




Speech By
John-Paul Langbroek
MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Record of Proceedings, 23 March 2017

MOTION: UNIONS

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (5.25 pm): Having heard the contribution of the member for Pine Rivers, I note with interest how far we have gotten away from the original motion that I rise to speak in support of, which relates to the comments by ACTU Secretary Sally McManus threatening the rule of law and supports the federal government's move to implement the trade union royal commission's recommendations for criminal penalties for corrupt payments between unions and companies.

We only have to look at the minister's amendments to see that those opposite do not support the federal government's move to implement these recommendations for criminal penalties; they just note them. They note the comments by ACTU Secretary Sally McManus and support the rule of law, but Sally McManus does not support the rule of law. It may be important for the sisterhood to laud Sally McManus as the first female ACTU secretary. That does not mean that we support the rule of trade unions. We do not have the rule of kings in this country; we have the rule of law. Sally McManus said very clearly that she thinks union members should act outside of the law.

Members opposite have come in here and said, 'We think you just need to change the government to change the law.' That is not what Sally McManus said. She said that union members should break the law to try to get the law changed. The rule of law has at its heart the concept that both the government and citizens know the law and obey it. Here we have those opposite commending the ACTU secretary for her edict that members should go out and break the law.

I want to speak about the specific issues we are dealing with—about what the CFMEU has done, especially on the Gold Coast over the past year and since this government has been in power for the past two years. It has walked all over Premier Palaszczuk and her ministers. It has decided to turn a blind eye to the illegal strikes and the standover tactics. I table a cartoon from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* which depicts the Minister for Industrial Relations with her hands over her eyes, ignoring the work of the unions, who were having daily two-hour stop-work meetings for months while they had a dispute with Hansen Yuncken, halving production.

Tabled paper: Cartoon, undated, titled 'The Closing Ceremony for the 2018 Commonwealth Games' [\[512\]](#).

They have had disputes with Grocon. They have had disputes with Boral. Of course, that is why the federal government is bringing up these issues of corrupt payments that are causing particular companies to get favourable treatment from the unions.

Gold Coast locals are proud to be hosting the Commonwealth Games in just over a year from now. We are excited about the infrastructure improvements. We know that the games will boost our international reputation as a city, a state and a nation. We are excited to project our city onto the world stage. There is a strong sense of optimism in the Gold Coast city, but locals have also felt frustrated, embarrassed and anxious in the face of CFMEU strikes which jeopardise the progress of key projects such as the Carrara sports and leisure precinct. Workers were lazing around on the grass, and I table a copy of an article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* that portrays them as bludgers.

Tabled paper: Front page of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, dated 25 May 2016, with the headline 'Bludgers: working flat out for Commonwealth Games success' [\[513\]](#).

The Federal Court was told that as little as two hours of work was being done per day on the \$126 million site. They threatened other key sites. It cost \$700,000 and that means that Hansen Yuncken had to tender allowing for that \$700,000 to be built into the price, and it is taxpayers who end up funding that sort of thing. It drives up the costs for Queenslanders because it adds to the cost of buying a home or the cost of doing business because other businesses that may not be union members have a 30 per cent reduction in their productivity.

Bob Hawke as a former prime minister, Peter Beattie as a former premier and Simon Crean as a former Labor opposition leader have all said that the CFMEU should be reined in or that it would be better off not being in the Labor fold. The ABCC, the Australian Building and Construction Commission, shows that the CFMEU is the respondent in 56 current prosecutions, with 110 of its representatives facing 1,076 alleged contraventions. Queensland is the strike capital of Australia. The numbers of days lost in Queensland are almost double those of New South Wales and Victoria combined. We know that the CFMEU does not care about Queenslanders. It is evident that the Labor Party is more interested in ensuring that the CFMEU can bankroll it during the next election than in working for Queenslanders. Queenslanders expect better. Gold Coasters expect better. Justice Reeves in the Federal Court will sentence on 8 May having found the CFMEU guilty of what it did on the Carrara site. It is not good enough for the people of the Gold Coast or the people of Queensland.