




Speech by  
**Curtis Pitt**

**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

Hansard Tuesday, 5 June 2012

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## **MOTION: ORGANISED CRIME**

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.55 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. We have heard continually from the LNP government that the Criminal Organisation Act is flawed in some way. Last Friday, lo and behold, the government experienced a conversion on the road to Damascus. It was a backflip worthy of a perfect 10 at the London Olympics, which are coming up. It was amazing. Anyone who saw it would have been gobsmacked at the approach that they have taken. They issued a media statement proclaiming that the act was worth invoking. Finally, they have seen the light. I congratulate and commend them for doing so. I can only imagine how hard it must have been for the government to issue that media statement, given their past comments about the bill. All I can say is: what an embarrassment.

What is also embarrassing is the government's alternative to the Criminal Organisation Act. The LNP repeatedly makes the assertion that, rather than use the Criminal Organisation Act to disrupt and dismantle bikie gangs, law enforcement agencies should target the proceeds of crime. Those opposite who are new to this chamber should be very aware of something. Queensland already has proceeds of crime legislation. It is called the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2002. I do not know whether the LNP was snoozing when that act was passed through the parliament, but as the name suggests it has been around for almost a decade. It is a detailed act with more than 240 pages of legislation, covering various ways the government can recover the ill-gotten gains of criminals, including from members of outlaw motorcycle gangs. The law covers methods of recovering criminal proceeds such as through forfeiture orders, restraining orders and the ability to seize property from crooks.

The previous Labor government introduced those tough laws to send a clear message—and I quote the Attorney-General—that crime does not pay in Queensland. That is exactly right. Under the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2002, assets can be seized civilly or criminally and that is proving to be effective. For example, the Crime and Misconduct Commission, which is responsible for administering parts of the act, hit a major milestone in late 2009. What was the milestone? It was not \$10 million confiscated, it was not \$50 million confiscated; the CMC reached the \$100 million mark in seizures from criminals in less than seven years.

Since then, the CMC's good work has continued. In its 2010-11 annual report the CMC reports that, during the financial year, its proceeds of crime team was in the process of litigating 99 matters involving restrained property valued at a massive \$53.19 million. The annual report goes on to state that the CMC concluded 48 matters, resulting in the forfeiture of property worth more than \$9.3 million. Also, the CMC obtained five proceeds assessment orders worth \$4.96 million, including—and I emphasise this one—\$4.2 million in relation to a former member of an outlaw motorcycle gang.

The new LNP government has views about the CMC and its effectiveness, and I understand that it has some concerns that may cloud its judgement. However, they may need to have that discussion another day. Clearly, the current proceeds of crime laws are working. If the LNP thinks they can be improved, I urge them to put a bill before the parliament for the opposition to consider. Hopefully, that will be done through a committee so that we can also have community input. However, it is clear that the LNP does not understand that tackling the threats posed by bikie gangs requires a multipronged attack.

The LNP's embarrassment on this issue was further highlighted, as we heard from the Leader of the Opposition, post April when the Attorney-General, the member for Kawana, made some ill-advised statements about proceeds of crime laws. He returned from a meeting of Attorneys-General where a national scheme to target unexplained wealth was raised by the federal government. What was the response of the member for Kawana? He accused the federal government of trying to take control of Queensland's criminal laws. What he failed to realise is that these bikie gangs have chapters in many states and often shift profits and property across borders and across boundaries to avoid detection. Here is a news flash for the Attorney-General: the Gold Coast is quite close to the New South Wales border. That is why these things are discussed. That is the importance of it.

It is little wonder that the member for Kawana is worried about his position in cabinet because I can see the member for Mansfield, who obviously has a much greater depth of knowledge about all of these things, and it is wonderful to see. I am very pleased. But the Attorney-General's view is symptomatic of it. I take this opportunity to say this: the LNP is trying to take credit for the Bligh government's laws. Interestingly, in doing so they are attacking Labor for doing nothing. What have we heard before? The police are the ones who bring forward the application.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! There are too many interjections across the chamber. I warn members on my left and my right. I call the Leader of Opposition Business.

**Mr PITT:** The police are the ones who will put forward the application, not the government. Essentially, moving an amendment to this motion that notes that the LNP government has done more in its first 100 days than the previous Bligh Labor government's failure to do anything since the introduction is absolute hogwash because this is about the police. They are the ones who make the application. So members opposite should apologise to the police and all of the hardworking members of Task Force Hydra for bringing them into such disrepute. How long does it take to get this evidence base? It takes a lot longer than eight weeks. It takes about 2½ years, and that is what they should be explaining to the people of Queensland.