




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (3.10 pm): After about 18 months in government, this Labor Party has been true to its fluff-around-with-crime approach by finally bringing in legislation in respect to organised crime that waters down the tough legislation that the LNP put in place. Labor's main policy direction has been anything that is contrary to that of the previous government. Labor just wants to rip it up. That sent a very clear message to organised crime in this state that the welcome mat was out. After this government was elected, we saw criminal bkie gangs out in droves in contravention of the existing law, testing the waters to see if the government would crack down, to see if there would be a response. This government's message was, no, they were watering down the legislation. After 18 months, this soft-on-crime government has put before the parliament legislation that waters down the law that the LNP brought in to tackle a very serious issue.

In Queensland, Labor was in denial over what was happening with outlaw bkie gangs. Thanks to the Labor Party's attitude, on the Gold Coast there was terror on the streets in a way that we had never seen before in this country. The Labor Party had allowed organised crime, particularly criminal bkie gangs, to believe that they owned not only the Gold Coast but also the system and that they could do what they liked. Over many years of a Labor government, we saw people being shot at. We saw people being intimidated from coming forward with examples of extortion that had been brought against them by these criminal gangs.

A government member: Rubbish!

Ms SIMPSON: It is not rubbish. People were shot. The member should be ashamed of himself. What occurred in Queensland was an outrageous example of a soft-on-crime Labor Party that, over many years in government, allowed these thugs to get away. We in the LNP said, 'That's not good enough.' Queenslanders deserve to be safe on their streets. Queenslanders should not live like they are in some Middle Eastern horror story—a war unfolding in their local community—in this, our Australia, in this, our Queensland but, thanks to this inept, seriously soft-on-crime Labor Party, they were.

After 18 months, the Labor government has brought forward legislation that rips up the LNP's approach, which, clearly, had been successful. The figures show clearly that there has been a reduction in crime. They prove that the 2013 VLAD laws were working. We have already seen a significant decrease in crime throughout Queensland, particularly on the Gold Coast. The statistics speak for themselves. In 2014, across Queensland, we saw a reduction in the number of assaults by 3.7 per cent. Robberies were down by 24.8 per cent. Unlawful entries were reduced by 17.4 per cent. Car theft was down by 19.4 per cent.

Mr Walker: These are very stark figures.

Ms SIMPSON: They are stark figures. I highlight the fact that, thanks to the VLAD laws, more drugs were off our streets. We want to see children protected. Putting drugs on the streets through organised crime is one of the most insidious ways to rip those kids' lives apart. That was occurring through not only outlaw bkie gangs but also the organised crime links in this state that had been allowed to proliferate unchallenged with some help from those lefty lawyers who seem to like the Labor Party.

In relation to drug offences, as at June 2015, QPS intelligence revealed that 76 per cent of identified Queensland organised crime networks were involved in the illicit drug market. That is a significant connection. In his submission to the parliamentary committee, the Mayor of the Gold Coast, Tom Tate, outlined his concerns—and, as we know, organised crime is a statewide issue but it is a critical issue for the Gold Coast. He stated that—

... City of Gold Coast will again be plunged into the climate of fear that accompanied the crime wave unleashed by outlaw motorbike gangs over the past decade.

Mayor Tom Tate stated further—

The trail of devastation caused to thousands of families by the drugs peddled by these gang members is horrendous. How many more young lives are to be wasted by addiction peddled by motorbike gang members? Make no mistake, drug running is a core activity associated with most of these clubs. The evidence is irrefutable.

Tough sentencing was crucial to enable the police to rein in the activities of these organised criminal gangs. The watering down of these laws will see these outlaw bikie clubhouses reopen. The previous police minister even admitted that these new clubhouses could spring up. That will mean more drugs on our streets, more violence, more assaults, more robberies, more unlawful entries and more car theft.

Who owns Labor in this state? We know that some of the thugs in the CFMEU certainly own a good chunk of this government. We know that certainly some of the left-leaning lawyers own a huge chunk. I think that the outlaw bikie gangs who campaigned for this Labor government also own a huge chunk. It is well and truly on the record that some of those people, with rap sheets as long as your arm and drug offences, were out there campaigning in support of a change of government to see Labor come to government in Queensland. They own this government as well. It is no surprise that, finally, after fluffing around for 18 months while these gangs were getting back into business and reorganising their clubhouses, we see this watered down legislation before the House.

Instead of properly reviewing the previous laws there was a sham review, where the terms of reference mandated that the VLAD laws had to be ripped up and watered down. Instead of having a proper review, this soft-on-crime Labor government came up with a review that had a predetermined outcome that did not independently or seriously look at the issues. The terms of reference for the review mandated that the VLAD laws had to be repealed, had to be overturned. That was not a fair review of the laws.

Under Labor, for more than a decade criminal gangs owned the streets and built up their network of drugs culminating in the shooting up of tattoo parlours and many other instances of fires and extortion—the list goes on. The LNP changed the laws. What does this mob do? It does not conduct a fair review of the VLAD laws. In its review, rather than looking at the effectiveness of the VLAD laws, it mandated that they be repealed. Were there any public hearings? No. Was the Crime and Corruption Commission, which had already reviewed the 2013 laws, represented on the task force? No. It was a closed-shop review with a predetermined outcome. What a debacle! Once again, who owns this government? The thugs in the CFMEU, the thugs in the crime gangs who were out there campaigning for a number of Labor government members and those who put them in power.

I note the comments from the non-government members of the committee that suggest that there are two provisions in the bill that do have merit, namely, amendments to the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 and the Criminal Code relating to child exploitation over the internet. Unfortunately, they have been attached to a piece of legislation that fundamentally builds up crime gang network opportunities by ripping up the LNP legislation. The overall intention of this government is to rip up the previous government's legislation and to go soft by weakening the existing laws. I cannot support this bill which weakens those laws that were about putting those crime gangs out of business. It will put our community at risk again from the illegal activities of organised crime gangs that are out there to rip off children with the drugs that they peddle in our community.