



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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CIVIL FORFEITURE OF THE PROCEEDS OF CRIME BILL

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (8.54 p.m.): I rise to support the Civil Forfeiture of the Proceeds of Crime Bill. The objective of this bill must be very clear. It is to seize assets from people who have derived those assets from the commission of serious crimes. Under the current regime in this state crime does pay. It will continue to pay if the government does not act to seize the assets resulting from crime. It is appalling that only about \$1 million per annum is confiscated under the current regime.

It has been interesting to listen to some of the defences of Labor members as to why they will not support this legislation, which is designed to put an end to the gravy train which is attached to those who profit from crime and keep those profits. Tonight I have heard Labor members starting to commend the state government for legislation we have not even seen. Once again we see the state government failing to act on a serious issue. It is an issue in relation to which my colleague has put in the effort to bring legislation before the parliament.

It was the opposition and my colleague the member for Southern Downs who acted to bring forward the issue of drug courts in this state. It was a Labor government that dragged its heels and finally introduced drug courts into Queensland. We see once again almost a reluctance on the part of Labor members in regard to this very issue. I think it is very disappointing considering that we know there is a problem.

The aim of this legislation is to look at assets which have been derived from serious crime related activities. It is quite clear. Why would people be involved in these criminal activities unless they were going to profit from them? Why would they fear what the government may do if we have not seen action to this point?

I want to look at the objectives of this legislation. A person who derives economic or financial benefit from committing a crime should be prevented from realising or keeping any such benefit. The community is concerned to ensure that persons who commit crimes that result in large financial gains are not able to reap financial reward from their crime, irrespective of whether they serve a jail sentence. We know that with the proliferating drug problem in this state there are many who do not fear the greatest weapon of law, which would be the confiscation of those assets. Governments need to act to ensure that there is a closing of the loopholes which basically enable criminals to get away with these things. This is the intent of the legislation my colleague the member for Southern Downs has brought before the House.

I support the bill because we must ensure that no longer does crime pay by criminals being able to hold on to their assets as a result of loopholes in the law that currently exist. To date all we have heard from the government is hot air. We have not seen detail of what it proposes to do. I think that is extremely disappointing. It is with pleasure that I support my colleague's legislation before the House.
