




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 9 August 2017

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, CFMEU

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (6.07 pm): This motion takes me back to one of my favourite musical acts, Redgum, and one of their great songs *One More Boring Night in Adelaide*. This motion is one more boring union-bashing motion in the Queensland parliament by the LNP—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. If I cannot hear the member I know that Hansard cannot record what the member is saying. We have the option to either start again or we allow the member to continue so that Hansard can hear.

Mr KELLY: Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. Honestly, they are obsessed with union bashing. This yelling is actually a cathartic experience for them, so I am happy for them to yell at me about unions. If it helps them get it off their chest and move on to something more important for Queensland, let us get that out. I really do not know why they bother with these motions. It brings nothing to our parliament, but let us get this done because I want to go and have dinner with me dear old mum. There were no unions for women who stayed at home and raised seven kids—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. If we have a continuation of this I will invite the member for Greenslopes to start again.

Mr KELLY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let us get this debate done, because I want to go and have dinner with my dear mother. There were no unions for women who stayed at home and raised seven kids, but my mother often joked that there should be. She may not have been a union member, but she taught us some great values that stand you in good stead whether you are in a union or anywhere else. She taught us to listen; she taught us to try and get along; she taught us to be respectful; she taught us to stick up for ourselves and our values; and she taught us to watch out for our family and watch out for our mates.

I am pleased that I have been asked to respond to this absolute load of nonsense. Perhaps I was asked to respond because I have been the beneficiary of being part of a strong union for 30 years. I have been part of my union, the Queensland Nurses and Midwives Union, and I have seen the tremendous help it has provided to members over all of those years. I have done my part volunteering. I have done my part supporting my mates. Good unionists do not just back each other; we also back the organisations we work for. We back the employers because we know that a successful organisation creates more work, better jobs and safer jobs.

I could talk about my personal experiences, but I would rather talk about the absolute privilege I had touring the many local coalmining towns as part of the coal workers pneumoconiosis committee. That was an experience I shared with many in this House. Shock, horror: we met a lot of men and

women from the CFMEU. Did we meet thugs? Did we meet criminals? No. We met workers who were sick and tired of being forced to work in unsafe conditions. We met workers who were sick of seeing their workforce being divided and conquered by the use of temporary and casual workers. We met workers who told us about temporary workers who made a complaint about safety in the morning and were walked off site in the afternoon. We met workers who were absolutely distressed and disgusted that their towns and communities were being devastated by the employment practices of these big mining companies.

The entire committee—members came from all sides of parliament—treated these workers with respect and dignity. We did not brand them as thugs or criminals; we listened and we delivered a report that will hopefully deliver some justice for afflicted workers and protection for those still in the industry.

Of course at times there has been bad and corrupt behaviour in unions—behaviour that should be stopped, punished and prevented from ever happening again—but does this behaviour make the institution bad? Of course not. Let us consider other institutions that have had corrupt individuals: banks, the military, universities, religious institutions, political parties, the Public Service. Should we get rid of these institutions because individuals do bad things? Absolutely not. We should learn from their mistakes, compensate victims, hold those who were corrupt to account, reform if necessary and celebrate the many great things those institutions do.

I will tell members about one institution I would like to see shut down—that is, the ABCC. When that mob has been in full swing, the number of deaths on construction sites has grown. It is absolutely disgraceful. If anybody thinks that I or any member on this side of the House would support an organisation that makes workplaces unsafe, they really are seriously misguided.

It is sad that the LNP wastes the time of this House on motions like this. I would rather talk about things like the Back to Work program. That is what the people of my electorate sent me here to do. That is what the people of my electorate welcome. I reject this motion. This motion is rubbish. Let us get back to the important work of this House.

(Time expired)