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VLAD laws boot out southern bikies.

Crime and Court

South Australian Government poaches our anti-bikie laws and intends to keep them

Paul Weston, Gold Coast Bulletin
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AS the Palaszczuk Government waters down the state's tough anti-bikie laws, South Australia's Labor Government is using the Queensland legislation to close gang clubhouses operating as gyms.

South Australian police earlier this month used laws based on Queensland legislation to close down the Adelaide Gym, a new 24-hour facility which had a fully equipped strength and cardio studio, basketball court and mixed martial arts cage.

Property searches showed the gym was owned by the Mongols treasurer, enabling police to declare it a “prescribed premises” to prevent gang members from gathering there.

The Palaszczuk Government this week announced it would scrap Queensland’s “excessively harsh” anti-bikie laws after it received a review of the legislation by retired judge Alan Wilson.



Retired Justice Alan Wilson (left) hands over his recommendations regarding Queensland's controversial anti-bikie 'Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment' (VLAD) laws to Attorney-General Yvette D'Ath in her office at the State Law Building in Brisbane, Thursday, March 31, 2016. Picture: AAP Image/Dave Hunt

The Government has said it will consider introducing anti-consorting laws similar to those in NSW.

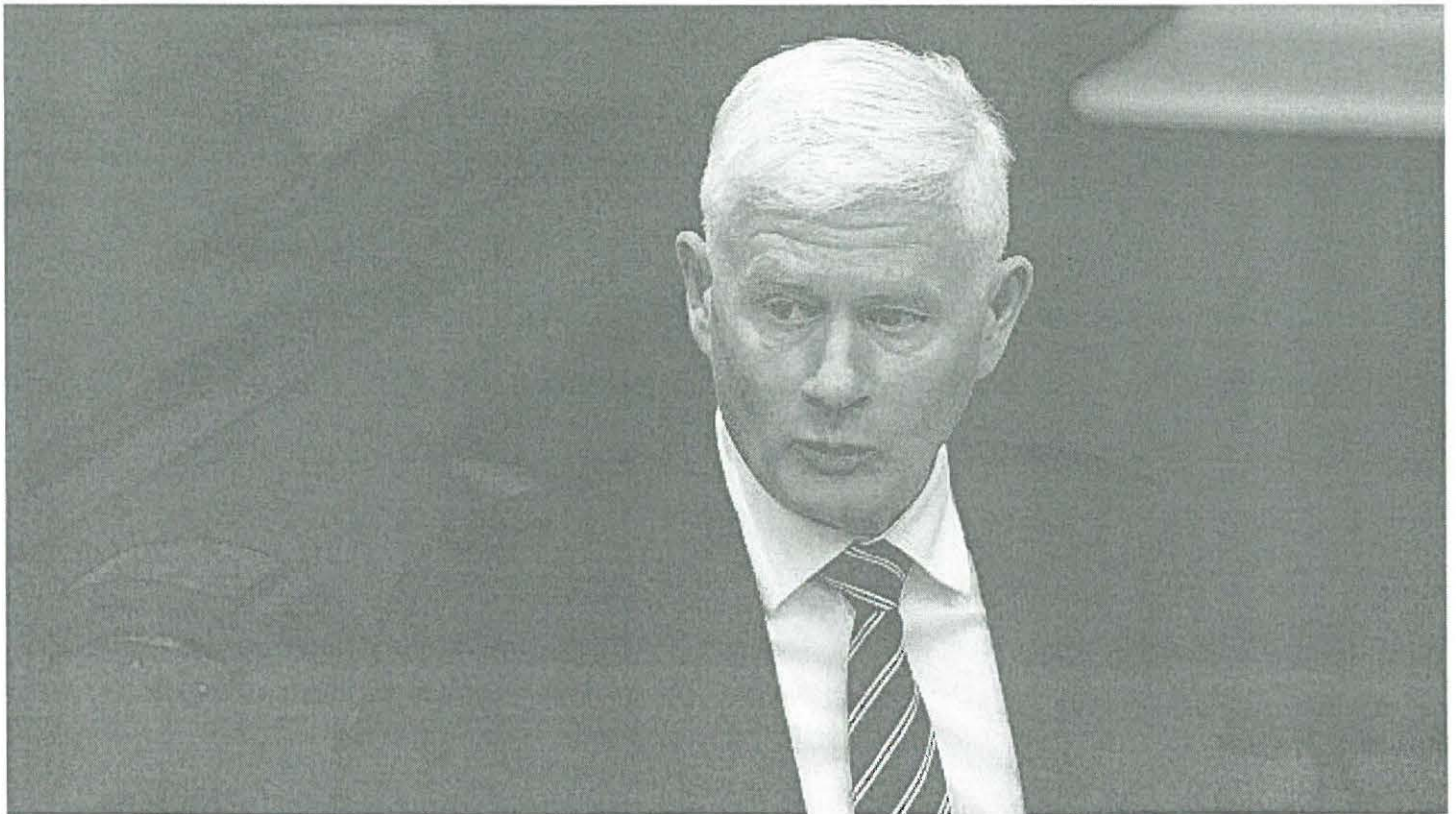
Critics suggested consorting laws wasted police resources because officers needed to first prove criminals were meeting for illegal purposes before obtaining court orders to remove them.

Gold Coast LNP-based MPs predict changes to the laws will see bikies returning to abandoned clubhouses in industrial estates on the tourist strip.

South Australia’s Labor Government shows no intention of moving away from the laws from based on those introduced by the former Newman LNP government.

