

The Inspector
Legislation & Development Review Services
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Dear Sir,

Re: PROPOSALS FOR POSSIBLE REFORMS TO THE POLICE OFFENCES ACT 1935 REGARDING ORGANISED CRIMINAL GROUPS LEGISLATION

I wish to express my opinion regarding the proposed changes to the above Act.

Most people in Tasmania would totally agree that there is no room for manufacture, sale and use of methamphetamines and the law needs to investigate and deal with the makers and suppliers of these drugs. Unfortunately, the public have incorrectly been informed that "all motorcycle groups" are involved in this trafficking and use, as well as other crimes. Instead of thoroughly investigating the many people from a variety of backgrounds, who are responsible for such drug trafficking and other crimes, it is so much easier to put the blame on what they call "Outlaw Motorcycle GANGS" when it is not true. I have it on good advice that most motorcycle groups do not allow the use of or trafficking of "ice" in their groups and that if members are found to be using or dealing in ice, they are removed from the group.

I oppose all of the proposals, but in particular Proposal 6.

Proposal 6 –* Prohibited item legislation similar to Queensland be introduced via amendments to the Police Offences Act 1935. Under such a model, it would be an offence for a person to wear, carry or openly display in a public place (or in/on a vehicle in a public place) clothing, jewellery or other insignia that show the patches, insignia or logo of an "identified organisation".*

- The introduction of this legislation should not be tolerated. This is discrimination and against an individual's freedom of choice. There are so many groups all over Tasmania who wear a uniform, whether they do so for work, sport or as a member of a group who have a similar love of their interest or hobby. We are talking here in particular, about motorcycle groups in Tasmania. It is wrong to discriminate against these members for being proud of the group they belong to, when other groups in the community will be free to continue wearing their "uniforms" to signify their membership in a club. These motorcycle club members are members of a group just as others who wear uniforms. They are good mates, hard workers, businessmen, they have their own loving families, and they, more often than most people give them credit for, participate in charitable work for the community. It is total discrimination to suggest that they should not be seen in public supporting their "uniform". One would have thought that if any of these members were to

participate in illegal activity, it would be much easier to identify them by them wearing their colours, while the real criminals in the community wear their unmarked clothing and continue to commit crimes without fear of ever being caught. It is just easier to put the blame on a bikie "gang". This proposal will also label every person who rides a bike and who is not a member of a motorcycle club. Nobody will have colours to identify their club, so it will be assumed that everyone who rides a bike is a member of a "gang". If members of a motorcycle group are allowed to continue to wear their colours, then this problem would not occur and it would not inconvenience the members of the public who just happen to own and ride a motorcycle.

It is wrong to assume that if a person is a member of a motorcycle club that they are bad people. There are bad people in every group but what is wrong is that if a member of a group participates in an illegal activity, then they let the whole team down and the team ends up with a bad name. It's funny how this is reflected differently depending on which group a person belongs to. For example, a member of the Police force is found to be involved with dealing in drugs, then that member is removed and is just one in the group who did wrong, "They're not all like that" it is instantly announced and everyone moves on. Similarly, it may be that a member of a car club may be found guilty of stealing many cars, then that member is removed and the club continues and they move on or a member of a bowls club steals the club's charity funds, he is removed and then the club remains with no bad name and moves on. Quite differently, a member of a motorcycle club participates in illegal activity and then the whole club becomes a "gang" and is shunned as being "bad" and that "they are all the same". They are NOT all the same. There are many wonderful achieving members of motorcycle clubs who deserve some credit for what they do for the community. To remove their freedom to wear the colours of the club they represent is discrimination. If a member of a club is involved in criminal activity then the club will remove that member and let the law deal with them as they see fit.

Another point to be made here is that a comparison needs to be made regarding criminal activity. I am sure that if the statistics were checked accurately, the ratio of citizens who are NOT members of a motorcycle club in the community committing crimes would far outweigh crimes committed by members of a motorcycle club, and the results would show that the members of a motorcycle club had very low incidents. In fact, many member of the motorcycle clubs that have been in Tasmania for years, have no police criminal record whatsoever.

I urge you to take these points into consideration and not allow these proposals.

With thanks,

Treenie Harwood
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