




Speech By
Linus Power
MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Record of Proceedings, 12 November 2015

MOTION: TRADE UNIONS

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.27 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the disappointing motion moved by the member for Surfers Paradise and speak in opposition to it. I start by borrowing a few words from a colleague about the role of the union movement. Remember that these are not my words but the words of another member in *Hansard*. The member stated—

The union movement has an important role. The union movement has had an extremely important role in this state and in this nation for more than a century.

The member continues—

I recognise that, and I commend those people who have worked in the union movement ... That is why the union movement will always, and should always, have an important and respected role in this nation and in this state.

It may surprise members to hear that these words do not originate from a member on this side of the House. Indeed, these words can be found in *Hansard* on 9 November 2000 and they are the words of the member for Southern Downs. I will continue with a few more words of support from the member for Southern Downs. He stated—

Employee unions in this country have done vital work for over 100 years. Frankly, if we had not had them, the rights of workers which we have today would not be enshrined and guaranteed as they are. They deserve commendation for that.

I do not know if I would be as eloquent and as fulsome as the member for Southern Down. However, I agree with these sentiments. We know the member for Southern Downs is the father of the House, held in esteem by all—sorry, I correct that; held in esteem by almost 40 per cent of the members of the opposition benches. I further note today that the member for Burleigh in the debate about our ports—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, I cannot hear the member for Logan's speech.

Mr POWER: I further note today that the member for Burleigh in the debate about our ports, as a dutiful MP, put great weight into reading into the parliamentary record the statements of the Maritime Union of Australia, arguing that this House should listen more to the MUA. He praised the opinions of the MUA. Indeed, this morning the member said, 'We need a member from Burleigh to stand up for the people,' such as the MUA.

As members may be aware, recent media reports have informed us, and indeed they have informed the member for Burleigh—and I have them here; I can table them, if the member for Burleigh wants me to—that the MUA has plans to merge with the CFMEU to create a new single union. The member for Burleigh this very morning urged members to listen more—

Mr HART: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is reading from a document, and I would like you to ask him to table it, please.

Mr SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr POWER: As I said, I am very happy to table this document that says, 'CFMEU and MUA enter merger talks to create "Australia's most powerful union".'

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Logan, have you tabled that now?

Mr POWER: I am happy to table it now. I am not actually reading from it. I table it for the member's benefit.

Tabled paper: News article from ABC Online, titled 'CFMEU and MUA enter merger talks to create "Australia's most powerful union"' [\[1658\]](#).

The member for Burleigh this very morning urged members to listen more to this future part of the CFMEU, even though he would, totally hypocritically, argue the opposite this afternoon. I guess the member wrote that speech before the tactics committee dreamed up this silly motion and thinks so little of it that he could not even be bothered rewriting it.

I note that this motion is not really about current members of the House. Instead, I read it as a thinly veiled attack on the former premier Campbell Newman. We all know that he approvingly quoted the former CFMEU official Mr David Hanna in this place in 2012. Let us not forget the Newman LNP government appointed Mr Hanna to government boards. No doubt those opposite cheered, 'Hear, hear,' just as they hypocritically howl this evening.

Mr Speaker, I may be new to this House. However, my understanding of the role of a member of parliament is to represent, to meet with and to stand up for the community. Earlier in this place I told members how I spoke with a rank-and-file delegate from the firefighters union while doorknocking and also the state secretary of the Queensland United Firefighters Union. Speaking with both rank-and-file members and officials deepened my understanding of the issue of higher cancer rates that firefighters face and the difficulty of proving causation to WorkCover. I am happy to speak to anyone to get a wider idea of what people are thinking, and this motion fundamentally directs members not to speak with people to understand their point of view. One member suggested that we should not speak to the Catholic Church or to the Salvation Army because they face a different inquiry. We need to listen to as many Queenslanders as possible to get a wider view.

Those opposite continue a bizarre obsession with the trade union movement. It is all we have heard from them this year. My suggestion is that they give up on their fixation and work on ideas that would make Queensland an even better place. In stark contrast, members on this side of the House are getting on with the job of our \$1.6 billion Working Queensland package, including the Advance Queensland initiative, which is helping to build jobs now and jobs for the future.

My community of Logan, where there are great workers, great businessmen and great community members and students, expect members in this House to be focusing on growing our economy and creating jobs, and that is what this Palaszczuk Labor government is doing. This motion attempts to prevent members like the member for Burleigh or any other member from being the kind of representative who stands up for the interests of their workers.