




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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**CRIMINAL LAW (CRIMINAL ORGANISATIONS DISRUPTION) AMENDMENT
BILL; TATTOO PARLOURS BILL; VICIOUS LAWLESS ASSOCIATION
DISESTABLISHMENT BILL**

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (11.58 pm): I rise tonight to speak in support of the legislation introduced as part of the Newman government's criminal motorcycle gang reforms. Our government's response to this issue has been unprecedented and sends a very clear, strong message to all those associated with criminal gangs and motorcycle gangs. On behalf of my constituents, I congratulate the Premier and the Attorney-General on their commitment to the safety of Queenslanders and their commitment to the promise we made as a government 18 months ago to get tough on crime in this state.

Earlier this evening we heard the Leader of the Opposition's attempt to compare our government's dealings with criminal gangs to our youth justice boot camps. The member for Inala said we cannot even hold two kids in a boot camp as if that was some credible basis for attacking our proposals for dealing with serious criminal activities. Clearly, the Leader of the Opposition has no idea about the difference between dealing with young people who have come from significantly disadvantaged backgrounds and serious organised criminals.

As a father of four sons I understand all too well the delicacies and intricacies of raising boys. It is challenging for any parent in this complicated, fast paced, modern world of ours. For the Leader of the Opposition to suggest there is even a remote similarity between youth justice and dealing with serious crime is not only delusional but simply appalling. Youth justice is about working with young people, providing programs to help change their thinking, supporting those who are receptive with monitors, giving them hope and helping them to develop new patterns of thinking and fundamentally keeping them out of jail. There is no similarity; there is no comparison between how we should deal with badly behaved young people and how we should deal with serious criminals and organised crime. The former government, the government which the member for Inala served in as both a member and a minister, was soft on financial management, soft on economic reform and soft on crime.

The Gold Coast has had enough of this issue. We have had enough of the escalating violence and we have had enough of the intimidation and scaremongering. The Gold Coast's reputation is being tarnished by a lawless minority and it is time to put a stop to this madness. Tonight we have heard from the member for Nicklin, the member for Gaven and the member for Condamine who have all gone to great lengths to talk about how we are rushing this through, how we have no respect for the process and how it is inappropriate to be pushing these reforms through. Can I say as someone who has sat on the end of a phone call at two o'clock in the morning and received threats from someone who said, 'I know where you live, I know where your kids go to school and I'm coming after you,' it is no comfort to me and it is certainly no comfort to the families on the Gold Coast that we go

slow on this issue. It was only thanks to the quick action of the Broadbeach police at that time back in 2007 that they were able to trace that call, and on that occasion the perpetrator was actually caught and dealt with. But it is not a great experience for a father of young boys to hear that sort of threat made over the telephone. So, as far as I am concerned, these reforms and these laws and this action by this government cannot come fast enough.

The legislation introduced today by the Attorney-General is unlike any that we have seen in Australia. This is not a short-term fix; it is a long-term solution to ridding our society of these groups. We will make the changes the former government did not when the criminal motorcycle gangs began seizing power in Queensland. A senior Gold Coast policeman approached me at Ashmore City last Saturday morning. He spoke to me about the government's response to this issue and how he and other officers were motivated by the Premier's statements in the aftermath of the Broadbeach incident. He actually asked me to pass on his congratulations and thanks to the Premier, the police minister and the Attorney-General for their swift action and their strong stance. He said that our government's support for the officers on the front line, dealing with the violence and criminal activity linked to these motorcycle gangs, has been especially empowering and encouraging. In fact, he said that the recent statements of the Premier and the Attorney-General had actually inspired many officers who for some time had become quite depressed and despondent about the lack of action from the previous government when some of these matters arose a number of years ago.

The former government dropped the ball on these issues. These tough new laws signal a fresh approach. Our government has had enough. I want to congratulate the Attorney-General on these and the many other reforms we have already seen in our term of government in respect of sex offenders, child protection, drug offences and the proceeds of criminal activity.

The most recent response from Gold Coast police has been absolutely outstanding, and it is very pleasing to see that Jim Keogh is back on the coast. He was fantastic in his previous role. His return has restored a great deal of confidence and I know that the public can rest assured knowing that the fight against these gangs is being led by someone as experienced as Superintendent Jim Keogh.

Since being elected to represent the people of Southport, I have developed a very close relationship with the Southport Police Station, the officer in charge Ray Vine and the district officer Paul Ziebarth. They have done a fantastic job of keeping the Southport community safe and calm during the last few weeks when media interest has created an increased sense of fear and intimidation. I must remind the House this evening that the officer in charge Ray Vine is the first permanent appointment at Southport after many years of temporary appointments by the previous government. Again, I must pass on my thanks to Minister Dempsey and the Police Commissioner for giving one of Queensland's busiest police stations a permanent person in charge and for treating the team on the ground and the community with respect, unlike the opposition who have fiddle-faddled over these staff appointments in the past, just like they fiddle-faddled over serious crime on the Gold Coast.

The Gold Coast is, however, by and large a fairly safe place to live thanks to the wonderful services of our front-line police. It has always been known as a great place for families. Since being elected as the member for Southport, I have made the safety of my community a top priority.

Mr Johnson: Didn't Paul Wilson start some great work?

