Conclusion

“We must not silently allow any incremental erosion of our fundamental freedoms.”114

Through the investigation of the increase in anti-terrorism legislation which pertains to remove and restrict civil and human rights that are at the core of a democratic society, it is concluded that the introduction of said legislation has limited aspects such as the rule of law, the protection of the presumption of innocence and the right to privacy that are at the core of the definition of a free and democratic Australia. Discourse on the threat of terrorism has posited that the removal of key rights is a necessary sacrifice for the ensured safety of the nation’s security. However, in the same way that Winston Churchill once stated during the Second World War, ‘If we reduce funding in art and culture for the war effort, what are we fighting for?’115. If the rights and freedoms being sacrificed are the basic tenets of a democratic nation, then the core elements of that nation worth protecting are no longer present.

As consequence of this investigation, my proposed hypothesis, “the rights and freedoms of Australian citizens have been sacrificed as a result of the changing national understanding of a ‘crisis’, which is damaging the notion of democracy”, was proven to a large extent. However, the justification of these removals of rights is valid as it represents a major portion of the opinions of the policymaking institutions. Due to time constraints and investigatory ability, during the course of the project many limitations arose, which impacted the validity of the results. Despite attempts to prevail objectively, influence of personal beliefs, morals and ethics was unavoidable, resulting in subconscious subjective connotations and interpretations throughout.

The triangulation of primary research methodologies: a questionnaire, an interview, a focus group and a content analysis propagated a thorough investigation and understanding of the effect that anti-terrorism legislation was and is having on the civil and human rights of Australian citizens. The results of the interview, conducted with Mark Rix, Senior Lecturer of the Sydney Business School and Author of Anti-terrorism research papers, though limited by the use of email, proved to be most useful in giving qualitative instruction from a professional

with expertise on the subject. The interview must be evaluated, as bias did prevail as a consequence of the questions and viewpoints of both the responder and myself. The qualitative results of my focus group, are valid at a micro level and provide insight from respondents representing the general community, proving to be invaluable. The questionnaire, limited by the demographic it reached, resulted in quantitative and qualitative data that proved to be instrumental in the development of the discussion.

This project contributed to broader understanding of the Society and Culture course, in particular the ability to apply related concepts to the surrounding culture and environment. Additionally, the ability of the institutions of power, such as the Government, to have a massive impact on core elements of persons in the micro, meso and macro world became well understood. I have learnt how to research effectively, efficiently and ethically, particularly the necessity of referencing sources appropriately. After evaluating the rapid change in society through the reactions of governments to the threat of terrorism, I have become more involved in major national and global issues.

“They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety – Benjamin Franklin”