



MB17-003325

Tabled by: Mr Bleijie MP  
At: 7.35pm  
Time/date: 18/7/17  
Signature: M.

The Hon Jarrod Bleijie MP  
Shadow Minister for Employment, Industrial Relations, Skills and Training  
Suite 4  
3 Nicklin Way  
MINYAMA QLD 4575

4 April 2017

Dear Mr Bleijie

### Enforcement of criminal laws in Queensland

We are writing because of our concern that the integrity of the criminal justice system is being challenged in Queensland.

As you would be aware, the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption uncovered widespread and deep-seated criminality and misconduct amongst trade unions and the employers with which they deal – and that this was just “the small tip of an enormous iceberg”.

As the Royal Commission found, police forces have traditionally been reluctant to prioritise investigation of matters such as this, which they view as matters of industrial relations. However, the blackmail, bribery, extortion, kickbacks, threats of violence and disregard for the law were common themes in the Commission’s findings and remain in need of full investigation.

In 2014, the Commonwealth funded a new Police Taskforce made up of police forces in eastern states working cooperatively to investigate matters arising from the Royal Commission or associated with its terms of reference. However, Queensland Police has recently advised the Commonwealth that it will no longer participate in the Taskforce. This was reported in the Courier Mail on 27 January 2017, and we have attached the report.

This is a very concerning situation. We have written to the Premier, Minister for Police and Minister for Industrial Relations in Queensland to express our concerns, and attach a copy of our letter.

We would urge you to hold the Government to account over this failure to engage with the Police Taskforce. It is of vital importance to the rule of law in your State and the nation that all criminal matters are investigated fully and the criminal law enforced.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Ms Elise Little, Senior Workplace Relations Adviser to the Minister for Employment, on (02) 6277 7320 or 0417 612 860.

I have written in similar terms to the Hon Timothy Nicholls MP, Leader of the Opposition in Queensland and the Hon Tim Mander MP, Queensland Shadow Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

Yours sincerely

MICHAELIA CASH  
Minister for Employment

GEORGE BRANDIS  
Attorney-General

MICHAEL KEENAN  
Minister for Justice

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The Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk MP  
Premier of Queensland  
1 William Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000

4 April 2017

Dear Premier

### Enforcement of criminal laws in Queensland

We are writing because of grave concerns about the prospects for the enforcement of criminal laws in Queensland in relation to corruption and misconduct by unions and the employers dealing with them.

As you are aware, the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption examined these matters in depth and uncovered widespread evidence of corruption involving serious professional criminals. The Commission ultimately referred 119 instances of likely unlawfulness to authorities for investigation and prosecution, more than half of which related to criminal offences.

A Joint Police Taskforce was established in 2014 at the request of the Royal Commission to examine the criminality identified by the Commission or associated with its terms of reference. The Taskforce initially consisted of police offices from the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory. However, we have recently been informed that both Queensland and Victoria have decided to withdraw from the Taskforce.

We are very concerned about this decision. The Taskforce is funded by the Commonwealth and was recently provided with an additional \$21 million to continue its investigations over the next four years. The decision by your State to withdraw from the Taskforce effectively rejects Commonwealth funding to dedicate to investigation of these matters.

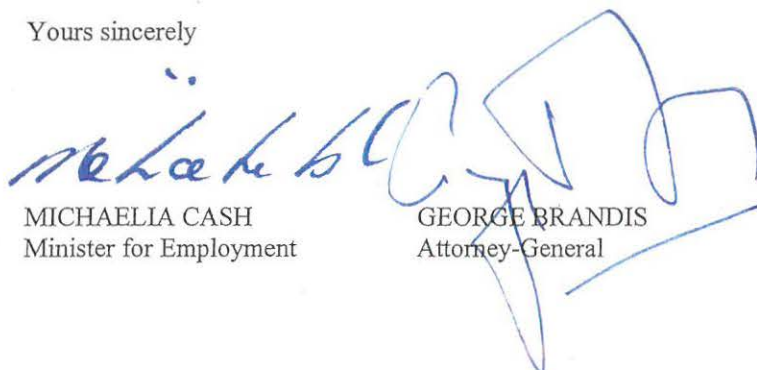
In addition, many of the criminal referrals arising from the Royal Commission have not yet been fully investigated or prosecuted. The Royal Commission found that the unlawful behaviour it uncovered was just "the small tip of an enormous iceberg." New regulators for the building and construction industry and registered organisations are likely to identify and refer further criminal matters.

It is incomprehensible that your Government has not taken steps to ensure your police force remains within the Police Taskforce and continues to investigate and pursue the kind of serious criminality touched on by the Royal Commission. We reiterate that the Taskforce is funded by the Commonwealth.

These matters strike at the heart of the integrity of the criminal justice system. It is vital that your Government consider this matter and we urge you to engage with the Police Taskforce.

