




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.11 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. This bill will tackle organised crime in all—and, I repeat, in all—its forms in Queensland. It offers a vastly improved approach to the LNP's suite of laws which primarily targeted outlaw motorcycle gangs—laws that were counterproductive and unworkable.

We have heard a lot of talk from those opposite about what happened, why the laws came about and the fact that it is all about the Gold Coast. They obviously ignore the rest of Queensland that also has issues in relation to serious and organised crime. All we hear is what happened on the Gold Coast and that this is a Gold Coast law. I have no problems with ensuring that the Gold Coast has tough laws, but it is also important that we have similar laws throughout all of Queensland—regional Queensland and everywhere else—and not just where those opposite say we should. The interesting thing is that we are hearing a lot of stories and a lot of talk, but very little detail. There is no detail at all.

It is a measure of the arrogance of the previous government that they rushed their VLAD laws through the House in a single day. There was no appropriate stakeholder consultation nor were the VLAD laws subject to the proper scrutiny of a parliamentary committee. Instead, the LNP ignored due process just like the laws themselves. The implications for operational policing, criminal prosecutions and the rights of Queenslanders took a back seat as the previous government thumped its chest in search of cheap headlines, just like they are here today.

I am pleased to say that we contrast that to the actions of the Palaszczuk government. We have consulted widely on the bill before the House. It is a culmination of three reviews. Are those opposite seriously saying that the commission of inquiry, conducted by Michael Byrne QC, which made 14 recommendations for legislative reform, was all about weakening the laws? Are they seriously implying that in this House? Are they seriously implying that the task force chaired by the Hon. Alan Wilson QC, with representation from the Queensland Police Union of Employees, the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Law Society and the Bar Association of Queensland, and the review of the Criminal Organisation Act 2009 was all about watering down these laws and making them weaker, allowing criminal bikie gangs to get away with what they are intending to do and allowing them to walk the streets? It is preposterous. It is absolutely ridiculous.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Millar): Member for Mermaid Beach, if members are to interject they should do so from their seat.

Ms GRACE: The task force published its terms of reference on its website, called for public submissions and made targeted requests for submissions from key stakeholders. They had the best interests of all Queenslanders at heart. I believe that their recommendations go to the fundamental changes that are going to make these laws more effective, more workable and tougher in all areas of organised crime.

This far-ranging review found that in addition to outlaw motorcycle gangs Queensland was also facing other key organised crime threats. Do those opposite seriously believe that the only people who peddle drugs and other illicit substances are motorcycle gang members on the Gold Coast, and that is it? It is a joke. They are a joke just like their laws were a joke. We are here to clean up what is fundamentally their mess.

The other organised crime threats include the illicit drug market, online child sex offending including the child exploitation material market and cold-call boiler room investment frauds. The bill has been drafted to tackle these and other emerging threats and was subsequently referred to the parliamentary committee for consideration. The committee, chaired by the member for Ferny Grove, received 282 submissions on the bill, which is being opposed by those opposite along party lines. I commend the work of the chair and the committee on the bill which I believe offers a workable way to tackle serious organised crime in all of its forms, without throwing out proper legal safeguards and without ditching due process.

This bill is guided by the principle that criminality should be determined by a person's conduct not by their membership of a particular organisation alone. It is tough on serious and organised crime. It introduces a new consorting offence that makes it a criminal offence for a person to associate with two other people who have previous convictions. It prevents the wearing of colours in all areas and in all establishments, not just licensed premises.

Do members know where family mainly gather? It is in non-licensed premises. The bill of those opposite just stops the wearing of colours in licensed premises. This bill prevents it in all premises—cafes and restaurants—where children and their parents gather. Is that a watering down of serious organised crime legislation?

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms GRACE: We have the member for Kawana interjecting. He does not really understand what we are introducing here. He is struggling to grasp this. How this is a watering down of laws is beyond me. I would like the detail from those opposite rather than them just getting up and speaking in platitudes and phraseology. I would like them to get down and tell us what is being weakened by these laws. They are very short on substance. I have really not heard—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Ms GRACE: I heard nothing of substance from the member for Mermaid Beach in his speech. It was just platitudes, phrases, words and talking points. Somebody wrote them for him and he read them out. There is nothing about the substance of the laws. They should have a look at the bill and read it and if they think that that is watering down the law then I suggest they think again.

The bill also allows for conviction based control orders to impose conditions to prevent, restrict or disrupt involvement in serious criminal activity post imprisonment. It contains provisions allowing police to issue a public safety order, which can be used to prohibit one or more persons from being in or going to an area, premises or event for a prescribed period if they pose a serious risk to public safety or security.

The bill allows CCC and police officers to request an order requiring a person to provide information necessary to gain access to electronic information stored. If that is watering down laws, I do not understand their thought patterns. These are not the kinds of provisions you introduce if, as they keep saying using the same old phraseology, you are soft on serious and organised crime. We know that that is absolutely ridiculous. They have no proof. They are offering no substance to what they are saying.

These laws are tough but fair. They are targeted and measured. Above all, they are practical. If those opposite believe that the people who reviewed these laws were all about watering them down and giving organised criminal activities the upper hand, they need to think again because they are vastly misinformed. Convictions will stick under our laws, unlike the laws of those opposite under which not one bikie gang member has been convicted in this state. Queenslanders will be safer, and those engaged in serious and organised crime will have nowhere to hide. I commend the bill to the House.