




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (5.43 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. On this side of the House we oppose this legislation due to the fact that a number of serious community safety concerns that have been raised with respect to Labor's proposed legislation have not been satisfactorily explained by the Labor government. The Labor government is proposing a number of changes that we believe both are unnecessary and will weaken the ability for law enforcement agencies to prevent and disrupt organised crime and keep all Queenslanders safe.

To fully understand the existing laws that were passed by the Queensland parliament on 16 October 2013 and are known as the Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment—VLAD—Act, we need to return to the very beginning and revisit the primary catalyst that brought about these changes. Criminal gangs, including criminal bikie gangs, in Queensland and particularly on the Gold Coast were causing, creating and contributing to increasing public safety issues and associated criminal offences at the time. Back then our newspapers and law enforcement agencies were reporting almost daily the latest increased activities and prevalence of criminal gangs with respect to lawlessness and general criminal activity.

On Friday, 27 September 2013 over 50 Bandidos bikie gang members proceeded to walk with apparent purpose, side by side, through the Broadbeach mall. Their conduct attracted the attention of members of the public and also the police, who were obviously aware of the unusually large number of bikies attired in their colours. These gang members entered a restaurant in Broadbeach where men, women and children were out enjoying dinner. In front of all of these diners and their families they approached a particular diner who was a member of another bikie gang. A brawl ensued and was taken outside of the restaurant by the Bandidos and another now outlawed motorcycle club. Police had to use stun guns to disperse the brawling gangs, and 18 members of these gangs were charged as a result of this disgraceful incident. We all remember the headlines in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on 2 October with a Bandidos pictured. The headline attached to his photo was 'We run this town'. This sounds familiar and is very similar to a CFMEU official who said recently words to the effect that the union owns the Labor Party.

The time had come for the government to take a firm stance, and thankfully the LNP government rose to the occasion. Fast forward to 16 October 2013 and the Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment Act 2013 came into immediate effect. Associated legislation was enacted on the same day and included the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) Amendment Act 2013 and the Tattoo Parlours Act 2013. These acts were to be reviewed by the relevant minister after three years. These laws have been labelled the toughest antibikie laws in Australia. These laws have worked and have had the complete backing of the Queensland Police. They were also upheld by the High Court of Australia.

It should be noted that both the Labor South Australian government and the Labor Victorian government have been favourably predisposed to such tough legislation. Results with respect to the VLAD legislation saw a 10 per cent reduction in reported crime in the first full year following their introduction. This speaks volumes and begs the question: why would any government want to implement measures to reduce their effectiveness? The mayor of the Gold Coast, Councillor Tom Tate, is on the record as asking that these laws remain in place and that they remain unchanged. Mayor Tate has said that either repealing or weakening these laws risks the re-emergence of bikie gangs in his city, undoing the great work of our police force in reducing crime. He has also said that such action will lead to irreparable damage to tourism and the image of the Gold Coast.

In June of 2015 the socialist Palaszczuk Labor government set up a task force to review the suite of legislation introduced by the LNP government in October and November of 2013. This task force was a closed shop review with a predetermined outcome, so it comes as no surprise that on 31 March 2016 a report was delivered which made 60 recommendations. On this side of the House it is very difficult to justify a case for change when crime rate statistics, including those in 2014 when the LNP were still in government, showed that crime significantly decreased on the Gold Coast as a result of the Liberal National Party's strong law and order legislation. Homicide reduced by 21.4 per cent; assaults reduced by almost two per cent; robbery reduced by 17.2 per cent; and unlawful entry reduced by 27 per cent. Crime also significantly decreased across Queensland. Assaults were down by 3.7 per cent; robbery was down by 24.8 per cent; and unlawful entry was down by 17.4 per cent, to quote but a few. Drug offences were also being dealt with in a more timely manner.

Both I and the LNP opposition believe that Labor's proposed legislation is flawed in that it adopts recommendations from two reviews that have come under significant criticism. One of our two law enforcement agencies, the Crime and Corruption Commission, was not represented on the task force that reviewed these laws. Also of importance is that 23 of the 60 recommendations of the task force were not unanimous, with 18 of those not being unanimous because of concerns raised by the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union and the Queensland Police Union of Employees.

However, I do believe that there are two components of Labor's legislation that have merit. These are amendments to the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 and amendments to the Criminal Code which relate to child exploitation material being accessed over the internet. However, the vast number of amendments in Labor's legislation that soften and weaken the existing criminal gang laws means Labor's laws will increase the risk to community safety from organised criminal activity and criminal gangs and will return us to a very problematic set of public circumstances in existence prior to the VLAD laws being enacted. The socialist trifecta of the Labor Party, corrupted unions and the antidevelopment Greens is supporting and empowering criminal gangs and criminals whilst also destroying our state's economic security.

Those in Queensland, Australia and the free world who will vigorously deal with crime, criminal gangs, lawlessness and terror related offences and will protect our democratic freedoms, our values, our flag and the importance of family will continue to do so. I stand united with like-minded conservatives to defeat Queensland's socialist Labor government. Queenslanders are further united each and every day to reject the insidious growth of Labor's biased political correctness agenda. Free speech should always be defended. Labor's Marxist slurs levelled at various community leaders will be rejected by the silent majority. Labor's clear social agenda to silence, isolate, destroy and undertake a formalised program of character assassination directed at Liberal National Party politicians and other political leaders will be defeated. Labor and the Palaszczuk Labor government are soft on crime. Labor are soft on border protection. Labor are the economic vandals of Queensland and Australia, and I oppose the legislation.