

POLICE — NATIONAL ANTI-GANG SQUAD

**186. Mr I.M. BRITZA to the Minister for Police:**

Today in *The West Australian* I read that the commonwealth government is forming a strike team —

**Mr P.B. Watson** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Albany, I call you now to order for the second time.

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** Today in *The West Australian* I read that the commonwealth government is forming a strike team in Western Australia to assist Western Australia Police in combating gang-related crimes as part of the national anti-gang squad. Could the minister please update the house on this timely announcement?

**Mr J.R. Quigley** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Butler, you seem to be a bit confused—you are not the Minister for Police. I call you to order for the second time.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:**

I thank the member for Morley for the question and for his continued interest in law and order and crime-related matters in Western Australia. Indeed, that was a very good announcement made today. The federal government has announced that it intends to establish a Western Australian anti-gang —

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr J.R. Quigley** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Butler, I will pretend that I never heard that one—okay?

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** The intention, of course, of this investment by the federal government in assisting Western Australian resources around the organised crime area is to establish a Western Australian anti-gang strike team. This announcement is the result of recent, very fruitful discussions with the federal Minister for Justice—a great Western Australian—Hon Michael Keenan. Shortly after his appointment as Minister for Justice, he commenced dialogue with his state counterparts, and I am very pleased that, as a result of those discussions, our mutual concern about outlaw motorcycle gangs and their criminal operations will now be addressed in this format. The new federal government is serious about working cooperatively with the states and territories, particularly to combat the scourge of motorcycle gangs and criminal gangs across Australia. These resources will consist of five Australian Federal Police members and one analyst from the Australian Taxation Office. Their focus will be on disruption and prevention in the organised crime space. It is difficult to place a measure on the ability for these federal employees to be placed with Western Australia Police, with access to federal databases. Commonwealth law enforcement authorities have the ability to bring together intelligence and resources, to share information from across Australia and to access similar sorts of information from international jurisdictions.

We think this is a very significant announcement for the state because it enables our state police officers, who have been doing an excellent job with OMCGs, to access the federal criminal intelligence holdings. That means getting access to the databases of the Australian Taxation Office, the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, Centrelink and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. These new resources will work within the serious and organised crime division of WAPOL in Perth and will be co-located with our Western Australian police officers who work in this area and do a tremendous job.

It is interesting to provide a contrast with the previous Gillard government's announcement on its national anti-gang task force.

**Mr J.R. Quigley** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Butler, I call you to order for the third time. Minister, come to a conclusion.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I was making the point that about a year ago an announcement was made with great fanfare by the Gillard government about establishing an anti-gang task force across Australia. It promised one full-time equivalent position for Western Australia, and it did not even deliver on that.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** The new federal Minister for Justice, Mr Michael Keenan, has already delivered to us extra resources in a short space of time to make sure that we can have an impact in this area. Although the

previous federal government was focused on Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, the new government is focusing on a national effort to combat organised crime. It is opportune this week, with the Senate election on Saturday, to highlight the governments that put their money and their resources where their mouths are and follow up a commitment with resources on the ground.