




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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**CRIMINAL LAW (CRIMINAL ORGANISATIONS DISRUPTION) AMENDMENT  
BILL; TATTOO PARLOURS BILL; VICIOUS LAWLESS ASSOCIATION  
DISESTABLISHMENT BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (10.47 pm): I have to say that tonight is a very proud night for me in this House in terms of this legislation coming in and hopefully being passed. I have been talking on this matter for many years. I have given numerous accounts here in the parliament about this budding problem from the years in opposition to now that I am part of the government that is addressing this matter. It is addressing the matter in a very, very tough and finite manner that I believe will be the answer to this longstanding problem which has been occurring in my backyard.

The Mermaid Beach area, which encompasses Broadbeach as well, has been the focus for these groups as they have grown over the years mainly because it is a magnificent area in which to live but also because the many tourists we have in the area and the many young people enjoying the entertainment precincts of the area are very susceptible to the tacky trade that they peddle. So these people have thrived in an unmitigated manner because of previous laws that were not enforced and were, to be honest, weak in the matter in delivering an outcome for the greater percentage of our community.

These guys call themselves the 'one percenters' of our community. That is not one per cent of the good guys; they are very proud of being the one per cent of the bad guys. They publish that and they use intimidation and any other tactic they can to present an image that is totally against what society expects of its community. Their behaviour is abhorrent. Their threatening demeanour is unacceptable to modern society. The violence and the code of conduct that they live by and conduct their clubs by are totally unacceptable to our modern communities. I can assure honourable members that it has been a long road in trying to bring this matter to the attention of the House, to the law-makers from both sides of parliament, to make something happen with regard to these criminal bikie gangs.

We have had other incidents over the past few years such as the spraying of former tattoo parlours with bullets. I have been on about tattoo parlours in this House and when that incident happened around the corner from me in Mermaid Beach, I said to the ABC Radio station that everyone thinks it is okay and it is just bikies playing amongst themselves, but there will be collateral damage one day. Sure enough, the next day after I gave that interview a woman was shot in the leg at the Robina Town Centre after an exchange between two idiot bikies who were shooting it out in a very busy public shopping centre at Robina with not enough brains to separate themselves. So it has been as a result of their actions in taking over a restaurant in Broadbeach on the evening of Friday, 27 September, that this matter has been brought to a head and received national attention.

I can assure the House that the millions of dollars that both the council and the government spend in promoting tourism in greater Australia and internationally is just washed down the toilet when you see activity such as that in a main entertainment precinct on a Friday night. Men, women and children were ducking for cover, and the police were screaming for help to overcome these

threatening criminal gang members. The police had been surrounded and cornered, and they were screaming for backup to address this terrible situation which occurred in Broadbeach.

The Premier has understood the importance of curtailing the growth of lawlessness by these groups. He has directed and taken on board the skills of the police minister and the Attorney-General to address this matter in the toughest possible manner. He has put the financial muscle of the Queensland taxpayer to the tune of \$20 million behind a program to eradicate these criminal motorcycle groups—and I mean get rid of them completely—from the Gold Coast in particular and Queensland in general.

The laws that we are passing tonight will hopefully be with the support of all members of parliament, because I think all members should recognise that these bills go beyond politics. These bills are about addressing the major problem in Queensland of drug peddlers, because that is where these criminal gangs get most of their funding from. They run major networks of contacts and legitimate businesses behind which their money is laundered and young people can become affected and caught up in drug distribution outlets. On a number of occasions in this chamber I have highlighted the fact that a lot of money is being made out of drugs, intimidation and loan collection, and all of these sorts of nefarious activities are part of their modus operandi.

The Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment Bill—VLAD for short—the Tattoo Parlours Bill and the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) Amendment Bill 2013 will give law enforcement agencies and our judicial system the power to curtail the activity of these criminal motorcycle gangs. This is an incredible night for me, members of parliament, because it is the culmination of a long campaign. They have brought this attention on themselves by being out there flaunting the thin blue line and saying, 'We are stronger than the law. We can intimidate the police at Southport Police Station. When they try and enforce the law, we can intimidate a small group of police men when they try to break up a fight right in the main heart of the Broadbeach entertainment precinct.' I congratulate the Attorney-General on his wonderful effort. He has put considerable determination and hours of effort into producing this legislation for the House to address this major problem. I can assure members that I have heard nothing but support for the fact that somebody has finally started to address the outlaw criminal gangs that have been running unchecked for many, many years and building their empires.

This is the first step in breaking down those empires, but there is a long way to go. There will be High Court challenges. These gangs are well funded and are prepared to go to the best solicitors. Unfortunately, these solicitors are prepared to accept drug money and take their cases all the way to the High Court. It will not be easy to bring about an end to these illegal criminal gangs, but we need to support this on behalf of the 99 per cent of the community who expect us to go forward with the best of their interests at heart. I am hoping that the opposition will put aside short-term politicking to support the government to rid the state of these criminal elements.

There are many methods that I would like to see employed to address the eradication of these groups, and one that I think could particularly assist is the recurrent deployment of sniffer dogs throughout the entertainment and nightclub precincts of the Gold Coast. I am sure that the relevant ministers and police authorities will take these messages on board. This will stop people supplying drugs in these areas and will cut off their supply of money. This is all about money and a way of life. It is all about them building a great, well-funded lifestyle in a fairly easy atmosphere of law enforcement, and we have to address that at every opportunity.

There is no doubt that a lot of the petty theft and break and enters on the Gold Coast are attributed to people looking for drug money. We have had court cases in recent times where people have been thrown off of balconies over drug deals. Someone was stabbed the other day in the middle of Broadbeach, and I am sure there are drug deals going wrong left, right and centre. Such activities send the worst possible message about our suburbs on the Gold Coast, but they are the best places in the world to live, relax, play and work. It sends the message that schoolies are not safe when they come to the Gold Coast, and that is a major event that we have been supporting for many years. It sends the message that international visitors are not safe when they come to the Gold Coast, and we have to make sure that that message is not sustained.

We have to make the Gold Coast the safest place. It is a family entertainment area. It is a wonderful place to visit, and this legislation will go a long, long way to putting it back on track again and making it part of this great state with great opportunities. I congratulate the Attorney-General and the police minister on this matter. I congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer for giving us the money, and I look forward to success and not seeing bikies in my back yard on the Gold Coast.