South Australia’s Attorney General John Rau worked closely with then-Queensland Attorney General Jarrod Bleijie after the Newman Government introduced the Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment (VLAD) laws.

South Australian Government sources said Mr Rau obtained regular updates from police on the operation of the laws and there was no intention of reviewing the legislation.



📷 South Australian Attorney General John Rau has been a strong backer of Queensland's anti-bikie laws.
Picture: Mark Brake

"South Australia introduced anti-association laws to protect the rights of law-abiding citizens over the individual rights of members of declared criminal organisations," Mr Rau said.

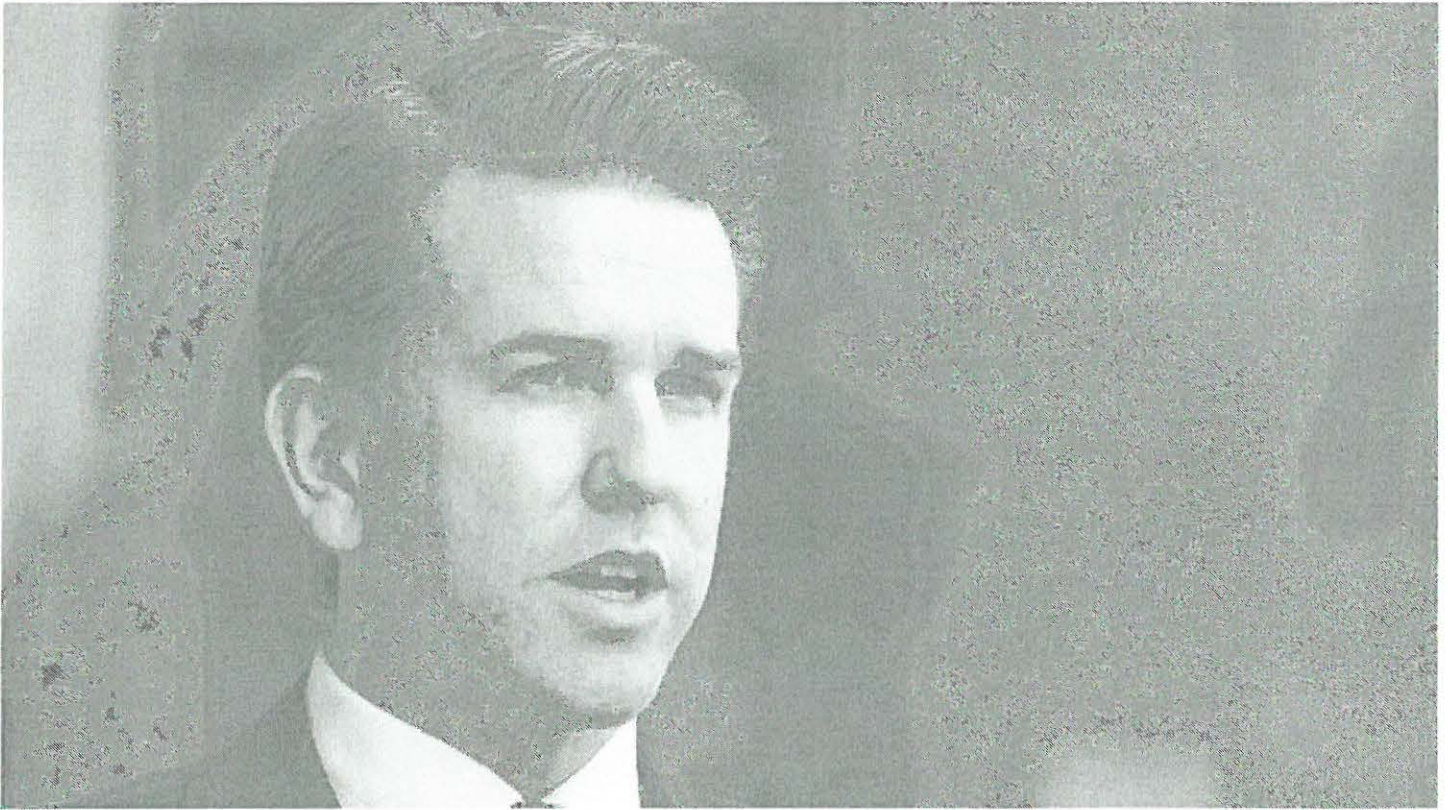
"Since they have come into effect in South Australia, police advise that there has been a dramatic decrease in both the visibility and the number of incidents involving members of organised criminal gyms and groups.

"In other words, our community is a safer place, thanks to these laws."

The South Australia laws make it illegal for declared members to meet in public, enter hotels or wear club colours.

Ten gangs in South Australia were declared criminal organisations and the laws led to the Rebels and Comancheros bikies immediately abandoning their clubhouses.

Mr Bleijie said he had discussed anti-bikie laws many times with Mr Rau at Council of Australian Government meetings and South Australia had supported Queensland's defence of its legislation against a High Court challenge by bikies.



Shadow Police Minister Jarrod Bleijie talks to the media about the Vlad laws. Picture: Jono Searle.

“Despite being on the other side of politics, they always showed strong backing for our laws,” Mr Bleijie said.

“South Australia was really the first state to start tackling the gangs through legislation.

“I kept in contact with John Rau.

“I know in COAG meetings he was a big backer of our laws.”

Mr Bleijie visited Broadbeach on Wednesday to meet with State MPs and restaurant owners to discuss reaction to the Labor Government’s move to weaken the anti-bikie laws.