




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

CFMEU

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (2.22 pm): The union movement, particularly the CFMEU, is running amok around construction sites all throughout Queensland. We have seen time and time again in the courts—both in the Federal Court and the Federal Circuit Court—unions described by judges as lawless. Essentially now their modus operandi is to break the law. I am glad the federal government and the new Prime Minister are looking at completely deregistering the CFMEU in Australia because their modus operandi is to disrupt construction sites. We know that Queenslanders pay an extra 30 per cent on their hospitals and their schools when the CFMEU is involved. It is industrial sabotage.

We have seen in the last two weeks former CFMEU official Jade Ingham appointed to the lofty office of the Building and Construction Commission—another job for their CFMEU mates. We have seen him appointed there. We have also seen him negotiating the salaries in the EBA for the Queen's Wharf development. An average carpenter will start off at \$203,000 a year. If they work past three o'clock in the afternoon their salary goes to \$288,000 a year. The only reason that EB has been negotiated is because the CFMEU said to the construction industry, 'You give us this in the EB and we will not have industrial action against your company.' It is blackmail. It is a rort. It is verging on criminal activity.

We have seen a situation in the last few weeks with a company called Enco. They have a few jobs doing federal government work like the Caloundra Road interchange and the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing. Enco does precast material. They have never had the CFMEU on their site. All of a sudden, because they have a contract to deliver services for the federal government, the CFMEU rocks up at their door and tries to shut down their site. The CFMEU knows that if they shut down that site they shut down the project that the federal government and the taxpayers are paying for.

What is more concerning, particularly as a former minister for workplace health and safety and industrial relations, is that it seems now that Workplace Health and Safety are on speed dial to the CFMEU in Queensland. In particular, a director named Helen Burgess is now rocking up at construction sites and workplaces. Not only that, she is taking action against employers in the Industrial Relations Commission of Queensland and doing the union bidding. It is happening with Enco.

I was told the other day that a CFMEU official turned up to a Sunshine Coast construction site having had his permit deregistered by the Fair Work Commission. He was rightfully refused entry. They got on the phone to Workplace Health and Safety and 10 minutes later director of Workplace Health and Safety, Helen Burgess, turned up from Brisbane. That is the quickest trip on the Bruce Highway from Brisbane to the Sunshine Coast. Helen Burgess was around the corner waiting for the CFMEU call to get them onto the site. That is wrong.

The department should be investigated. It is wrong when the union movement is using Workplace Health and Safety directors to do their dirty work on construction sites in Queensland. Is it any wonder people are walking away from the union movement? A key finding in the Menzies Research Centre policy brief released this month states—

- Membership in the union movements former blue collar strongholds in manufacturing, transport, warehousing and construction has sharply declined in the last 40 years
- Union membership has declined from a peak of 65% of the workforce more than fifty years ago to 14.55% per cent ...

People are voting with their feet and walking away from the union moment. We have 15 per cent of the total workforce in unions and less than 10 per cent in the private sector.

The Heart Foundation reported recently that 14 per cent of Australians smoked daily and another two per cent irregularly between 2014 and 2015. This confirms that more people smoke in Australia than are members of the union movement. That shows that the courts are seeing action against the CFMEU. The Labor Party should dissociate from the unions. The Workplace Health and Safety office should be investigated for interference in the independence of workplace health and safety.

(Time expired)