Mr MOLHOEK: Absolutely he did. I take that interjection. Criminal activity, however, linked to motorcycle gangs cannot be tolerated. We are looking at tougher laws, on top of those we have already put in place. The Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment Bill will see members of criminal organisations receive severe punishments for committing serious offences. The bill will deter individuals from participating in these criminal organisations, encourage those involved in these organisations to cooperate with the law and, most importantly, break the morale of members of criminal motorcycle gangs.

The regime will apply to a person who commits an offence while participating in the affairs of an association. Such an offender will be considered a 'vicious lawless associate' and subject to extra punishment beyond that which would normally apply for the offence—a further 15 years added to their sentence. If the associate was at the time of the offence a leader in the group, they will also receive an additional 10 years, on top of the 15 years imprisonment, and all of that on top of the original sentence.

We are not stopping there. If the offence was violent, a further 10 years imprisonment will be added to their sentence. This bill makes it clear that extra punishment is mandatory and cannot be reduced by the court. I, for one, am pleased to see that these measures are being put in place. I think all of us are fed up with hearing many occasions where the judiciary has let down the people of Queensland, where serious offenders have been let off on short terms or suspended sentences or been let out far too early on parole and to such a large extent have begun to make a mockery of the system. The Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment Bill is the first of its kind in Australia and will see the Gold Coast and Queensland become a safer place for families and visitors.

Many of my constituents might be surprised to learn that an estimated 80 per cent of tattoo parlours in Queensland are run by criminal motorcycle gangs. Phase 1 of the Tattoo Parlours Bill introduces a licensing regime for body art, tattoo parlours and tattooists. The bill will see members of criminal organisations banned for owning, operating or working in these parlours, ensuring only fit and proper persons are able to hold licences. The bill will also amend legislation to prohibit criminal motorcycle gang members from wearing club colours inside licensed venues. Licence applications will start being received from 1 January. Compliance with unlicensed trading will start from 1 July next year. Prohibition of criminal motorcycle gang members wearing club colours will commence on assent to this bill.

We are wasting no time in the effort to put an end to this nonsense. Phase 2 will see the Criminal Organisation Act 2009 amended so that many other licences may be refused to individuals who the Queensland Police Service advises are members of criminal motorcycle gangs. This bill will make it very difficult for members of criminal motorcycle gangs to do business in our community, and I think that is a good thing. The Criminal Code will be amended with the insertion of a number of new offences and the creation of new circumstances of aggravation for existing offences. These amendments will target those involved in criminal organisations to help clean up the streets of the Gold Coast.

A criminal organisation is already defined in section 1 of the Criminal Code to mean, firstly, an organisation of three or more people who predominantly gather for the purpose of engaging in serious criminal activity and who present as a risk to the safety, welfare and order of the community. Secondly, it is defined as an organisation declared under the Criminal Organisation Act. Additionally, it is proposed that another arm be added to this definition to include criminal organisations that are prescribed by regulation. These new offences that will be added to the Criminal Code will incur a maximum of three years imprisonment and mandatory minimum six months imprisonment as well as confiscation and crushing of any vehicle used before, during or after the offence. The offences include knowingly gathering in groups of three or more members in a public place, going to banned locations such as clubhouses as prescribed by legislation and/or promoting or recruiting for the organisation.

The current maximum penalty for affray is one year which, under these amendments, will be increased to seven years. Furthermore, a mandatory one year imprisonment will apply for serious assaults on police if committed by members of criminal motorcycle gangs. Mandatory disqualification of a driver's licence for three months for criminal motorcycle gangs will also apply. There will also be changes to the Bail Act regarding any offence, and this is an important reform. These will include presumption against bail for criminal motorcycle gang members as well as mandatory passport surrender as a condition of bail.

Amendments will also see additional powers given to the CMC. This will make it an offence to withhold evidence from the CMC even if you fear retribution and are a member or an associate of a criminal motorcycle gang. There will also be mandatory imprisonment for first contempt offences, 2½ years for second offences and five years for third offences. This legislation is ground breaking. We will take away their money. We will take away their bikes. We will take away their assets. We will stop them gathering in groups. We will stop them from recruiting new members. We will put these criminals in jail where they belong.

When I ran for parliament I heard from many people in Ashmore, Southport and Parkwood and other parts of the electorate, particularly elderly people, just how concerned they were for their own safety. Gang violence, drug dealers, drug dealers' disputes, and break and enter offences had dominated our local news bulletins for far too long. However, this is not just about my local community; this is about our city's image. This is about our tourism and development industries. This is about jobs and opportunity. Queensland and the Gold Coast do not need the negative publicity generated by the kind of behaviours we saw in Broadbeach recently. This is not the image of the Gold Coast that we want potential visitors to see on their TV screens in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and

Perth. We do not want them changing their holiday plans. We do not want them worrying about the safety of their families.

There are so many great things happening right now on the Gold Coast and in Southport that it would be a shame to undo all the good work that has occurred in the 18 months since this government came to power. So it is important that we send the right message interstate and overseas. That is why I cannot commend the Premier enough for the strong message that he is sending to Queenslanders and our nation through these legislative changes. Next year our state will host the G20 and the Pan Pacs and in just a few years time the Commonwealth Games will place the Gold Coast and Queensland on the world stage. It is just so fundamentally important that we undertake these measures and do everything we can not only to clean up our image but to make our streets and our cities safer.

This issue is threatening the secure future for our families and our state. It is threatening the secure future for our city and it needs to be addressed. I am pleased to stand here tonight as a proud member of this government in support of the Premier, the Attorney-General and our police minister in support of this legislation.