




Speech By
Hon. Bill Byrne

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2016

MOTION: LAW AND ORDER

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (6.06 pm): The government opposes the motion put forward by the opposition. This motion is a direct smear on the Queensland Police Service. It proves once again that it is impossible to craft—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. The government members, by and large, listened to the member for Mansfield in silence. I would urge you to allow a similar courtesy to the Minister for Police.

Mr BYRNE: It proves once again that it is impossible to craft a sentence that has the words 'Liberal National Party' and 'good public policy' in the one sentence. The truth is—

Mr WATTS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. If we are going to be directly provoked, we can hardly sit here in silence.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba North, resume your seat!

Mr BYRNE: I was not provoking; I was simply making a statement of fact. The police have been relentless in their pursuit of targeting crime. That is the whole point I make about this motion: it is a direct attack on the Queensland Police Service. That is what this is about. The fact that the Liberal National Party continue to run this agenda is a reflection of the level of intellect they bring to the debate. Police have been frankly relentless in targeting crime in all its forms—be it outlaw motorcycle gangs; boiler rooms; child sex exploitation, which I did not hear the member opposite refer to; or drug trafficking. The focus and energy have been on all forms of crime and in all places in Queensland.

Police themselves say that they will continue to exploit every opportunity to target criminal activity everywhere—and they are doing just that. For example, since Taskforce Maxima began, more than \$15 million in cash and assets have been seized. These recent arrests and charges reinforce the government's resolve, and that of the Queensland Police Service, to target crime in all places and in all locations. Importantly, we are giving police the resources they need to combat organised crime and keep Queenslanders safe.

We recently committed an additional \$20 million over four years for the Queensland Police Service to specifically target organised crime. This funding will deliver a further boost to police resources and will give our law enforcement agencies the tools and technology they need to tackle organised crime in all its insidious forms, whether it is child exploitation, boiler room fraud, drug trafficking, overt criminal groups such as outlaw motorcycle gangs and everybody else.

It is a nonsense for the opposition to bang on about task force numbers. As I tried to point out yesterday, it is naive and reflects a total lack of understanding of contemporary policing practices and the combined might of police resources. I suppose we should not be surprised by that from those opposite. Police remain resolute in their pursuit of organised crime gangs and all other forms of crime in this state, and the Palaszczuk government backs their efforts every step of the way.

Any decisions about the despatch of officers in Queensland should be made by senior police, not by politicians and certainly not by those opposite. What we see time and again is an inept opposition that persists, and has a history of persistence, in mixing policies, policing and politics. It got them into trouble during the Bjelke-Petersen era, the Borbidge era and even the Newman era, and it will get them into trouble again the more they want to interfere with policing and policing strategies. They learnt nothing from the lessons of the past. They never understood the separation of powers or those who did never respected them in the first place. It is not the government's role to be telling police where to put their efforts. That is why we pay professional officers. That is why the Police Service exists.

Let us talk about the Gold Coast. In the past year, 21 additional officers have hit the beat in the Coomera area. In addition to those officers, there are specialist officers in other parts of the Gold Coast that provide a high level of service to the northern Gold Coast including officers from the water police, forensics, the Dog Squad, detectives from the CIB, and child protection and investigation units.

We are delivering 266 additional police this financial year thanks to the Palaszczuk government. Not only are we delivering extra police; we are giving them the resources and equipment they need. We have rolled out 300 additional body worn cameras and we intend to roll out more. The LNP has embarked on a smear campaign using law and order issues to create unnecessary angst in local communities. As I told the House earlier this morning, when the Liberal National Party was in power they refused to release crime statistics so I find it ironic that they are bringing crime statistics forward today. They hid the crime statistics and refused to do the annual statistical review. One of our policies we took to the election was to get an independent set of crime statistics published in this state because of the legacies left by those opposite.

What are those legacies? Those legacies are a nearly 30 per cent increase in the prison population, a refusal to publish crime statistics, an abuse of the Police Service where we had the president of the Police Union stand up during the campaign and call the then premier a liar—unprecedented—a war with the judiciary and a war with the legal fraternity. That is the legacy that those opposite left in the justice system in Queensland. I hear silence. They should be ashamed of themselves. Everybody knows the record of the Liberal National Party when it comes to law and order.

(Time expired)