




Speech By
Tony Perrett

MEMBER FOR GYMPIE

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SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (5.58 pm): I rise to speak briefly on the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I will state the obvious: why change legislation that is obviously working? This bill is not based on common sense. It is not based on best practice and using the best way to ensure the safety of the majority of Queenslanders. It is based on political cynicism, hypocrisy and expediency. This bill is seriously flawed. It has its genesis in the government's blind determination to overturn the previous government's successful legislation. Out of sheer political expediency, the Labor Party government had decided on a conclusion well before it investigated the adequacy of that 2013 legislation.


The government has tried to justify this legislation by reference to recommendations made by the Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry and the Taskforce into Organised Crime Legislation. The Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry held no public hearings and the task force was provided with a predetermined conclusion. There was no proper, thorough, broad, comprehensive attempt to investigate and review the laws. The government had already predetermined the outcome of that task force because it had set out in the terms of reference that—

The Taskforce will note the Queensland Government's intention to repeal, and replace the 2013 legislation, whether by substantial amendment and/or new legislation, and will ...

...

- advise how best to repeal, or replace by substantial amendment, the 2013 legislation ...

It was not—and never could be—a fair review of the laws. This is the cynical treatment of the safety of everyday Queenslanders who have been affected by the activities of organised crime.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (7.43 pm), continuing: No-one can forget the appalling activities of bikie gang members, particularly on the Gold Coast, and their involvement in serious crime. These gangs have no respect for the police or the law. Their criminal tentacles are extensive and pervasive. It is time we let the police and the legal system crack down on this behaviour. This is what the successful LNP VLAD laws were doing. They achieved more than a 10 per cent reduction in reported crime in the first full year since the laws were introduced. The VLAD laws were about serious crime and not just about criminal bikie gangs.

Despite the myth that is peddled by the Attorney-General and others that the LNP's laws only focused on bikie gangs, the Police Commissioner made it abundantly clear that it also applied to other forms of organised crime. He confirmed that the first conviction under the VLAD laws was actually someone on drug related offences and not a member of a criminal motorcycle gang. The LNP's laws work.

The Gold Coast superintendent of the antibikie task force, Superintendent Jim Keogh, said—

While it will be all good from a police perspective to lay claim to the success in relation to the criminal motorcycle gang problem, the reality is you can't do it without the legislation.

This legislation had been obviously the right legislation and it's withstood the test of time and it's proven to have cleaned up the street. Bottom line is why change something that's working?

As it stands currently, should you remove the legislation you would see the return of the organised criminal motorcycle gangs. It would be foolhardy to think that they've totally walked away from a multimillion-dollar criminal enterprise.

We are talking about an enterprise which deals in all levels of criminal and illegal drug activities. No community in Queensland is immune from the effects of their illegal, multimillion dollar drug industry. In my electorate of Gympie the police are working hard to combat and tackle increased illegal drug use. It affects families, friends, the users and our community.

Last month I was disturbed to hear reports in the national media that families were selling houses, cars and going into debt to rescue their children from the effects of ice. It was disturbing to hear an addiction counsellor on the ABC's *Four Corners* program rhetorically ask what parent is not going to say, 'Yes, I will sell my house or I will give you my kidney to save my child's life.' It should be concerning for our entire community.

Parents are risking everything to rescue and help their children, including families risking bankruptcy and turning to private clinics for rehabilitation. Its impact is insidious and it is not just the user but their families, friends and our broader community which is being affected. Unfortunately, it travels across all regions and all levels of society, and no income group, family circumstance, employment or educational level is immune.

It ends up with increasing numbers of drivers being caught drug driving rather than drink-driving. It ends up with increased levels of crime in Gympie which are either directly or indirectly related to the use of drugs. In October residents of Imbil Rural Watch were warned by the officer in charge at Imbil that there had been more drug-driving than drink-driving offences in the Mary Valley.

Crime figures have shown in the Gympie electorate big increases in the last year, with assaults up 12 per cent, unlawful entry up 13.7 per cent, drug offences up 22.9 per cent, unlawful use of motor vehicles up 57.1 per cent and offences against the person up 70 per cent. None of these categories is immune from drug taking as users resort to theft and other crimes to support their habit.

This bill is flawed in that it adopts recommendations from two reviews which have been heavily criticised. The LNP laws have been working and that is why they should be retained and this bill rejected.