




Speech By  
**Rob Molhoek**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT**

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### **SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (4.38 pm): Today I rise to speak in opposition to the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Three years ago last month I rose in this House to speak in support of the LNP's Criminal Law Amendment Bill and want to begin by reflecting on my words. I said—

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.

When I first ran for parliament in 2012, I heard from many people in suburbs like Ashmore and Southport, parts of Parkwood and other parts of my electorate, particularly from a lot of elderly people, about 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 issue is not just about my local community; it is also about my city's image. It is about the tourism and development industries on the Gold Coast. In recent months, we have heard so much from the government about how important tourism is to the state of Queensland and how spectacular the growth in domestic and international visitors has been. I do not think that any of us should dare be frivolous about the importance of protecting the image of the Gold Coast and Queensland.

My comments back then were that this issue was really about jobs and opportunity, that Queensland and the Gold Coast did not need the negative publicity generated by the kind of behaviours that we saw in Broadbeach in that infamous brawl, which then spilled out into an all-out assault on the Southport Police Station and the watch house. That is absolutely not the image that the Gold Coast needs. We are at a time in our state's history when we can ill afford to turn away visitors. This issue continues to threaten a secure future for families in our state. It is also threatening the secure future for the city of the Gold Coast. It absolutely needs to be addressed.

I am pleased to say that, in the past three years, community confidence and a sense of safety in Southport and the Gold Coast has risen. The streets feel safer. When I was first elected in 2012, I had people come to my office who told me that it was a regular occurrence to see people dealing drugs down the back alley behind my office at Chirn Park. I can assure members that, over the past few years, there have been no repeats of that. I can also assure the House that that is a trend that we are seeing less and less of across the city of the Gold Coast.

The Gold Coast is in an era of great prosperity. We have the Commonwealth Games just some 18 months away. Infrastructure development is being rolled out across the city. There is great enthusiasm and optimism. Stage 2 of the light rail is well underway. The new Health and Knowledge Precinct and the university are thriving. All of this activity underpins the need for us to maintain a strong stand on law and order. If these reforms are passed—this softening of our approach to criminal gangs—I am particularly concerned that, in a sense, we will be putting out the welcome mat to them. We are already hearing stories from across the border of criminal gangs planning to gear up and come back once these laws go through.

I am particularly concerned about the consultation on these proposed changes that has gone on with the Gold Coast community—or, should I say, the lack of consultation. In September, I was fortunate to fill in on the committee when a public briefing on the recommendations of the task force that had been set up was held. Fortunately, at that public hearing I was there with the member for Coomera and the member for Currumbin—three members representing the Gold Coast filling in on the committee that day. The committee received briefings from Acting Inspector Ian Carroll from the Queensland Police Service; Mr David Ford, the Deputy Director-General for Liquor, Gaming and Fair Trading of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General; Ms Carolyn McAnally, the Acting Director for Strategic Policy and Legal Services of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General; Mrs Leanne Robertson, the Acting Assistant Director-General of Strategic Policy and Legal Services of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General; Ms Louise Shephard, also from that department; and, most importantly, Commissioner Ian Stewart from the Queensland Police Service.

I simply asked the question: of all the people on the task force who were given the job of coming back with these recommendations and to review what was being proposed, how many of them either lived on the Gold Coast and had some practical work experience on the Gold Coast at some point or had spent some part of their working career down the Gold Coast dealing with this issue in what is a very dynamic and unique market?

**Mr Walker:** What was the answer?

**Mr MOLHOEK:** I take that interjection from the member for Mansfield. The answer was none. Apart from perhaps the commissioner himself, who has spent a bit of time down on the Gold Coast from time to time, not one of the task force members charged with the responsibility to come up with recommendations on how to deal with serious crime on the Gold Coast had ever lived or worked on the Gold Coast for any significant period of time. I think that is an absolute disgrace. I have real concerns about that.

At that hearing I also asked the commissioner questions about the proposed new anticonsorting proposals. I asked if he was happy with them. I have to say that I was not very satisfied with the answer. I do not think that the responses that we received from the commissioner and other representatives in that hearing were adequate. How do we monitor these new anticonsorting proposals? How are we going to have people in the field with the ability to observe whether people are consorting? How do you monitor that? In years gone by, the commissioner had previously expressed concerns about these anticonsorting proposals.

A lot of the venue owners have concerns about these anticonsorting proposals. They want to know what their responsibilities are. How are they supposed to monitor and act on these anticonsorting rules? I want to quote from a contribution that was made to the public hearing by Mr Paul Burton, the general manager of the Southport RSL. He said—

From the outset, any diminishing of the 2013 suite of laws primarily targeting outlaw motorcycle gangs, which I will refer to as OMCGs, would be to the detriment of society, given the purpose and result achieved thus far by the then introduced laws. For the sake of our towns and licensed venues, our tourism and our children, I respectfully submit that any proposed softening of these laws will again bring fear back to our society and undo the extreme positive efforts of our law enforcement officers, which in turn sends out a message to the OMCGs.

For the record I have witnessed and been subject to the intimidatory tactics employed by OMCGs in my licensed venue which, from the coalface, is a very disturbing experience, not only for the venue operator but also for members and guests. Members and guests constantly advise me that they feel safer in the club than they do in their own homes. Whilst this is a sad indictment on the world we live in, it is a reality in certain sectors of society, particularly the elderly.

Mr Burton's contribution reflects the concerns of venue operators and owners and the wider community as he also heads up the alliance of venue operators in Southport.

I want to go back to some comments that I made in the hearing. This is a very personal issue for me, too. The LNP responded to outrageous behaviour on the Gold Coast. We were at a conference at the convention centre. The Premier pulled a few of my Gold Coast colleagues aside and said, 'You need to come to an unscheduled meeting with the Police Commissioner. I cannot tell members how disturbing it was to be handed the Police Commissioner's phone number and the Deputy Police Commissioner's phone number, to be given a briefing on the personal risks involved and advised to give those phone numbers to my family and my kids just in case 000 did not work and they found themselves in a situation where they were being targeted. I could also talk to the House about the four months that we had police officers stationed at my office at Chirn Park for the safety of my staff. I cannot support this legislation.

*(Time expired)*