




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 18 February 2016

MOTION

Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption, Palaszczuk Labor Government Response

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (6.14 pm): I start by saying I am P-R-O-U-D—proud—to be union; I am union proud and have been for 28 years and will be for my entire life. I have been a member—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I note there are a number of members already on warnings under standing order 253A and I note the day is getting on.

Mr KELLY: I have been a member, a delegate and an official with the union. Like our entire society, I have been a huge beneficiary of the hard work of the volunteers and the employees who make up our great movement. Can I say to the members opposite in the House: thank you very much for making my family welcome in the gallery tonight. I am proud to stand before them and say that I am a proud union member.

This motion is nothing more than another example of the continued obsession that those on the other side have with unions. It is pathological. Seriously, they need help. I will let the House in on a secret. There are things in life other than unions to speak about and to think about. However, I do want to talk about unions. Those opposite put their best fundraiser on the case, their absolute best fundraiser. He missed some important things about unions and I am going to clear those up tonight.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I am not able to hear.

Mr KELLY: One of my learned colleagues has suggested I slow down, and I think that is an excellent suggestion because the next part of this speech is definitely important. I want to do a mea culpa.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I cannot hear the member for Greenslopes.

Mr KELLY: I want to do a mea culpa. I want to take responsibility for my actions in the great Australian union movement for which most of my time I was a volunteer. I gave up thousands of hours of my own time. I stood in solidarity with workers who had been bullied, supporting them, listening to their concerns, helping them to speak to management, taking an interest in their family because bullying affects the whole family. What about the time I helped a worker with terminal cancer get access to her superannuation payment so she could pay for healthcare costs? I know these things are appalling and they would be totally unacceptable by any standard of common decency! I know those on the other side

of the House hate workers having the benefit of a union official coming into a place to sort out safety issues. I want to tell the House—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, you are warned under standing order 252.

Mr KELLY: I want to tell the House of perhaps my most nefarious act as an official. I went into a pathology lab at the invitation of the delegates who, for six months, had been asking management to fix a fume cabinet. There were junior doctors working in there who, for six months, were breathing in formaldehyde. I worked with the delegates; we used right-of-entry laws and workplace health and safety laws, and management fixed the problem in 24 hours. Yes, it was terrible and rotten! I am guilty of that.

It is so easy to see how those opposite would become obsessed by the actions of volunteers in our workplaces who, like me, did so much over so many years and who will continue to do so much over so many years. I wish I had more time, because I want to speak about the union that I have just joined in the last year: my local chamber of commerce. They support members, they try to help improve their workplaces and they lobby the government, and those are things that I would expect a union to do.

I will speak to the motion, but first I want to ponder a question. Do those opposite have any other donors or fundraisers who are going to conduct any more investigations that the government or I have to respond to? Are there any more Liberal donors out there who are going to step forward and run any more bogus inquiries? In six weeks what has the federal government done? Nothing. Perhaps 'Malcolm in the Middle' is going to come out and make some pompous postulations about this, only to withdraw and do exactly what the extreme right of his party is going to tell him to do.

This motion is nothing more than another example of the ongoing obsession with unions and worker bashing of those on the other side of the House. I am totally and utterly opposed to this motion, and I am P-R-O-U-D to be union.