




Speech By
Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 18 February 2016

MOTION

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

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (6.19 pm): Obviously, I rise to speak in support of the motion. I listened to the member for Greenslopes, who gave one of the greatest impressions of Peter Garrett that I have seen in a long time up the back there. I do not know whether his moves on the dance floor were something that he learned while he was volunteering or not.

Mr Speaker, this is not about union bashing and this is not about the good work that is done by those good members of unions who go out there and do represent their workers. This is about addressing the culture of unlawfulness and disobedience to the rule of law and the thuggish and brutish behaviour that was uncovered by a royal commission which was commenced in 2014: 3,800 pages; six volumes; 189 days of hearings; 155 public hearings; two years of work; 75 case studies; and 500 witnesses. This is a significant piece of work which investigates lawlessness in an industry—particularly the construction and building industry—that employs somewhere in the order of 200,000 people here in Queensland.

This motion should be supported by those opposite and there are many reasons for that. There are 1.7 million reasons, and that is the amount of donations made by the union movement to the ALP in 2014-15. Two hundred and fifty thousand of those 1.7 million reasons are because, in the annual returns of the party, that was donated by the CFMEU.

Let us have a look at some of the recommendations that were made by the commissioner. Why should the state respond? Recommendation 1 states—

Commonwealth and State governments give consideration to adopting a national approach ...

Recommendation 2 states—

State governments give consideration to recommendations concerning the *Fair Work Registered Organisations) Act* ...

Those are two good reasons, and they are the first two recommendations of the 79 recommendations in volume 5. Here is another good reason. Recommendation 57 says—

The building and construction industry regulator have concurrent power with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to investigate ... secondary boycott provisions.

Corrupting benefits is another one. They are laughing over there. Recommendation 40 says—

Legislation be enacted amending the *Fair Work Act* 2009 (Cth) to include a provision criminalising the giving or receiving of corrupting benefits ...

Why should that be important in this state? Because here you have in the case studies 'CFMEU Queensland—document destruction'. We have reports of funds which should be applied to union members being used to pay for a union official's IVF treatment, and those recommendations are peppered throughout the report. It is important that these recommendations be considered by this government so that those sorts of things can be addressed in a sensible way; so that employers have confidence to invest in the industry in Queensland; so that young people looking for jobs are not frightened off by a culture of brutish and thuggish behaviour—'You're either in the union or you're out of a job'—so young people in Queensland, where the unemployment rate today has just gone to 6.4 per cent seasonally adjusted, have the opportunity for a job in a construction industry that employs 200,000 people. It is important for the rule of law. It is important for jobs and opportunities. It is important that we eliminate standover tactics. It is important that we eliminate the costs that go to business which means that other people are not employed. It is important for taxpayers who pay more every time a benefit is handed out or something is not done properly.

Why is it important for this government to do it? It is important because this government appears to owe its allegiance to the union movement and not to Queenslanders. This government mentioned the union movement 180 times when they came into this place. They received \$1.7 million in donations from the union movement. This government, more than any government, needs to show its separation from the union movement and that it is prepared to govern for all Queenslanders—to provide jobs, to provide employment and to provide that the rule of law is predominant and not the rule of the jungle. If this government does not believe in doing the right thing, then all Queenslanders shall condemn them.