




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

CRIMINAL PROCEEDS CONFISCATION (UNEXPLAINED WEALTH AND SERIOUS DRUG OFFENDER CONFISCATION ORDER) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.29 pm): I rise today to speak to the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation (Unexplained Wealth and Serious Drug Offender Confiscation Order) Amendment Bill 2013. The objective of the bill is to amend the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2002 to introduce a scheme for the recovery of unexplained wealth and also to provide relief for dependants from hardship of persons against whom proceeds assessment orders are made. This will allow for innocent dependants of whom the order is made to apply for relief from hardship in particular circumstances.

As we have heard from members tonight, the issue of unexplained wealth from the proceeds of crime is a very important issue, as seemingly legitimate looking businesses can be fronts for illegitimate businesses—such as the illicit drug trade, illegal brothels et cetera—with funds obtained from any sort of criminal activity and criminal behaviour. Confiscation orders will enable the community and the justice system to seek compensation for the illicit drug trade that costs the community massively, both financially and in human costs, across the areas of health, the community and the legal system. This is a way to recoup some of the enormous expense that this abhorrent and illegal activity forces onto our community.

Just recently the Australian Federal Police acknowledged they have identified six crime bosses who have amassed \$100 million each in unexplained wealth from the illicit drug trade—that is \$600 million—along with 72 persons who have acquired \$10 million each in unexplained wealth. That makes \$1.3 billion. If we could recoup that, that would be enough for us to pay off the former Labor government's Health payroll disaster.

The *Courier-Mail* reported on 21 March 2013 that the Australian Taxation Office clawed back \$1.4 million of unpaid taxes from the Rebels bikie gang, which, I am told, is the largest bikie gang in Australia. Even though this is a separate issue, one would ask the logical question whether this sort of income was proceeds of crime, as the income would have been considerable to pay that amount of tax. These gangs are very active and there are some totally unsavoury elements among some of their participants. These new amendments will work in conjunction with this focus on illegal bikie gang activity and any criminal activity that benefits from the proceeds of crime.

My beloved region of the Gold Coast unfortunately seems to be a place where bikie gangs have infiltrated, with their clubhouses and headquarters making their homes in the region. While many do have legitimate businesses, the ones who are involved in illegal businesses are going to get caught. The proceeds from their criminal activities will be seized under these new laws. In a lot of these businesses dirty money is being cleaned through these front-door legal activities.

A recent story that has been in the media is of bikie gangs infiltrating the Victorian police force. Bikie gang members have been cultivating, compromising and corrupting police officers. They have been offering police officers access to strip clubs and drug related activities. They will do anything and stop at nothing to continue their illegal activity. The speed and accessibility of this sort of corruption

which is causing a lot of damage is immense and usually drug related. These networks infiltrate legitimate areas of business to corrupt for their own gain. They hide behind legitimate businesses, such as gymnasiums, where there is a lot of drug and steroid use. I think peptides are the latest ones they are all promoting.

Mr Bleijie: Not at my gym.

Mr STEVENS: Your gym has not been working, Attorney-General, I can assure you. Tattoo parlours are very much a focus for this bikie gang behaviour. There is no doubt in my mind that these tattoo parlours that have popped up all along the Gold Coast—and I am sure in the electorates of other members; there are plenty of heads nodding—are the way that bikie clubs clean their money. Once this bill becomes law the Attorney-General will be able to pursue those ill-gotten gains.

I have a suggestion in relation to tattoos that the health minister might look at. Under the Health Act there should be a register of people getting tattoos so that we can identify those people getting tattoos rather than have John Smith, Bill Brown and all the other fake names of people who are paying \$5,000 or \$10,000 for tattoos. This is a way for these bikie clubs to clean their money.

I remind everyone that the most notorious killer and bandit in America, 'Scarface' Al Capone was never jailed for murder. He was jailed for taxation and wealth issues. That was how they put him away in Alcatraz. I saw where he camped in Alcatraz. That was the only way they stopped this terrible man continuing his illegal activity in America.

The Attorney-General has taken the bit between his teeth in relation to cleaning up crime—the get-tough-on-crime policy which was part of the Newman government's platform at the election. This is another step in that. I congratulate the Attorney-General on taking it very seriously and proceeding with enormous speed to bring this legislation to the House. This is what our members want to see. This is what our communities that the members represent want to see. Keep up the good work, Attorney-General. We look forward to supporting more legislation as you continue to sit in this House.

The amendments in the bill will allow for the Supreme Court to make an unexplained wealth order if the person has engaged in serious crime related activities, acquired property through serious crime with some or all of a person's previously accumulated wealth which was acquired unlawfully. I am sure the 'I cannot remember where I got the money from' defence, which we have even seen in the CMC lately, will be eradicated through the prosecution of people after the legislation becomes law. The specific accused person has to prove that this is not the case for financial proceeds not to be seized. There needs to be a determination that these were not acquired through unlawful means. It must be remembered that this legislation is very specific in its utilisation. The confiscation orders will be administered by the CMC and the Director of Public Prosecutions will act as the solicitor.

In relation to the government's commitment to attacking crime throughout Queensland and to making Queensland a very unsafe place for outlaws to do their dirty business, this is another major step forward. It will lift a lot of the bad elements of the bikie clubs from my Gold Coast area, I am sure. They will go and do business in other states. South Australia is the only Labor state. They might all move to South Australia where they successfully overturned the criminal organisations legislation in the High Court. Here in Queensland it was upheld by the High Court. The Attorney-General will have the capacity to continue outlawing the outlaws' illegal activities. I absolutely commend this bill to the House.