




Speech By  
**Verity Barton**

**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.48 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill. At the outset I want to say that I am very proudly joining with my colleagues on this side of the House in opposing this Labor government's attempt to weaken what are some of the strongest anticriminal gang laws in the country. These laws have been so strong and so effective at stopping criminals and organised crime and bikie gangs from even getting on to the streets of the Gold Coast that we have seen jurisdictions across Australia follow the LNP's lead.

I was very proud in the lead-up to the 2015 election to stand firm with my Gold Coast colleagues as we stood up to the criminal motorcycle gangs, as we stood up to the drug rings, as we stood up to the paedophile rings and as we stood up to all organised crime not only on the Gold Coast but across Queensland. We stood up to them and we said, 'You are not welcome in our city.' Gold Coasters spoke very loudly. They spoke very loudly, indeed.

What we can see from the legislation before us today—and this is just one of many pieces of legislation that affirm and reiterate this point—is that, where the LNP wants to be tough on crime and criminals and the LNP wants to protect Queenslanders, the Labor Party time and time again is weak on crime. With this legislation the Labor Party is rolling out the red carpet to criminal motorcycle gangs on the Gold Coast. It is rolling out the red carpet to organised crime across Queensland.

I have had the opportunity since 2012 to talk to people in my electorate about the issues that matter most to them. Consistently people tell me that they are very, very concerned about law and order and, particularly on the Gold Coast, they are very, very concerned about criminal motorcycle gangs. Indeed, it is the third most important issue for my community behind management of the economy and jobs. Since the election in 2015, nearly 2,000 people have actively sought me out to complain about the fact that Labor is rolling out the red carpet to criminal motorcycle gangs on the Gold Coast and across Queensland. It is quite significant that that many people would actively, of their own volition, make the effort to complain about what this government is doing.

The Labor Party, as part of their big suite of claimed reforms, want to introduce anticonsorting laws which they say are modelled on the New South Wales provisions. As has been outlined by the member for Beaudesert, what that means is that we are stopping them from hanging out after they have committed the crimes. The whole intent and purpose of the anti-association element of the original VLAD laws, which were introduced and passed by the LNP government, was to stop them from even hanging out together in the first place.

We want the crime and criminal activity on the Gold Coast and across Queensland to stop. That is the whole point of the anti-association element of the VLAD laws, to make sure that they were not able to get out there on the streets of the Gold Coast, that they were not able to go to Robina and fire a weapon catching innocent people in the crossfire, that they were not able to go to Broadbeach and have a riot in front of terrorised families and tourists, that they were not able to go to the Southport Police Station to try to take a police station in this state to have members of their criminal motorcycle gang released.

I have spoken not only to many people in my community but to many police officers on the Gold Coast. They are telling me and every other member of this parliament from the Gold Coast that they absolutely want and need these laws to stay because they need to have a firm and tough hand. That is the power that these laws gave them. That is why last year the Police Commissioner himself said that he thought these laws were being effective. That is why the head of the Queensland police union said these laws were being effective. If you speak to police officers on the beat, they will tell you that these laws have been very, very effective. You just need to look at how often Taskforce Maxima is mentioned in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. I see the member for Burleigh nodding, because we know that just the other day Taskforce Maxima completed a raid and collected drugs and weapons. We know that if we weaken our stance and if we weaken the resolve then criminal motorcycle gangs will again try to run our city.

For the benefit of the House and for the benefit of Labor members—who probably do not get a chance to read the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on a regular basis because it is not their local paper given that the Labor Party does not have any members on the Gold Coast—I would like to table this article, the headline of which is ‘Gold Coast bikies laugh off gang “crackdown”, tell police: “We run this town”’ and the cover of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* that day.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* online, dated 2 October 2012, titled ‘Gold Coast bikies laugh off gang “crackdown”, tell police: “We run this town”’ [2160].

What we said in government was, ‘You do not run this town. We will run you out of town,’ and that is exactly what we did. That is why we need to make sure that we do not weaken our resolve. We have seen Labor go weak at the knees when it comes to being tough on crime. We have seen Labor go weak at the knees when it comes to saying to criminal motorcycle gangs, to drug rings, to paedophile rings, to extortion rings that they are welcome in this state again.

I am very proud to say that, until the next election and beyond the next election, I will be very, very firm, alongside my Gold Coast colleagues—I see the member for Burleigh nodding and I acknowledge and thank the member for Mermaid Beach for his support as well. We will take a very, very strong line that the LNP opposes absolutely the changes that this government is making, because we know and we saw firsthand the impact and the effect that criminal motorcycle gangs and organised crime more broadly had on the Gold Coast.

We just had schoolies on the Gold Coast. I note that the New South Wales school leavers and the Victorian school leavers are there this week. We need to make sure that drug gangs and drug rings which seek to peddle illicit substances amongst those 17-year-olds and all across the Gold Coast are not given the opportunity to do so. That is another reason that we must not and should not weaken our resolve.

I spoke about some of the more famous incidents where people were caught in the crossfire both figuratively and, unfortunately, as we saw at Robina Town Centre, literally. The people on the Gold Coast have spoken loud and clear. They do not want these laws repealed. We know that we have the wholehearted and full support of the Gold Coast City Council when it comes to taking a firm stand against criminal motorcycle gangs.

I will just reflect on the committee report that was tabled in this House. I think it is most unedifying that a parliamentary report would seek to so shamefully and disgracefully make assertions and references about the character of the mayor of the Gold Coast and one of the local city councillors because they have had the guts to stand up to Labor and say to Labor that they should not repeal these laws. It is absolutely disgraceful. It is unedifying.

**Mr Hart** interjected.

**Miss BARTON:** I take the interjection from the member for Burleigh: it is reprehensible. It reflects on all members of this parliament that that committee would make such a reflection on elected officials across this state.

In the time that I have remaining, I make it very clear to the people of Broadwater and the broader Gold Coast that the LNP stands firm on the decisions that we took in government to keep Queenslanders safe because that is what governments need to do. Very clearly, by the laws that the government are attempting to pass after that sham review, they do not care about keeping Queenslanders safe. They are rolling out the red carpet to criminal motorcycle gangs in Queensland.

Mark my words, the LNP, particularly on the Gold Coast, will continue to fight the fight to make sure that there are no criminal motorcycle gangs, there are no drug rings, there are no paedophile rings and there are no extortion rings which are threatening the everyday lives and the safety and the enjoyment of everyday Gold Coasters. Shame on Labor. They do not understand the Gold Coast and they never will.