




Speech By
Hon. Bill Byrne

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2016

MOTION: ORGANISED CRIME

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (4.51 pm): I rise to support the amendment moved to the motion. The amended motion will be much like what will be introduced into this House—that is, our government's well considered and comprehensive package to target organised crime. All I have heard so far in the debate from those opposite is a demonstration that the Liberal National Party cannot establish a consistent narrative on this topic, and it has not been able to do so for quite a period of time. I will point to a few things in that regard later on, but what we are doing as a government is new funding, new resources, new laws and the collective will of nearly 11,500 sworn officers. It is regrettable that the opposition does not share the same level of support for our police and for the tools and resources we will give them to get on with the job of dismantling organised crime.

Those opposite have form on this. In 2009 the member for Surfers Paradise was quoted in the *Sunday Mail* saying that association laws, which is what they have been arguing for, did not strike at the nub of the problem. That shows how much they understood then, as they do now! He also said that the police—this is another antipolice quote—have said that they will not abuse the laws and he said that that is not exactly ringing endorsement. These comments came after members of the Liberal National Party opposition had been dealing with and meeting with patched members of criminal organisation gangs. I have never met with a patched member of a bikie gang officially and never will I. Tonight the opposition has been leading with its chin. The member for Everton's commentary was posturing idly and standing up for nothing because the LNP has never been sure-footed on this issue. Organised crime is a disease and hot air—which is what we have seen this evening—is its recommended cure. If history is any indicator, the people of Queensland can be prepared to be underwhelmed by the LNP's unpredictable—that is right, unpredictable—useless response. Those opposite are standing up for one per centers—the one per centers in the white shoe brigade on the Gold Coast and the top echelons that support their party. Tonight they are standing up for them and they have history of standing up for one per centers, and I will get to that in a minute.

Members voting on this motion should be aware of the history of our parliament's response to organised crime, and the LNP has had some interesting form in the last seven years. It was for and pro bikie interests in 2009 when the member for Kawana championed the civil liberties of bikies. This is a very interesting piece of commentary that has been much reported in the media, that is that the Liberal National Party—

... will also sleep secure in the knowledge that we fought to maintain the fundamental right of free association. Labor members by contrast should be haunted by the spectre of their bans on free association. Labor members should be condemned—

this is fantastic—

to the eternal nightmare which follows their trampling of centuries of established legal rights of every Queensland citizen into the dirt as they are doing today.

Going forward three years under the Newman government, we have the then attorney-general and member for Kawana saying—

The Newman government does not think anti-association laws are the right way to deal with rogue bikie gangs and other organised crime syndicates.

That is over the three or four years leading through that process. Those opposite had been standing as the great civil libertarians, but in 2012 Campbell Newman ruled out banning bikie colours. We just heard members opposite talk about how intimidating they are, but the then premier said that his party would not do anything about them. He said—

The team that I lead believe that you shouldn't be sort of penalised for wearing your footy team uniform or jersey ...

That was at the same time when then Commissioner Bob Atkinson was saying that bikie groups were underrated and were one of the greatest challenges facing police. This great appreciation that has been demonstrated by those opposite has been a failure—an unmitigated failure. Let us not forget that everything that is in place now is under their regime. The laws as they apply have been set up by those opposite and their own statements this evening demonstrate what an abject failure they have been in effect. When we introduce our legislation those opposite are going to see well considered and well thought through legislation that will do serious damage to organised crime.

(Time expired)