

Commission of Inquiry into the CFMEU and Misconduct in the Construction Industry

WITNESS STATEMENT OF GRANT GALVIN

I, Grant Galvin, CEO of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, swear as follows:

Background

1. I make this statement in response to a notice issued by Commissioner Stuart John Wood AM KC, the Commissioner appointed pursuant to the *Commissions of Inquiry Order (No. 2) 2025*.
2. I hold a Bachelor of Commerce (Majoring in Industrial Relations and Human Resources) from Griffith University. I also hold an MBA from the University of Southern Queensland.
3. I was the CEO of Master Builders' Queensland (**MBQ**) from July 2013 to June 2022.

Master Builders Queensland

4. MBQ is the peak industry association for builders and subcontractors in the Queensland residential building and construction industry. It is an Employer Association. MBQ represents suppliers, subcontractors and builders across the building industry in Queensland.
5. MBQ has over 9000 members. These range from tier 1 builders (including, for example, Hutchinsons, Multiplex, John Holland and the like) through to small subcontractors in regional areas. It advocates on behalf of members in the residential and commercial construction sectors. About 80% of MBQ's members are residential or small commercial builders and subcontractors, 15% were medium to large commercial contractors and 5% were tier one contractors. The CFMEU had a strong working relationship and apparent influence with the tier 1 builders and subcontractors.
6. When I commenced as CEO at MBQ in 2013 it was in financial difficulty. It was losing about \$1.5m per annum.
7. Within about 12 months of commencing as the MBQ CEO, we had managed to turn the financial position of MBQ around so that it broke even. The financial position improved after this, with MBQ recording a profits for the remainder of my tenure.

BERT

8. In 2015, I was appointed a director of B.E.R.T Pty Ltd and BERT Fund Limited (**BERT**).
9. BERT provides redundancy payments and benefits to its members along with a range of other services for workers in Queensland and Northern Territory's building and construction industry. MBQ and the CFMEU nominates directors to serve on the board of BERT.
10. Michael Ravbar (**Mr Ravbar**) was on the board of BERT at the same time that I was. Mr Ravbar had a very dominant personality during board meetings.
11. I resigned from BERT in about 2017.



2017 Rally

12. In October 2017, the CFMEU held a rally at MBQ's office at 417 Wickham Terrace, Spring Hill, Queensland. Between 1,000 and 2,000 people marched on the building.
13. I understood that the rally was organised to protest the then Turnbull Government's plans to bring in additional governance and transparency rules for worker entitlement funds, including BERT. As I understood it, the Federal Government wanted to introduce regulations to improve governance and oversight for redundancy trusts and insurance trust funds. I had no issues with any proposals for improved governance given the large sums of money being managed on behalf of members.
14. BERT, and similar funds, would collect fees on behalf of its members as required by the CFMEU Enterprise Agreement, and both MBQ and the CFMEU would benefit from this in different forms. The benefits provided to MBQ and the CFMEU were funded from the investment proceeds of members money. Decisions on how these funds would be distributed were made at the discretion of the BERT boards.
15. My personal view was that money collected, including the interest gained on any investment, should have been paid back to members as is the case with superannuation funds. Instead, a large portion was being provided to the MBQ and CFMEU for the provision of services. At the time, funds received by MBQ were used for frontline leadership training and for the CFMEU, it was for used for courses such as asbestos awareness and apprentices. It also provided funding for different charities such as Mates in Construction which was a suicide prevention program. However, because the money was essentially being returned to the industry from which it was collected, I was nonetheless comfortable with the arrangement and I considered myself a supporter of BERT at the time. I believe this was a view shared across the MBQ organisation.
16. The rally caught me by surprise, in terms of its organisation, scale and its purpose. I was only informed about it by a call from the police who warned me and advised that given its size and their assessment, that they would be present to ensure security and safety. The CFMEU members marched from near Roma Street Parklands to the MBQ's office. When they arrived at the office they were chanting "wake up Grant, wake up" to the tune of "Wake up Geoff" by the Wiggles.
17. There were about approximately 50 staff in the MBQ office on that day. About 30 of them were women. There were participants in the rally who surrounded the building and positioned themselves against the office windows. I received reports and witnessed myself, these men were making lewd and sexual comments to the women in the office and this was causing them significant distress and making them feel scared and intimidated. The police were positioned both inside and outside of the building. The police went around the building and requested all staff to move away from the windows and out of sight of the protestors.
18. Once the CFMEU members had gathered around the building, Mr Ravbar, Jade Ingham (**Mr Ingham**) and someone else (I can't recall who it was now, but he introduced himself as being from the ETU) entered MBQ's office. They were escorted by Queensland Police officers who brought them into the building. The Police had advised that me meeting with this delegation would be a faster way to end the rally
19. Mr Ravbar said that they wanted to discuss the issues confronting BERT and my lack of support for the fund. I said that I supported BERT. I think we all then saw the comical side of what had just happened. The representative of the ETU said something along

