




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2016

**FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE: REPORT, MOTION TO TAKE
NOTE**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (12.34 pm): This inquiry proved to us beyond any shadow of a doubt that there is a problem with certain small members in the labour hire industry. We understand that completely. As members have said, there were individual cases that we are very, very sorry about and we are sorry to hear of the practices going on. However, what we did find out conclusively from that inquiry was that a licensing arrangement for labour hire firms will not assist or solve that problem one iota. There will still be individuals running terrible practices and they are people we all abhor who are abusing the good workers of Queensland.

Clearly, there were recommendations that it would be much better addressed through the federal sphere of legislation. Perhaps at COAG they could bring these matters forward and then put in place laws that effectively work. It was identified that we did not have proper regulation through the Fair Work Ombudsman and that all those matters could be better addressed if the government funded better Fair Work officers to go out and supervise these matters where people are bending the rules and breaking them quite clearly now.

From our point of view, if there is any movement to this licensing regime, it will be more bureaucracy and more jobs for union mates. They will run the licensing arrangement. It is clear that since this government came in on day one it has danced to the puppeteers of the union movement. That is where this proposal is basically coming from. The best estimate that all members put forward was that the number of problem operators from Victoria right through to Queensland was a single digit number. They basically said that most of them were wonderful for the industry and were doing a great job for employees. They said that if there were not these labour hire groups there would be no jobs. For a government that keeps rolling on about jobs, jobs, jobs, I can say that any further impediments on this labour hire industry will roll back those jobs, jobs, jobs and, again, this government will be responsible for a lessening of work practices throughout this state.

Clearly, licensing does not fix the problem. Even the people who presented from unions et cetera basically said that licensing will not stop the rogue operators because the rogue operators are exactly that—rogue operators that we do not want in our system today. We want this government to use all of the facilities through the laws that are available now and can be effective now to address this matter, instead of sitting on their hands and saying, 'Let's have a licensing regime and let our union mates run it. If they're not in the CFMEU'—or whatever particular union it is—'you don't get the licence if you don't hire union members.' That is what this proposal is all about. It is not about looking after those workers who were disadvantaged through bad employers—and those bad employers are out there.

This is all about serving their political masters who do not have the interests of the workers at hand. All they want is more members because I think they are down to about 13 per cent of the workforce now. They want more members so they can get more union fees to fund these Labor campaigns. That is how it works. There is no evidence whatsoever that a licensing regime will satisfy anything other than the pockets of the union masters who drive this lot on the other side of the House.

We are totally opposed to the licensing regime as it is another burden on industry. There is not one instance that could show us where a licensing regime would fix the problem. I can guarantee that the minister will bring in some you-beaut, whoopy-do legislation to help out her union mates, and that will be coming shortly. This is a thought bubble. There is no sustainable supporting evidence to bring in that legislation. It is just more crippling of Queensland, where this government will do anything in its power unfortunately to break down industry so industry cannot get on with the job of fixing Queensland's parlous state.