We have written in similar terms to the Hon Mark Ryan MP, Queensland Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and the Hon Grace Grace MP, Queensland Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations.

Yours sincerely



MICHAELIA CASH  
Minister for Employment



GEORGE BRANDIS  
Attorney-General



MICHAEL KEENAN  
Minister for Justice

# Queensland police withdraw from union corruption taskforce

Renee Viellaris, The Courier-Mail  
January 27, 2017 6:09pm

QUEENSLAND'S Police Minister Mark Ryan says the decision to cease involvement in a taskforce into union corruption was a matter for the state's police service.

"Whether there is a joint taskforce or not, if there are allegations of crime, whether they are against trade union members, community members or anyone for that matter, those matters will be investigated by the Queensland Police Service," Mr Ryan said.

"If anyone has any concerns, complaints or allegations, I'd encourage them talk to the Queensland Police Service and the police service will investigate."

It comes as the state's LNP Opposition joined federal colleagues in accusing the state's police of being influenced by the Labor Government into discontinuing the taskforce.

Industrial relations shadow minister Jarrod Bleijie accused unions of buying "silence" and "legislative protection" from the Palaszczuk Government through Labor donations.

Unions bankrolled Labor to the tune of \$2 million in the first half of this year, according to the party's disclosure returns.

"We hear stories all the time about the allegations of intimidation and fear put on by union heavy weights to the construction workers in Queensland," Mr Bleijie said.  
"It's got to stop."





Jarrod Bleijie says the “relationship between the CFMEU and Anastacia Palaszczuk’s Government is stronger than ever”. Picture: Jono Searle

“The reason it’s not going to stop is the union, the CFMEU, continue to fund the Palaszczuk Labor Government to the tune of millions of dollars a year and that’s what it buys you.”

Queensland police wrote to their federal counterparts to advise them they would no longer be participating in a joint taskforce investigating allegations of union corruption after the agreement ended on December 31, 2016. It came after the Federal Government extended the federal police’s role in the taskforce a further four years with \$21 million in funding.

Mr Bleijie said the State Government should have been on the front foot about getting some of that funding to Queensland so the state’s police could continue union investigations.

“It is clear that the relationship between the CFMEU and Anastacia Palaszczuk’s Government is stronger than ever,” Mr Bleijie said.

“At a time when we should be investing more resources into the Queensland Police Service, it appears now, resources are being taken out of the police service to deal with allegations of fear, intimidation and particularly corruption.”



The Australian Justice Minister Michael Keenan



Dave Hanna

The Palaszczuk Government has been contacted for comment.

## **OVERNIGHT**

QUEENSLAND police have shocked victims and the Turnbull Government by withdrawing from a successful joint taskforce investigating high-level union corruption crippling parts of the state's building industry.

The Turnbull Government last month extended the national taskforce for a further four years and provided \$21 million funding, but Queensland Police has written to the Australian Federal Police advising it will no longer take part.

Justice Minister Michael Keenan accused the Palaszczuk Government of a blatant political decision to help save its Labor "union mates", while Employment Minister Michaelia Cash said it "defies all logic for the Queensland police to now withdraw from the taskforce" and said the state had become, under the Labor Government, a paradise for corrupt union mates.

The taskforce including the AFP and police from Queensland, NSW and Victoria was set up in October 2014 to assist the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption.

It has been investigating evidence and complaints tendered to the Royal Commission that relate to federal and state offences.

Its investigations have led to high profile charges in Queensland, NSW and Victoria, including the recent charging of former Queensland CFMEU boss Dave Hanna over alleged secret commissions.

QPS said the agreement to participate ended on December 31, 2016 and there were no outstanding referring from the commission needing QPS action.

Any referrals from the AFP will be sent to Queensland Police's state crime command, into a queue including murders and organised crime.

Master Builders Queensland, whose members have been regular victims of union intimidation and corruption, was "very surprised and disappointed" by the QPS decision.

"The Trade Union Royal Commission found significant evidence of union corruption in Queensland, so much so that in late December very senior officials of the CFMEU were arrested and charged with serious criminal charges," a spokeswoman said.

"Only this last week serious allegations of ongoing union corruption have surfaced.

"But it would appear that the State Government is turning a blind eye to the lawlessness and corruption that has plagued the construction industry for many years.

"As an industry we expect our Government to take the lead in cleaning up the industry, not turn a blind eye. In December of last year the State Government significantly watered down the accountability of union officials with regard to how they spend their members' money, whilst federal parliament passed laws to root out union corruption.

"It deeply concerns us to see the Queensland government continuing with a watering down of union accountability. It flies in the face of the community and the industry's expectations."

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/queensland-police-withdraw-from-union-corruption-taskforce/news-story/c438fa410b3c48950eba4bc0a2edf8b8>