the lines of "well that was easy" He then said with a bit of laugh something like "so why the f*** did we have to march up here then?".

20. I said that if they had called or contacted me beforehand, I would have told them of MBQ's position on BERT and our overall support of its objectives and the rally would have been unnecessary. Mr Ravbar said something like "well I needed to rally the boys anyway".
21. After they left my office, Mr Ravbar announced to the crowd that he had demanded that I change my position to support BERT, that I had capitulated and that MBQ would now support BERT. The crowd cheered in response to this announcement and the crowd dispersed.

Meeting at the CFMEU's office

22. Shortly after the CFMEU rally described above, I was invited by Mr Ravbar to attend a meeting at the CFMEU's office in Bowen Hills.
23. I drove to the meeting and parked my car in the CFMEU car park, out the front of the CFMEU's office.
24. Mr Ravbar, Mr Ingham and another CFMEU official attended the meeting. I can't remember too much about what was discussed in the meeting. It was an amicable meeting, although Mr Ingham left the meeting shortly before it ended.
25. When I exited the CFMEU office after the meeting, I saw that my car had been covered in stickers. The stickers were CFMEU stickers with a viper snake on them and the slogan "Strike if Provoked" written on them. Once I spotted the stickers I turned around and looked at the CFMEU building. I could see Mr Ravbar, Mr Ingham and other CFMEU staff looking out the window and laughing.

BUSSQ

26. In early 2014, I was appointed a director of the Building Unions Superannuation Scheme (Queensland) (**BUSSQ**).
27. BUSSQ is the trustee of the Building Unions Superannuation Scheme (Queensland) (the **Fund**) and BUSS (Queensland) Pooled Superannuation Trust (the **PST**).
28. BUSSQ has about 75,000 members and about \$7 billion in funds under management.
29. At the time that I was appointed a director of BUSSQ, it had six directors. Three of those directors were nominated by MBQ and the other three were nominated by the CFMEU.
30. The chair of the Board at that time was Bob Lette (**Mr Lette**), a solicitor with a long association with MBQ. Wallace Trohear (**Mr Trohear**), a former state secretary of the CFMEU, was also on the board.
31. While Mr Lette and Mr Trohear were on the board it was run professionally, collaboratively and cohesively. I enjoyed the role. Each director appeared to take their duties and obligations seriously. Mr Trohear was a valuable presence on the Board. He was a great pragmatist. I thought he discharged his duties as a director with conviction and I never saw him overtly press a CFMEU or political agenda. I believed that he acted in the best interests of the BUSSQ members and in accordance with his

fiduciary duties. He never openly stated that he would consult with persons external to the BUSSQ board before voting on a resolution or making a decision in his capacity as a BUSSQ director.

