



Speech By  
**Hon. Anastacia Palaszcuk**

**MEMBER FOR INALA**

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Record of Proceedings, 4 March 2014

**MOTION: NEWMAN GOVERNMENT, ANTICRIME GANG LAWS**



**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House:

- acknowledges that the Newman government's anticrime gang laws are not workable and, in some cases, are impacting on innocent Queenslanders;
- notes the Premier's comments after the Redcliffe by-election, claiming that he and his government would listen to Queenslanders more; and
- in line with that promise:
  - requests the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to urgently undertake a public inquiry into anticrime gang laws to deliver workable laws that Queenslanders can support;
  - instructs the committee to consult with stakeholders and interested parties including the Queensland Law Society, the Bar Association of Queensland, the judiciary, the police, representatives of recreational motorcyclists and the public;
  - instructs the committee to undertake any other investigations, enquiries or inspections it deems necessary; and
  - instructs the committee to report back to this House by Friday, 9 May 2014.

Saturday, 22 February 2014 marked a pivotal moment in the history of Premier Campbell Newman and the Liberal National Party government. It was a day when the residents of Redcliffe sent a message to the Premier through the ballot box that they have had enough of this arrogant, uncaring know-it-all government. They were echoing the concerns shared by hundreds of thousands of other Queenslanders across the state. Queenslanders are growing increasingly accustomed to a government that has simply stopped listening. Redcliffe was a massive wake-up call to the Premier, and in the hours after this shattering loss the Premier gave the impression that he had taken the result on board, telling Queenslanders—

I'd just say to Queenslanders the government will be listening more and consulting more in the future. We've got the message and we will do the right thing in the future.

Has the Premier really changed his way and is he genuine in his claim that he is now prepared to finally listen? Through tonight's motion I am offering the Premier a chance to walk the talk. I am offering the Premier an opportunity to put his words into action and actually start listening to the people of Queensland. One of the areas where the Premier needs to start listening is in relation to his anticrime gang laws.

Five months after the Premier and the Attorney-General declared in this chamber that these laws would affect only criminal motorcycle gangs, the truth has been exposed. These laws are completely unworkable. They have gone too far, affecting innocent Queenslanders whose only crime is to ride a motorcycle. It is time for the Premier and the Attorney-General to admit that they got it so wrong. Go back to the drawing board and revise these laws. With their support for this motion, they can do just that by sending these discredited laws to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for a complete and thorough review.

The opposition warned the Premier about the dangers of rushing these laws through parliament in less than a day. But true to form, he refused to listen. Legal stakeholders urged him to refer the laws to the committee for proper consideration, but he refused to listen to them either. Is the Attorney-General afraid of having the committee look at the laws because he knows what the outcome will be? Perhaps if the Premier had been able to find it within himself to accept our advice, he would not find himself in the situation where his government has rapidly lost the faith of the people of Queensland. Perhaps the Premier would not be in a position where the result of the Redcliffe by-election simply says it all.

Do not get me wrong: Labor acknowledges that criminal organisations pose a threat to the safety and security of Queensland, and Labor has consistently stated its support for laws that target criminal motorcycle gangs—but in a workable, rational fashion. It should be remembered that it was Labor that introduced the Criminal Organisation Act in 2009 to combat outlaw bikie gangs—the toughest laws in Australia and the first to survive a challenge from the bikies to the High Court.

The LNP opposed these laws. The Attorney-General stood up in this House and decried the laws as an affront to the civil liberties of the bikie gang members. The health minister met with representatives of the bikie gangs and vowed to protect their civil rights. At the same time the LNP government's workable laws were debated, the Labor Party raised reservations about their scope and application and opposed their worst aspect. The LNP said last year that the anticriminal motorcycle gang laws would not affect innocent Queenslanders. As the Attorney-General assured everyone, 'Law-Abiding citizens have nothing to fear from these new laws.' Again he gave more advice and he said—

The legislation will target only criminal motorcycle gangs. Other law-abiding motorcycle riders will have nothing to worry about.

Those were the Attorney-General's words. They were your words, and these laws have failed. Since then, both the Attorney-General and the Police Commissioner have acknowledged that innocent riders can be affected. In short, it is a mess. But it is the LNP's mess, and they should clean up and fix this mess!

Those opposite are right to ask 'What would Labor do differently?' I am happy to answer that question definitively for the record. I can assure Queenslanders that a future Labor government will make sure we have laws that target organised crime gangs without attacking innocent people. We will start that process by developing, over the coming months, our own workable anticrime gang laws. Where the LNP does not listen, we will. Where the LNP rejects expert advice, we will welcome and embrace it. Where the LNP bungles these laws, we will get them right. We will repeal and we will replace them!

At the end of our consultations we will be in a position to outline new and workable laws that will be implemented by a future Labor government. We will also establish a public judicial inquiry to assess the state of organised crime in Queensland and the need for any additional legislative measures. As the Leader of the Opposition, I heard the message from the Redcliffe by-election. I have listened. Given the Premier's aversion to consultation and his failure to listen, I have been conducting my own consultation in recent weeks. That is because Labor recognises that meaningful and genuine consultation can improve any legislation presented to this chamber, particularly legislation that was cobbled together so quickly by the Premier and the Attorney-General.

I must sadly report to the House that my consultations have confirmed what Queenslanders have already realised—that these unworkable laws lack true support in the community. I have consulted with criminal lawyers; I have consulted with QCs. What was their verdict? The laws in their current state are problematic and they are concerned that these laws are unjust, they are not working and they should be referred to a parliamentary committee for urgent review. I have paid attention to what the Queensland Law Society has said—that these laws put at risk the democratic rights of all people and threaten the fundamental principle of the separation of powers.

Tonight I challenge the Premier of Queensland. If he is a man of his word, he will accept my challenge. If he is willing to consult, he will accept my challenge. Tonight I challenge the Premier to support this motion. I challenge the Premier to support this motion without hesitation and without amendment. If the Premier refuses to accept this challenge, he will simply prove what more and more Queenslanders think—that he and his arrogant government have stopped listening. Premier Newman needs to stand up, accept responsibility and start listening to Queenslanders. Earlier this year we said that these laws could be fixed, and the way those opposite could have fixed these laws straightaway was to get rid of this Attorney-General and put someone in that position with a bit of integrity, decency and honesty—someone like Minister Ian Walker perhaps who could have had a fresh start, worked with the community and got these laws right. Tonight there has been a secret cabinet meeting—a cabinet meeting talking about the underperformance of this government. The only person who is

underperforming is the Premier of this state. The Premier of this state is underperforming because he chooses not to listen. He will not listen to doctors. He will not listen to lawyers. He will not listen to workers. A future Labor government will govern for all Queenslanders, not just a few.