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SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE  
MEMBER FOR CORIO**

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT  
TV INTERVIEW  
SKY NEWS LIVE  
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**SUBJECTS:** *Barcelona terror attack; Khaled Sharrouf*

**HOST:** Let's now go live to the Shadow Defence Minister, Richard Marles – thanks so much for your time.

**RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE:** Pleasure, Aaron. How are you?

**HOST:** I'm well. We've seen the attacks using vehicles now at Berlin, Nice, Stockholm, London and now Barcelona overnight. What do you think it tells us about Islamic State's ability to inflict maximum pain simply using a vehicle, still?

**MARLES:** Well, I think we've known for some time now that the most basic of implements, the simplest of tools, can, in the wrong hands in the wrong way, wreak a whole lot of damage and death, and we've seen that play out in Europe, and we obviously need to be very alive and mindful of it, of the potential for it happening here as well, and I can assure you that our agencies, our police forces, very much are alive to it.

The first thing to say, obviously, is our thoughts and prayers go to all those who are involved, and particularly the Australians who appear to have been caught up in this. Islamic State have claimed responsibility for this. This is a feature of the world in which we live, and we need to be ever-vigilant in dealing with it.

**HOST:** You talk about the authorities here who are keeping an eye out, no doubt, absolutely the case in Europe, the UK as well, but it really is showing these attacks are very hard to predict and also prevent.

**MARLES:** I think that's a fair observation to make, and I can imagine people watching the TV and what's coming on our screens from Europe, you would think whether this is possible here. I guess what I'd say to that Aaron: I've been the recipient of a lot of briefings now from our agencies in respect of exactly this kind of issue, as well as places of mass gathering, sporting events and the like, and I can't

go through what they say, but what I can tell you is that I feel enormously encouraged at the depth, the professionalism, the thought that they go into working every possible scenario and seeking to defeat that, and you certainly come out of the briefings feeling a whole lot safer, given the work that is being undertaken, the level of coordination which exists across all of our agencies, and the way in which our intelligence sources are working as well.

It's said a lot but it's very true: we do have the best intelligence and security agencies in the world. They do work very well with each other. They have thwarted many potential threats, and they are working every day to make sure that we can live our lives in the way that we do without hindrance, and do so in a way which is safe.

**HOST:** You talk about intelligence, there's also the practical side, too: those concrete blocks that have been popping up over the past few months across Melbourne's CBD, as well. Do you think that those blocks should be rolled out around the country, and not just here in Melbourne?

**MARLES:** Firstly, the best practice, if you like, is being shared across the country, and that's something I've been particularly interested in examining. Those who are looking at this question in Melbourne are talking with their colleagues in all the other states, as well as the federal agencies, so I think what you'll find is a lesson learnt in Brisbane is going to be applied in Melbourne and a lesson learnt here in Geelong is going to be applied in Perth. There is literally conversations going all over the place, and those bollards are being put up in very strategic spots to try and keep people safe, and it is something as simple as a bollard in a particular spot which makes it impossible for the kind of thing that we've seen in Barcelona to happen in particular places where there are a lot of people on foot, and where that sort of threat could occur.

And you can then apply all of those learnings to places of mass gathering. I think, again, in the briefings I've had the particular set up of stadiums, where people tend to congregate, how it all works, all of that is looked at in great detail, it's shared across the country, and there is a lot of expertise which is going into that - and importantly so, because the last thing we want to see is people changing the way in which we go about our lives. We still want to go to the footy, we want to be able to enjoy concerts, and we want to live the kind of life that we can enjoy in this country, and it is possible to make us safe.

We need to continually be vigilant about this, and it is a very salutary reminder, what we've seen overnight - but our agencies are very much on the job.

**HOST:** Khaled Sharrouf, now, the Australian Government suggesting that he has been killed alongside his children. We just heard from Marise Payne with David Speers on this. I want to put to you: do you think it raises any questions, concerns, about children, Australian citizens, being killed in incidents like this?

**MARLES:** Well, look, that is a tragedy. Children are innocents, no matter who they're children of, and indeed in the case of Khaled Sharrouf it's hard to look at his children as being anything other than complete victims of their parents, and from that point of view it is an enormous tragedy.

I did listen to the interview with the Defence Minister. I guess I make this point: there is no question that collateral damage is a key factor in the way in which the Australian Defence Force goes about the decisions that it makes. I, too, have been to the Combined Air Operations Centre in Qatar and watched the way in which Australian personnel go about the process of targeting and issuing a green light or playing a red card – and I've actually seen a red card be played in respect of a potential strike, and that was specifically because of the threat of collateral damage in and around that strike, so it clearly has a huge impact and is a very key factor in whether to decide to take a particular step or not.

Having said that, the other thing that becomes very clear when you see our operations in the Middle East – you get briefed on this, but it's very apparent when you see it up close – this is a war zone. When Khaled Sharrouf took his children into a war zone he took them to a place of danger, and the person who should be blamed for what's occurred here to his children is Khaled Sharrouf himself. There can be no guarantees about no collateral damage when you're in the midst of a war zone. Obviously that's the case, and it becomes completely apparent when you see how war is carried out-

**HOST:** -Sure, but you talk about you've seen a red card be used before. We know that Australian intel was used to locate him, and then the fact that his children were with him, do you think a red card should have been used in this situation?

**MARLES:** I obviously can't comment on that, because I don't know the circumstances and I've not been briefed on the circumstances of the action which it appears has brought about his death. I can't comment on that, and there are a whole lot of factors which go into each case, and in that sense the Defence Minister was correct, but the point I would make and add to what the Defence Minister said: there is no doubt that the prospect of collateral damage would have been a key factor in any decision made because it always is, and you can't guarantee there'll never be collateral damage, but I have watched our Defence forces go through the process to make sure that all collateral damage is minimised, and in that they act absolutely in accordance with the rules of armed conflict and the very best standards of the way in which armed conflict is carried out, so I don't have any doubt that our Australian Defence Force personnel have acted appropriately.

As I say, I've watched it first hand, and collateral damage is always a factor. It would have been in this case, but if you go into a war zone yourself, and if you take young children into a war zone, you are taking them to a very, very dangerous place. Khaled Sharrouf bears the responsibility for that, and there can be no guarantees of anyone's safety when you're in the midst of a war zone, and I think that's how we ought to be looking at this.

**HOST:** OK, Richard Marles – thank you so much for talking to us from Geelong. We appreciate it.

**MARLES:** Pleasure, Aaron.

**ENDS**