



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**THE SENATE**  
**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Law Enforcement**

**QUESTION**

**Thursday, 30 October 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

---

## QUESTION

**Date** Thursday, 30 October 2014  
**Page** 8305  
**Questioner** Lambie, Sen Jacqui  
**Speaker**

**Source** Senate  
**Proof** No  
**Responder** Abetz, Sen Eric  
**Question No.**

---

### Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement

**Senator LAMBIE** (Tasmania—Deputy Leader and Deputy Whip of the Palmer United Party in the Senate) (14:26): My question is to the Minister representing the Prime Minister, the senator from Tasmania, Senator Abetz. Mr President, with your permission and with leave from the chamber I would like to table a photograph that shows myself standing in front of the Hobart chapter of the Rebels motorcycle gang headquarters.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is not granted, Senator Lambie.

**Senator LAMBIE:** The photograph shows the large outlaw motorcycle gang headquarters, which apparently displays the club's insignia, featuring the one per cent symbol, which indicates that they brazenly participate in criminal activities, including drug dealing. The photo also shows a Tasmanian schoolyard that the outlaw motorcycle gang headquarters overlooks. Can the minister explain why he and other members of his Liberal-Nationals parties have allowed a gang of drug dealers to set up headquarters opposite a Tasmanian primary school?

The PRESIDENT: I will ask the minister to address elements that do affect his portfolio or that of the Prime Minister.

**Senator ABETZ** (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:27): When the honourable senator started asking me about outlaw motorcycle gangs I thought I was going to get a question about the CFMEU, but we might be able to deal with that a bit later on in question time. In relation to the question that the honourable senator asks, I can indicate to her that, rightly or wrongly, Australia rejoices in three tiers of government, and state and local government has a lot of responsibility in relation to planning and allowing certain activities to occur on certain premises. I for one—I am not sure that it is necessarily government policy—would not necessarily want to see us getting too involved in detailed planning decisions as to where things are allowed to be located—near schools, next to schools et cetera. That is the clear responsibility of the state government and, in this case, the Hobart City Council. So I would respectfully request and suggest to the honourable senator that she should make those representations not to Canberra but to the state parliament in Hobart and to the new Lord Mayor of Hobart, Alderman Sue Hickey, whom I congratulate on her election.

**Senator LAMBIE** (Tasmania—Deputy Leader and Deputy Whip of the Palmer United Party in the Senate) (14:29): Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. Now that the minister has stopped tap-dancing, I refer the minister to his excuses. Does the minister agree that he must take some responsibility for the harm and deaths caused by terrible drugs like ice because he is a member of a political party that has turned a blind eye to this law and order crisis and allowed outlaw motorcycle gangs to prosper in my Tasmania?

The PRESIDENT: Again, Minister, I would ask you to address any components of that question that may relate to your portfolio or that of the Prime Minister.

**Senator ABETZ** (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:30): Mr President, I have been called many things during my time in this Senate, but a tap dancer—I hope not.

In relation to the scourge of ice, I would like to think that all of us in this chamber would be in agreement with the honourable senator that ice is a substance that is destroying hundreds of thousands of lives right around Australia, particularly in Tasmania—the home state of the senator, the President and myself—and especially, from recent reports, on the north-west coast of Tasmania. Therefore, the honourable senator can be assured that, with the

Attorney and Minister Keenan, we are doing everything we can through border protection, Customs, et cetera, to ensure that the importation of drugs into this nation is limited. Indeed, the manufacturing of drugs within this nation is limited— (*Time expired*)

**Senator LAMBIE** (Tasmania—Deputy Leader and Deputy Whip of the Palmer United Party in the Senate) (14:31): Mr President, I ask a further supplementary question. At least Minister Abetz and I actually agree on something. So will the minister join with me and help to introduce laws into this place which will give the parents of children—those 18 and under—who become hooked on highly addictive drugs like ice the legal right to involuntarily detox their children of this dreadful drug?

**Senator ABETZ** (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (14:31): In fairness, I would have to look at that question exceptionally carefully; but, having said that, anything we can do to stop people getting involved with a drug needs to happen. That is why, as a conservative, my approach to these things is absolute zero tolerance to drug taking but also a compassionate approach to the victims. To get people off drugs is something that one would hope everybody in this chamber would be agreed on. I am not sure that it is necessarily going to be successful if you try to get somebody off drugs involuntarily. You have got to convince the person first that they have got a problem from which they need to be released. I do not pretend to be an expert in that area. Suffice to say that anything we can do to relieve this nation and its people of the drug scourge I would be more than happy to assist with. (*Time expired*)