

Stop the violence, begs bikie mother

Geesche Jacobsen
and Andrew Clennell

THE distraught mother of Anthony and Peter Zervas has pleaded for an end to the bikie war in which one of her sons was killed and another seriously injured.

Effie Zervas, speaking to channels Nine and Seven, said: "Just tell them to stop ... Violence is not the answer," repeating her plea like a mantra.

Peter Zervas was reportedly having more surgery yesterday for a bullet lodged near his spine and was still too heavily sedated to speak.

Mrs Zervas told Channel Nine she did not want another mother to have to experience her pain. "No more bloodshed ... If they want to kill my son, they can come and kill me so I don't feel any more pain."

Meanwhile, the Premier, Nathan Rees, announced tougher measures against bikie gangs yesterday despite opposition in his cabinet and caucus to new anti-bikie legislation.

Mr Rees said declared members of a criminal group would be banned from working in "high-risk industries, such as security, motor traders, tow-trucks, firearms, second-hand goods, liquor and racing industries". The Government would also remove the presumption for bail for related offences.

Several ministers argued in cabinet on Monday for a "sunset clause" to be inserted in the anti-bikie legislation to enable it to be active for only a couple of years.

Six backbenchers also spoke out against the law in caucus.

One MP said: "They were concerned about guilt by association ... but the Premier stood his ground and pointed out that when there is a full-scale bikie war taking place in the city, we can't do anything by halves."

Public opinion about the bikie laws is also divided with only one in three voters supporting the new laws, according to a national survey.

Polling by UMR Research shows people are concerned about the effect such laws would have on civil liberties. An overwhelming majority of respondents thought existing laws were not strong enough to deal with bikie gang violence and they would back uniform national legislation to control the gangs.

But when asked if bikie gang members should be legally prevented from associating with one another - as proposed - support for the laws shrank dramatically.

UMR found 31 per cent would support laws stopping bikies from associating with each other, 46 per cent opposed such laws, and 22 per cent were undecided.
with Mark Davis and Alexandra Smith