRN threats and incidents;
- **Response** – coordination of capability and decision-making to mitigate the consequences and protect people, property and the environment; and
- **Recovery** – reconstruction and restoration of emotional, social, environmental, economic and physical well-being.

CBRN SECURITY GOVERNANCE



16. The diagram above indicates the formal and consultative linkages between key committees involved in Australia’s CBRN security governance

CBRN SECURITY STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

17. The NCTC will monitor and review the implementation of the Strategy through the NCTC CBRN Security Sub-Committee.

18. NCTC will consult with the Australian Emergency Management Committee, the Australian Health Protection Committee and the Primary Industries Standing Committee and other relevant committees in the implementation of the Strategy.