



Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Thursday, 3 September 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Criminal Organisations Legislation

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.20 am): The Bligh government has released the criminal organisations draft bill for consultation. The key objective of the bill is to disrupt and dismantle serious criminal organisations. It will enable authorities to break the criminal links in the chain that exists between members of such organisations. This will ensure that the community can be protected from the problem of organised criminal activity. These are serious measures to tackle a serious national problem.

The problem of criminal activity by outlaw motorcycle gangs in particular is an issue that requires a solid approach across the nation. The Bligh government has taken the time to get the balance right between community protection and the rights of individuals. We are determined to provide the most comprehensive yet balanced legislation in the country. If people engage in organised criminal activity our laws will ensure that police have the power to stop them and cut off their illegal profits. The draft bill includes tough measures to make it harder for criminals to band together in gangs in order to coordinate criminal enterprise.

Under the proposed laws certain gang members will be restricted from owning weapons, working in certain industries such as the security industry, or holding a liquor licence. There are hundreds of Queenslanders who are members of motorcycle groups simply because they love riding their motorcycles and these people have nothing to fear. This legislation will only affect serious criminal organisations. These serious criminal organisations are often smart, sophisticated and well financed. Our proposed laws are about pulling the gangs apart and preventing them from embarking on their criminal activities.

The government's draft bill provides the most comprehensive and balanced legislation in the country. We are determined to strike the right balance between protecting the community while also providing protection for the rights of individuals who are not associated with such gangs. That is why Queensland's proposed laws include a role for a new Criminal Organisations Public Interest Monitor. Queensland is the only state to include a public interest monitor in such legislation. As an independent barrister, the public interest monitor will represent the public interest by assisting the court in hearing certain applications under the proposed legislation. The draft bill has been released for consultation with key law, justice and civil liberties peak bodies.