




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MOTION

Palaszczyk Labor Government, CFMEU

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (6.30 pm): It is obvious that the member for Chatsworth has no idea about industrial relations. We heard the member for Chatsworth talk about the CFMEU and how bad they are and yet on 17 April 2012 one of the meetings Campbell Newman had in his diary: meeting and lunch with Dave Hanna of the BLF in the Premier's lounge. Then in *Hansard* he says, 'We have also had praise from unions such as the BLF.'

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I can hear you loud and clear, member for Everton. You are not on the speaking list and you have missed the boat.

Ms GRACE: We have him on record praising unions such as the BLF and Mr Dave Hanna. On 13 May 2012 he says, 'I thank him.' 'We are very much about creating jobs for workers in the BLF.' Then the CFMEU state secretary Michael Ravbar described the announcement as the boost the flagging construction industry needs. Those opposite praise them when they want to and knock them down when they want to as well. They appointed Dave Hanna to Construction Skills Queensland and here they are bemoaning the CFMEU. Once again they are bereft of any ideas. Here we are in the parliament—and, Mr Speaker, I have to apologise—once again debating the CFMEU.

We heard the member for Kawana talk about the rule of law. He said there are laws about what you have to do and how you conduct yourself. If you drive fast down a freeway there are rules about it. But are there any for employers? Do we ever hear anything about the rule of law for employers? There is not one word. Those opposite have an unhealthy obsession with the CFMEU and we hear nothing about employers actually following the rule law and doing what they should be doing. Let me tell members that ordinary families are not interested in the CFMEU, what they are interested in is the security of work. They are interested in whether, when their children get a job, they are made to get an ABN. My daughter recently got a six-month contract in Melbourne. They made her, a 20-year-old, get an ABN. She does not run a business. That is the point. The only way she could get employment was to get an ABN. The federal government is allowing that to go on.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Can I remind the members for Kawana, Gympie, Mansfield and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that you are already on your first warning under 253A. Other members will join you if they continue with disruptive behaviour.

Ms GRACE: Nothing is being done. In fact, the federal IR minister, Senator Cash, has not called a meeting of industrial relations ministers around this state for two years.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Gaven and member for Chatsworth, you are now joining the list of those warned under standing order 253A for your disruptive behaviour.

Ms GRACE: They want to be heard when they speak, but they do not like it when they get it back. Senator Cash has not called a meeting for two years.

Mr Hart interjected.

Ms GRACE: On Friday this issue of the misuse of ABNs and the exploitation of workers will be put on the agenda, member for Burleigh, don't you worry about that.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Burleigh, you are warned under standing order 253A. I find that you are trying to disrupt the minister and speak over the top of the minister. If you persist I will take the appropriate action. That is your first warning.

Ms GRACE: What do we hear from those opposite about issues of exploitation, labour hire, contracting upon contracting, employees not paid any wages proper and penalty rates being stripped? Nothing! We do not hear a word. There is silence—crickets—because they have nothing of substance to offer on these issues. The community is not interested about the views of those opposite on the CFMEU. It simply smacks of union bashing from the party of Work Choices, from the party of attack dogs on the wharfs, from the party that sacked 14,000 public servants and ripped away the rights of workers every single day.

Let me give those opposite some examples of the employers that have been fined: 7-Eleven has incurred more than \$400,000 in fines for underpaying workers—staff received as little as \$13 an hour; a Coffee Club here in Queensland was fined \$180,000 for forcing foreign workers to hand back \$18,000 of their wages; three Japanese restaurants in Brisbane were fined \$200,000 for paying five workers base rates lower than \$10 an hour; in Maroochy a company was fined \$230,000—listen to this one—for deliberately exploiting their workforce: 22 seasonal workers from Vanuatu were underpaid almost \$78,000.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. It appears to me that the member for Redlands and the member for Mount Ommaney are just pushing the boundaries. You will both now join the list of those on their first warning under 253A. Member for Moggill, you are about to follow if you continue.

Ms GRACE: Before my time runs out let me get to the member for Gaven, the wannabe union official who set up a non-registered union. They are the ones that they support, the ones that do not report, the ones that we do not know what they are up to, the ones that are not registered under the Industrial Relations Act. That is what those opposite support. There he is fighting with his union, fighting with his neighbours, fighting with his conscious about whether he stays in the LNP or goes to One Nation. They are the unions they want to support. They talk about numbers. Who knows? They are not registered. We abide by the rule of law and we will not take anything else.