



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 March 2021

**MOTION**

**Australian Building and Construction Commission**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (5.00 pm): I move—

That all words after 'ABCC' (paragraph 2.) be omitted and the following inserted:

- '3. supports building industry workers, tradies and small businesses;
4. supports the right of all workers to a workplace free from bullying and intimidation; and
5. calls on the Labor government to not support the ongoing role of the ABCC.'

Members on this side of the House know that those opposite are struggling. We know that they have absolutely nothing. When the Leader of the Opposition gets up and asks, 'Does anyone have anything we can talk about today?', they are all quiet, they have no issues and they have absolutely nothing, and there is the member for Kawana saying, 'Pick me! Pick me! Pick me! I'll just take out the union-bullying, busting motion. How's that?' We on this side know that those opposite are in trouble when they stoop down to the union-bashing antics that they do all of the time. We are used to it now. I will tell members that I do not often splutter into my All-Bran in the mornings, but let me tell you that those opposite are really scraping the bottom of the barrel when they claim that the ABCC is the workers' friend. It is pretending to be the friend of the worker.

The ABCC is funded in 2019-20 to the tune of \$33 million. It revealed that in estimates a year ago, because these are the facts. The member for Kawana just loves making this stuff up. At estimates a year ago the ABCC had spent \$3.2 million on legal fees in three years prosecuting unions, union officials and workers but had not prosecuted a single employer for sham contracting. If there is one industry where sham contracting is rife, it is the construction industry.

In June 2020 the ABCC released a report that it had audited 63 labour hire companies. The audit found that nearly 80 per cent—79 per cent—of the businesses audited did not meet workplace laws, including not paying their workers correctly, not keeping proper records and not giving their workers payslips. Do members know how many were prosecuted? Eighty per cent of the ones that it audited showed that they were not meeting their legal obligations, yet do members want to have a guess how many were prosecuted? Zero—absolutely zero!

We spruik about collecting funds for the ABCC. Since the 2016 re-establishment, the ABCC has recovered around \$600,000 in wages and entitlements. I love this tweet by the CFMEU—

The CFMEU in 2020 alone were able to get \$11.7 million for their members.

In five years an organisation funded to the tune of \$33 million recouped \$600,000 whereas the CFMEU recouped \$11.7 million, and the list goes on. The plumbers' union recovered a total of \$15.8 million for workers in 2018. Let me advise the member for Kawana: for any industrial officer worth their weight, \$600,000 will be recouped in no time at all. You would really have to be lazy to have only recouped \$600,000 in five years.

This motion is embarrassing given the way it was moved by the member for Kawana. It shows a desperate opposition. When it comes to bullying and harassment, those opposite are the leaders. Let us have a look at the war within the LNP. Those opposite know all about bullying and intimidation. It was really great to see that the member for Nanango was also mentioned in the article where she was quoted as saying, 'I will not be bullied by the backroom boys of the LNP.' We, too, support the member for Nanango in that workers should not be bullied, but the dysfunction and the absolute turmoil within the LNP demonstrates why its members are so desperate to bring another union-bashing motion, and I will tell the members on this side of the House why—because they have nothing. They are a rabble and they are dysfunctional, and that is the reason they lost the last election. They will be there for four more years.