

# Repeal, *don't expand*, ASIO's authoritarian secret police powers

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This petition of concerned Australians draws to the attention of the House that in a democracy under the rule of law, secret intelligence agencies should not have policing powers but should, respecting the Separation of Powers principle, provide intelligence to civilian police operating under independent judicial oversight.

Since 2003, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) has wielded secret police powers historically associated with authoritarian police states, allowing detention and coercive questioning of non-suspects, including children as young as 14, without judicial warrants.

Extremely controversial when first proposed, the powers passed Parliament only on the government's insistence they were necessary to thwart imminent terrorist attacks, and only after Labor added a sunset clause.

However, ASIO's coercive questioning powers have since expanded in scope

beyond imminent terrorist attacks to include non-life-threatening issues, while journalists who report on an ASIO operation can be jailed for up to ten years.

Despite its secret police powers, and despite knowing the perpetrators, ASIO failed to avert the Bondi Beach terrorist attack.

Yet the government is now legislating to expand the scope of ASIO's secret police powers even further and remove the sunset clause to make them permanent.

We therefore ask the House to:

Reject the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2025; and

Repeal all of ASIO's secret police powers enacted since 2003 and return to the principle of civilian policing under independent judicial oversight.

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