

**CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION AMENDMENT  
(INVESTIGATIVE FUNCTION) BILL 2007**

*Second Reading*

**MR P.D. OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood - Leader of the Opposition)** [4.03 pm]: I move -

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Corruption and Crime Commission Amendment (Investigative Function) Bill 2007 will amend the Corruption and Crime Commission Act 2003 to enable the Corruption and Crime Commission and the Western Australia Police to engage in joint task force operations to investigate offences - including extortion, fraud, firearm offences, cyber crime, paedophilia and terrorism - independently of the Western Australia Police. The Premier of South Australia, Mike Rann, recently declared bikie gangs “terrorists within our community”. He said that they are -

... involved in drug trafficking, murder, extortion, intimidation and firearm smuggling.

He is leading the nation in the fight against bikie gangs, arguing that bikie gangs are -

... an evil within our nation and we in South Australia intend to lead Australia in the fight against bikie gangs ...

The Carpenter government has denied the Corruption and Crime Commission’s repeated requests to have the authority to investigate organised crime. The people of Western Australia deserve protection from outlaw motorcycle gangs, Northbridge identities and ethnic gangs. The landscape in organised crime is changing and the police face increasing challenges.

In a report to Parliament in 2005, the Corruption and Crime Commission stated that organised crime groups increasingly work collaboratively across state borders, not unlike legitimate businesses. Of particular concern are submissions made by senior Western Australian police to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission that the quasi-military modes of organisation and discipline of outlaw motorcycle gangs make them particularly difficult to deal with from a law enforcement perspective. According to further submissions -

European crime syndicates, commonly of Romanian origin, are involved to a significant level in drug trafficking activities, particularly high purity methylamphetamine.

The Liberal Party has worked tirelessly to ensure that the legislation meets the needs of the community in tackling organised crime. It has been accepted by the Corruption and Crime Commission and the Western Australia Police. Much of what has been done in drafting the bill has relied on the recommendations of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission made in this area. I take this opportunity to praise the thorough job done by the members of that committee. I refer to Hon Ken Travers, Hon Ray Halligan, Hon John Day and Judy Hughes, MLA. The recommendations of the joint standing committee were endorsed by the Corruption and Crime Commissioner and the Commissioner of Police in a letter addressed to the committee on 19 September 2007. The government of the day must protect its citizens from the tentacles of organised crime groups. The people of Western Australia need a government that is not scared of organised figures who thumb their noses at police and who get away with terrorist-like activities. Despite the excellent work of the gang crime squad, which actively targets motorcycle gangs, certain high-profile people of dubious character repeatedly walk free with barely a slap on the wrist. The Liberal Party is fearful that if the Corruption and Crime Commission is not given the power to assist the police to investigate organised crime, these people will continue to be seen as being above the law. Our call to give the Corruption and Crime Commission increased powers was vindicated by the release of a report from the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission in September this year. WA Police reported an increase in the demand in Australia for crystal meth, due, in part, to European crime syndicates and their activities in Perth. The Commissioner of Police told the federal committee that the financial resources applied to combat organised crime in 2006 was approximately \$4.2 million and that a significant increase in law enforcement resources will be necessary to counter the activity of outlaw motorcycle gangs. WA Police has shown evidence that Romanian and Serbian crime syndicates prominent within Western Australia have strong links to interstate and international crime figures. The police are quick to point out that organised crime knows no boundaries. These individuals are not at all constrained by state boundaries.

The bill will amend the Corruption and Crime Commission Act to give the CCC the power to investigate serious crime independently of the Western Australia Police. The act constrains the CCC in that it is capable only of granting exceptional powers to the police. The Corruption and Crime Commission cannot actively participate in the investigative process with the police, nor can it enter into task force operations with the police or other law enforcement agencies. Queensland and New South Wales legislation empowers the respective crime

commissions in those states to investigate major or serious crime matters that are referred to them by management committees. The bill proposes to give the CCC the power to investigate serious crime matters that are referred to it by the CCC commissioner and the Commissioner of Police.

The bill is modelled on Queensland's Crime and Misconduct Commission Act 2001; the New South Wales Crime Commission Act 1985; New South Wales' Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1998; the commonwealth's Australian Crime Commission Act 2002; and, the Australian Crime Commission (Western Australia) Act 2004.

The term "serious crime" contained within the bill has a wider meaning than the current definition of "organised crime". The proposed definition of "serious crime" incorporates organised crime, indictable offences punishable by a term of imprisonment of not less than 14 years, ancillary offences and indictable offences.

As previously stated, the bill is consistent with the recommendations of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission and with a letter co-signed by the Commissioner of Police and the Corruption and Crime Commissioner. The police and the Corruption and Crime Commission are keen to fight organised crime together, and we are keen to assist them.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr J.C. Kobelke (Leader of the House)**.