

GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO CRACK DOWN ON BIKIE GANGS

3 May 2009

Premier Nathan Rees today announced legislation will be introduced to Parliament this week to create a new type of search warrant to make it easier for police to seize items connected to organised crime gangs.

The Premier made the announcement while inspecting some of the proceeds of crime seized by Police recently.

Mr Rees said that this is part of the Government's plan to tackle outlaw motorcycle gangs and stripping them of their assets.

"These new laws will help us rip apart criminal gangs by giving police increased powers to obtain special search warrants targeted at outlaw motorcycle gangs."

Mr Rees said the new warrants will allow police to apply to a Supreme Court judge to search a premises based on "reasonable suspicion". Existing warrants have required police to satisfy a higher threshold of "reasonable belief".

"We know that organised crime gangs scatter their weapons and drugs in numerous premises as a way of avoiding detection.

"The new warrants will allow police to get the evidence they need when there are multiple suspects and locations involved.

"It will be easier for police to search more than one location suspected of being used to hide illegal items."

The news comes as the NSW Government announced that it had seized \$41 million worth of suspected crime proceeds, including real estate, cars, motorcycles, boats, cash, jewellery and livestock, in the last financial year.

Some \$10 million worth of the seized assets have so far been forfeited to the State, auctioned and handed to Treasury.

Mr Rees said the Government is sending a clear message to anyone involved in organised crime.

"We are giving the Police the powers and resources they need – they will catch you, it's just a matter of time"

Attorney General John Hatzistergos said that a police officer ranked superintendent or above will be required to make an application to the Supreme Court judge to have one of the new warrants issued.

"Judges will be available 24-hours a day and the warrants will be valid for seven days," Mr Hatzistergos said.

Mr Rees said law to create the new warrants will be introduced to Parliament as an amendment to the *Law Enforcement Powers and Responsibilities Act*.

Since the fatal bashing of a bikie gang member at Sydney Airport on Sunday 22nd March, the NSW Government has taken several decisive steps in the fight against bikie related organised crime:

23rd March Established Strike Force Raptor to target outlaw motorcycle gangs and allocated 75 officers allocated to the

24th March: New Reference was given to the NSW Crime Commission called Leeton. Reference Leeton is using the strong powers of the Crime Commission to break up bikie criminal syndicates.

Covert search warrants passed the Parliament giving Police the power to search the premises of criminal groups such as outlaw motorcycle gangs without the owner's knowledge.

2nd April Tough new laws passed the NSW Parliament allowing the Police Commissioner to apply for gangs to be declared illegal. The new laws make it an offence for members of a declared gang to associate with one another. The laws also strengthen the ability of the Crime Commission to confiscate assets and ban declared members of illegal bikie gangs from working in high risk industries.

17th April The NSW Attorney General requested that the Commonwealth amend the corporation law so that declared bikie members cannot be directors or use companies to launder money and run drugs at the Standing Committee of Attorneys General (SCAG).

SCAG also asked the Commonwealth to make changes to telecommunications intercepts legislation so that Police have more information to target criminal gangs with.