



Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

ATTORNEY GENERAL MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINISTER FOR ARTS, HERITAGE & INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

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CHIEF MINISTER RESISTS COMMONWEALTH ATTEMPT AT CENSORSHIP OVER TERROR LAWS

Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said he had been dismayed today to receive an apparent instruction from the Commonwealth to remove from his official website draft counter-terrorism legislation that will affect the lives of all Australians.

"This afternoon I posted on my website draft laws sent to me by the Prime Minister, John Howard, in the wake of last month's meeting of the Council of Australian Governments," Mr Stanhope said. "I believe all Australians should have the opportunity to see, think about and have input into this legislation. These laws are of such significance that every individual and every organisation has the right to have a proper look at the drafts before they are codified into law.

"Within hours of my posting the draft laws my office received a telephone call from the Federal Attorney General's Department, demanding that I remove the document from public view. Shortly afterwards, the head of the Chief Minister's Department received a phone call from the head of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Peter Shergold, expressing the Howard Government's displeasure.

"It is appalling that the Howard Government apparently believes that the people of Australia have no right to see this draft legislation, or to have any input whatsoever into its formulation.

"This is all the more astonishing since the legislation relies on referred powers from the States and Territories. This is not *Commonwealth* law at all, but law drafted on behalf of the people of Australia's States and Territories.

"I find it remarkable that the Commonwealth apparently believes I should, as Chief Minister of the ACT, give my final agreement to this most unusual and extreme legislation without consulting the people of the ACT — the people these laws will affect.

"I have no intention of removing the draft legislation, which can be found under 'What's new' at www.chiefminister.act.gov.au.

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