




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (5.51 pm): After hearing the contribution of members opposite, including the member for Currumbin, it is obvious that all their porch lights are burning very brightly at the moment. The member for Currumbin alluded to government members of the committee being linked to criminal behaviour. I would like to put on record that I find these statements personally offensive and I consider them to be an abuse of privilege. There has also been much said today by members opposite regarding the chair's integrity. I would like to say that the chair has integrity in bucketloads. He is collaborative and consultative with government and non-government members alike.

Now I am going to talk about the very important bill before the House: the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. That is what we are here to talk about tonight. I would like to thank the chair of the committee, the member for Ferny Grove, Mr Mark Furner MP, and my fellow committee members. I would also like to thank the secretariat for their work and support during the consideration of this important bill.

As a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, I recognise the threat that organised crime presents to our entire state. In the course of this inquiry the committee carefully considered what the focus of Queensland's response to organised crime should be, how it should operate in practice and what fundamental principles it should underpin. I will focus my speech on two critical issues that have arisen in the course of debate in this House and in the public more generally: the breadth of application of the government's bill to all forms, especially emerging areas of concern; and the statewide spread of the bill.

Evidence has emerged during this inquiry that organised crime presents a much broader concept and reality than the presence of outlaw criminal motorcycle gangs on the Gold Coast. I draw members' attention to the following extract from part 1, chapter 2 of the Wilson *Taskforce on organised crime legislation* report at page 12, which states—

Organised crime is constantly evolving. It exists in a dynamic environment 'not exclusive to certain geographical areas, to singular ethnic groups or to particular social systems'.

Family-run, Mob-style mafia groups like those made famous in *The Godfather* and *The Sopranos*, once thought of as the defining stereotype, no longer dominate organised crime.

The nature of the modern-day crime landscape is such that those old-style traditional groups are no longer so prominent.

Organised crime syndicates are now, in the main, more fluid in size, structure and make-up. They form, coalesce and dissolve, crossing environmental and social boundaries, infiltrating a diverse range of crime markets, adjusting to new technologies, and adapting to law enforcement interventions.

The threat that organised crime presents goes to the heart of our police and government's ability to provide for the safety and integrity of the communities that we serve. This understanding of organised crime in its current state is what informed the need for this bill. The government's commitment to evidence based policy and protecting all Queenslanders is our guiding action.

The parliamentary committee identified that there is no territorial limitation for organised crime. The rise of the internet and increased global exchange of people and ideas has given rise to increased opportunities for illicit and quasi-legal arrangements to facilitate illegal and unconscionable activities. Evidence suggests the need to be vigilant for organised crime in all parts of Queensland, from the far north to the Gold Coast. Resourcing for police, prosecutors, intelligence and other crime-fighting infrastructure is critical to the success of any effort to tackle the issues we are discussing today. A framework of law is not enough.

Over successive budgets the Palaszczuk government has provided additional resources to address the different manifestations of organised crime in our state. In April the Premier announced a \$37.4 million funding package to address the issues raised in the Wilson task force and other reports. Specifically, this included \$20 million over four years for the Queensland Police Service to specifically target serious organised crime and a further \$5.3 million over three years to establish an independent crime statistics body to collect data and monitor organised crime as well as impacts and trends across all crime types. This funding was delivered as part of the 2016-17 state budget.

I also note that in this year's budget the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions was allocated funding for an additional 26 permanent positions. This represents an allocation of \$12.1 million in base funding over four years commencing 1 July 2016, and the majority of these positions are allocated to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions' regional locations—17 out of 26 of them. These positions, both prosecutor and support roles, will play an important role in bringing justice for regional Queenslanders.

It is clear that there is a strong community interest in the debate over responding to organised crime. The committee received 282 submissions, some of which were accepted on a confidential or partially confidential basis, and I would like to thank those organisations and individuals who contributed to this important process. Laws that impact upon the rights and freedoms of individuals and reform the criminal law should be subject to the appropriate parliamentary and public scrutiny, and I am pleased to be part of a government that recognises this fact and sees such activity as a key component of our legislative role in the democratic process. I will now turn to the laws themselves in greater detail.

The bill creates a comprehensive new regime for Queensland to tackle all forms of organised crime. The bill introduces a new consorting offence punishable by up to three years imprisonment for a person to interact with a recognised offender. A recognised offender is a person with convictions for an indictable offence punishable by a maximum of at least five years imprisonment or some lesser indictable offences often linked to organised crime such as riot. However, a fundamental aspect of the proposed change is that a person's criminality should be determined by their actual conduct. The new offence prohibiting the wearing of colours and similar paraphernalia in public recognises the real and valid concerns of many Queenslanders, including police officers. These items exist for no other purpose than to intimidate others, especially when worn in public places.

The Public Safety Protection Order Scheme is comprised of three orders and is a multilevel strike against organised crime. It will replace the LNP's clubhouse offence. The three orders are restricted premises order, public safety order and fortification removal order.

A concern that was put to the committee was the accountability of officers and government regarding the police exercise of special powers, and I can assure these community members that accountability mechanisms are built into the exercise of these warnings by police. The bill creates a more robust, more targeted and more contemporary organised crime work framework for Queensland, protecting all Queenslanders against all serious organised crime. I commend the bill to the House and I encourage all members to support the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill.