



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2022


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Education, Employment and Training Committee, Report

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.49 pm): It is becoming more frequent in the estimates process under the Labor Party that not only ministers but also senior public servants are refusing to answer questions from committee members. The chairs are saying, 'You may not like the answer but that is the answer.' I expect in budget estimates that when senior public servants who know the information are asked the information they should actually provide that information because that is what budget estimates is all about.

We had so many occasions when senior public servants knew the information but did not give the information. When I asked the minister to take certain questions on notice they would not take them on notice and, therefore, we would not get a response. It again shows how the estimates system under the Palaszczuk government is broken. The Palaszczuk government does not believe in transparency and integrity anymore. It is completely broken. When chairs continually say, 'No. You have asked the question and you got the answer,' no, I am sorry but when senior public servants do not give the answer you should be able to keep going until you get the answer you require.

It would not be an education and industrial relations estimates without the good old CFMEU involved again, showing how much power they wield over the Labor Party when you have members in the Labor Party who are members of the CFMEU who owe their jobs and their livelihoods to the CFMEU. I made a complaint 12 months ago to the CCC with respect to bullying and intimidation on a construction site at a business in Queensland—a non-unionised site—and the CCC referred it back to the department for investigation. Extraordinarily the Office of Industrial Relations confirmed that the department received the report and the completed investigation in January this year. It is now August and it is not public. Every time I ask the department, 'Where is this report?' the ethical standards unit in the department reply, 'It is with the deputy director-general who is still considering the report.' They have had the report for eight months.

Again, we do not have the Jackie Trad CCC report. We do not have the report into the CFMEU. We do not know whether there were any adverse outcomes in the report. The public servant, the deputy director-general, said that they are consulting and giving procedural fairness to public servants. The public ought to know what is in the report. I am the complainant. I deserve to know what is in the report because it was my complaint on behalf of a Queensland business—but, of course, we just see the

protection racket for the CFMEU continue. I say to the deputy director-general of the Office of Industrial Relations, who has had this report sitting on his desk for eight months: please finish reading it and release it. Put it on the website so the public can know the influence of the CFMEU.

When we look at the CFMEU and the influence it has over this government, it is no secret that in the last 12 months 14 Workplace Health and Safety inspectors have resigned. These Workplace Health and Safety inspectors should be independent. They are the ones who go on to construction sites and look at safety issues, but they are being bullied out of their job because of the fear, bullying and intimidation of the CFMEU—14 Workplace Health and Safety inspectors in the last 12 months. Minister Grace sat there at estimates not caring about that, not even thinking it was an issue.

If I were the minister—and I have been the industrial relations minister—and 14 of my Workplace Health and Safety inspectors resigned in a year, I would think, 'Geez, we have a problem here.' What is the problem? They are going out on sick leave and they are resigning because they do not have the support of the government and they do not have the support of the minister. When they put complaints in against the CFMEU they then get taken off construction sites and other people are put on construction sites who will do the work of the CFMEU. That is the system of industrial relations now in the state of Queensland. We have people out on sick leave, we have people being bullied out of their job and we have people resigning from the Workplace Health and Safety inspectorate because of the bullying of the CFMEU, and this government turns a blind eye to it.

Not all Labor premiers turn a blind eye to it. Not all Labor premiers have their head stuck in the sand like Premier Palaszczuk. An article stated, 'South Australian Premier ... has severed ties with the ... CFMEU, ordering Labor to repay a \$125,000 donation from the union ...' I table that article.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian*, undated, titled 'Labor will repay CFMEU donation after vandalism' [1148](#).

The Queensland Labor Party have received hundreds of thousands of dollars from the CFMEU. They are sycophants to the CFMEU. It is no wonder they are not putting the interests of their Workplace Health and Safety inspectors ahead of the interests of the CFMEU because the CFMEU pay the bills for the Labor Party. It is about time Minister Grace put the interests of her public servants first. It is about time she put the interests of Workplace Health and Safety inspectors first. After all, they should be independent of the government and of the minister, but they never will be when the CFMEU runs the show as it does.

(Time expired)