



Speech by

Hon. Judy Spence

MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT

Hansard Thursday, 22 February 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Bikie Gangs

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (9.56 am): I applaud our police on their involvement in a major operation yesterday involving police from Queensland and New South Wales, the Australian Crime Commission and the Crime and Misconduct Commission. Those officers raided more than 50 homes in Tweed Heads, Byron Bay, Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Logan, Ipswich and Redcliffe. Thirty-nine people were arrested for offences alleged to be part of a sophisticated amphetamine trafficking syndicate, and further arrests are expected. The alleged syndicate includes members and associates of the Gold Coast, Ipswich and Byron Bay chapters of the Nomads motorcycle gang. The raids were the culmination of an 18-month investigation.

Queensland police are playing a vital role in detecting and shutting down illegal activities by outlaw motorcycle gangs. Last year, we made an election commitment to set up Queensland's first outlaw motorcycle gang squad within our police service. We have provided \$2 million to set up this squad and just this week I approved more than \$300,000 to equip the squad with a fleet of 10 vehicles to further assist the officers in cracking down on those crimes and shutting down those gangs.

An outlaw motorcycle gang is a group of motorcycle enthusiasts who have voluntarily made a commitment to band together and abide by their club's rules, which are enforced by violence, and who engage in activities that bring them and their club into serious conflict with the public and the law. Last year, Queensland police conducted eight operations targeting outlaw motorcycle gangs. A total of 332 charges were laid as a result of those operations. Offences included attempted murder, extortion, robbery with violence, and possession of dangerous drugs, firearms and explosive devices, as well as deprivation of liberty and common assault.

The outlaw motorcycle gangs like to portray themselves as ageing motorcycle enthusiasts who deliver soft toys to sick children in hospital. Last year, we even had the situation where former National Party member of parliament Alex Douglas and his Gold Coast City Councillor wife Susie Douglas saw nothing wrong with their teenage son and another 100 TSS students partying at an outlaw motorbike gang clubhouse. The former member of parliament was quoted as saying that the matter was just 'storm in a teacup stuff' and that he thought it was a good idea and was prepared to give people like bikies the benefit of the doubt. That is a shocking message to give to our young people. The truth is that those gangs contain dangerous criminals and they are subject to increasing targeted police operations in Queensland.

The new outlaw motorcycle gang squad within the Police Service is coordinating the statewide management of intelligence holdings on the gangs to investigate incidents that involve gang members. The squad has been and will continue to work closely with the CMC, the Australian Crime Commission and the NSW Police Force.

The Beattie government will continue to give our police the resources and the laws that they need to enable them to do their jobs. We still wait for the federal government to respond to Queensland's request to change its telecommunications act to allow us to introduce the PIM to be part of telephone intercept powers. I call on the federal government to look at this example today and respond to this request.