32. Mr Trohear retired in 2019 after 26 years on the Board. He was replaced by Emma Eaves. Paula Masters was then the chair of the board and the third CFMEU appointee at the time was Ms Jacqui Collie.
33. Progressively over time, I detected a notable shift in the operation and management of the BUSSQ board once Mr Trohear resigned. By late 2020 onwards, Ms Masters and Ms Collie became increasingly more vocal at times, about needing to run things by Mr Ravbar before making a decision on the Board. I was concerned about this development.
34. Things really came to a head in 2021. One thing that happened was that at the direction of Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (**APRA**), Deloitte were engaged to perform a Board Evaluation and Capability Assessment Report. As part of the evaluation and assessment process, Deloitte requested that each director provide them with a list of qualifications, credentials and experience. This included a self-evaluation relevant to a set of skills matrix combined with the opportunity for board members to rate their peers against the same matrix. Following receipt of these submissions, Deloitte produced a draft report.
35. In around mid-2021, Deloitte then provided the BUSSQ Board with an updated, final report.
36. For a number of reasons, I had concerns about the integrity of the report. I raised my concerns with the Remuneration Committee of BUSSQ, of which I was a member, and the full board. I subsequently resigned from the Remuneration Committee.
37. At around this time, a robust debate was also taking place as to whether BUSSQ should merge with another superannuation fund. As I understood it, the leadership of the CFMEU, and its nominee directors of BUSSQ, were strongly opposed to the idea. I was open to a merger, whether that be with CBUS or any other fund if it was considered to be in the best interest of members. This test is one of the most important legal obligations applying to trustees of any superannuation fund.
38. In about September 2021, I took my concerns to APRA.
39. Not long after my meeting with APRA I received a phone call from Mr Ravbar in which he expressed anger towards me, including about the fact that I had taken my concerns to APRA.
40. Also at around this time, there was a proposal to increase the number of directors on the BUSSQ Board, and the CFMEU had nominated Mr Ravbar to join the Board. I raised a query with the CEO and other directors whether Mr Ravbar was a fit and proper person, being a question that I thought should be asked of any proposed director.
41. After this, I received another phone call from Mr Ravbar, who was aggrieved that I would question his status as fit and proper.
42. Also at around this time, I received some phone calls from MBQ's tier 1 members, requesting me to "stop rocking the boat" with BUSSQ, discontinue any discussion about a merger of BUSSQ with another fund and to "make peace" with Mr Ravbar.

43. In all the circumstances, I wasn't prepared to remain a director of BUSSQ and in October 2021, I resigned from the Board. I was replaced on the Board by Ms Dermatossian.

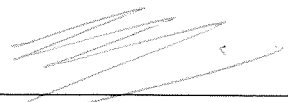
2022 Rally

44. In January 2021, the 3 MBA nominated directors all resigned from the BUSSQ Board leaving it without a quorum and unable to function.
45. Considerable pressure was put on me by Mr Ravbar, Mr Ingham and several tier 1 contractors to ensure that the Board of MBQ appointed new directors and agree that no merger discussions of any type between BUSSQ and any fund be progressed.
46. On about 8 February 2022, I received a telephone call from Queensland Police. I was told that the CFMEU were planning to march on MBQ's office and that they had arranged for the riot police to be at MBQ's office. The fact the riot police were being sent, it appeared to me to be a serious escalation in security threat relative to the previous rally.
47. Based on the conduct towards the women in the office at the October 2017 rally, I gave a direction to all staff who worked from the office, to not attend for duty for the duration of this march. Only a small handful of my senior executive team remained in the office with me.
48. The riot squad arrived at MBQ's office and prepared themselves both inside and outside of the building. Not long after that, thousands of protestors marched from the Roma Street Parklands and gathered around MBQ's office.
49. The large crowd were chanting loudly, including towards me. I saw Mr Ravbar and Mr Ingham leading the crowd.
50. In the crowd, there was a person dressed as the grim reaper, with a large sheath. Upon arriving at MBQ, Mr Ravbar and Mr Ingham gave speeches to the large CFMEU crowd. It was about me and MBQ wanting to shut down BUSSQ and merge with CBUS.
51. When I looked out the window at the crowd, CFMEU members started yelling at me.
52. The riot police had blocked access to the building however the CFMEU members attempted to force entry into the building through the front glass doors.
53. After trying unsuccessfully to get into the building, the CFMEU mob hoisted a coffin into a nearby tree outside my window. I took their actions to be a death threat.
54. At this point, I become concerned for my own safety and that of the remaining employees in the MBQ office. The rally lasted for an extended period of time and we remained trapped inside until the rally eventually dispersed.

Resignation from Master Builders

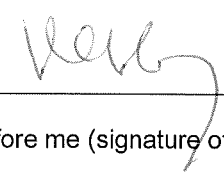
55. I resigned as CEO of MBQ not long after this rally and worked out my notice period.

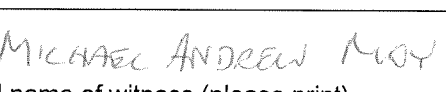
I swear the contents of this statement are true


Signature of Deponent

Place: Brisbane

Date 02/07/2026


Before me (signature of witness)


Full name of witness (please print)

☐ Justice of the Peace (JP #)

☐ Notary public

☒ Lawyer

☐ Other authorised person (specify)