



Queensland Government

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE CFMEU AND MISCONDUCT IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

COMMISSIONED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ACT 1950

BRISBANE MAGISTRATES COURT

**WEDNESDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2025
AT 10:15 AM AEST**

OPENING HEARING

APPEARANCES

**Mr Stuart John Wood AM KC – Commissioner
Mr Robert Gee – Secretary
Mr Liam Kelly KC – Counsel Assisting**

<THE HEARING COMMENCED AT 10.15 AM

COMMISSIONER: Good morning. Could the Secretary please read the terms of reference?

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MR GEE: Commissions of Inquiry (Order No.2) 2025.

Under the provisions of the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950, and every other enabling power, the Governor in Council hereby appoints Stuart John Wood AM KC as Commissioner from 1 August 2025 to make a full and careful inquiry in an open and independent manner with respect to:

- 10
- (A) Evidence of, and allegations concerning:
- (i) Misconduct by the CFMEU against stakeholders;
- (ii) The culture and behaviours of the CFMEU that tolerated, accepted, promoted, fostered or encouraged misconduct;
- 15 (iii) The impact of any misconduct on any stakeholder's physical, mental or financial wellbeing;
- (iv) Instances of misconduct making workplaces unsafe or uncomfortable for women;
- 20 (v) The systemic nature of misconduct involving current and former leadership figures within the CFMEU;
- (vi) Intentional, deliberate or reckless breaching of laws as an integral part of the CFMEU's business model;
- (vii) The involvement of organised crime or other criminal elements or identities with the CFMEU and in the construction industry;
- 25 (vii) The payment by the CFMEU of monetary orders for which CFMEU officials are personally liable;
- (ix) Irregularities in financial dealings by the CFMEU, including cash transfers and contracts;
- 30 (x) The sub-branch of the CFMEU known as 'the Youth Crew', and whether members of that entity were involved in misconduct and whether that entity should be wound up;
- (xi) The use of social media by the current or former leadership of the CFMEU to facilitate the misconduct;
- 35 (xii) The use of labour hire EBAs or State laws or policy that cause construction to become uncommercial;
- (xiii) Any other circumstances involving the CFMEU relevant or incidental to the matters mentioned in subparagraphs (i) to (xii) which I have just read.

40 (B) Any conduct which may amount to a breach of any law, policy or professional standard by the CFMEU to:

- (i) Procure an advantage for an individual, the CFMEU, a CFMEU official or another person or organisation; or
- (ii) Cause a detriment to a person or organisation.

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(C) Any payment or benefit arising from contracts, arrangements, understandings or dealings that may amount to misconduct by the CFMEU or any other person;

5 (D) The misuse of any CFMEU power and/or misconduct directed at non-union enterprise bargaining employers;

(E) The impact of misconduct on:

- 10 (i) The Queensland workers' compensation scheme;
(ii) Productivity in the Queensland economy and the construction industry;
(iii) Public infrastructure in Queensland;
(iv) Private infrastructure in Queensland;
(v) Housing in Queensland; and
15 (vi) Transport infrastructure and delays in the delivery of such infrastructure, with specific regard to:
i. The Bruce Highway;
ii. Gold Coast Light Rail;
iii. Cross River Rail; and,
20 iv. Centenary Bridge.

(F) Reviewing whether any law or policy change is needed in the construction industry or more generally, including changes specifically to any reforms relating to:

- 25 (i) Criminal laws;
(ii) The implementation of a "fit and proper person" test for all union officials;
(iii) Ensuring the misconduct is prevented;
(iv) Whistleblower laws; or
(v) Any other change that may become apparent during this inquiry.

30 (7) Reviewing whether any other organisation or person assisted the CFMEU in engaging in the misconduct.

Sorry, that should have been –

35 (G) Reviewing whether any other organisation or person assisted the CFMEU in engaging in the misconduct.

40 (H) Whether any individual or entity should be referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in Queensland for prosecution;

(I) Whether any current or prior law or policy has enabled or supported the CFMEU;

45 (J) Whether or not any EBAs, including labour hire EBAs, that were entered into with the CFMEU were done so in good faith by all parties; and

(K) Any other matter relevant to this inquiry or otherwise reasonably incidental to the matters mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (j) insofar as the conduct or events occurred in, relate to or are otherwise connected with the State of Queensland.

5 And directs that the Commissioner make a full and faithful report on the aforesaid subject matter of this inquiry, including an executive summary.

And directs that the Commissioner makes recommendations arising out of this inquiry that the Commissioner considers appropriate.

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And directs that the report be transmitted to the Honourable the Premier and Minister for Veterans; the Honourable the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Industrial Relations; and the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Integrity.

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And directs that the final report be provided to the Government by 31 July 2026, and that the Commissioner will determine if any interim reports are to be provided before that date.

20 Pursuant to section 4(2) of the Commission of Inquiry Act 1950, it is declared that all the provisions of the said Act shall be applicable for the purposes of this inquiry.

The Commission may receive submissions from relevant persons and entities, and hold public and private hearings in such manner and in such locations as determined by the Commissioner, as appropriate and convenient, in a way that protects persons who are or have been subject of, or who have knowledge of misconduct.

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The Commission should have specific regard to the Watson SC report, and any other reports associated or accompanying that report, the KordaMentha Report undertaken by the administrator; the Coaldrake Review, any reports undertaken by the Crime and Corruption Commission Public and Private, and the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption and any other reviews or reports deemed relevant to the inquiry.

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The Commission should have regard to the Queensland Productivity Commission inquiry into construction productivity to ensure there is no duplication of the economic focus of that inquiry, noting that the final report of the Queensland Productivity Commission will be made available to the Queensland Government by 24 October 2025

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Definitions in these Terms of Reference include:

Allied Industries - refers to businesses that support the construction industry and include, for example, architects, draftspersons, engineers, civil contractors, plumbers and electricians or their associated business entities.

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CFMEU - means the following entities as well as any agent, associate, director,

delegate, member, representative, supplier or any other person connected with the following entities insofar as their dealings relate to Queensland:

- (i) Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy, Industrial Union of Employees, Queensland, registered under the Industrial Relations Act 2016;
 - 5 (ii) Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union, registered under the Fair Act 2009; and,
 - (iii) Any subsidiary, division, branch or entity controlled by or connected with the entities set out in (i) or (ii) that I have just read.
- 10 Coaldrake Review - means the report titled Review of the Culture and Accountability in the Queensland Public Sector Final Report dated 28 June 2022 and prepared by Professor Peter Coaldrake AO.

15 Construction Industry - means the planning, design, building, and maintenance of infrastructure, residential, commercial, industrial and civil project, in the State of Queensland.

EBAs - means any collective bargaining agreement whether made pursuant to statute or otherwise.

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KordaMentha Report - means the report titled Special Purpose Report for the Administrator Construction, Forestry and Maritime Union Construction and General Division dated 7 March 2025 and prepared by KordaMentha.

25 Misconduct - means any act, or threat of, or omission that amounts to abusive, blackmailing, bribing, bullying, corrupt, criminal, harassing, inflammatory, intimidatory, menacing, misogynistic, offensive, threatening, uncooperative, unlawful, violent or otherwise morally reprehensible behaviour, and without limitation to the above which I have just read, also includes any scheme or

30 arrangement designed to circumvent any law.

Stakeholder - means any person employed in or otherwise involved in the construction industry in Queensland which will include, but is not limited to a union member, public servants including work health and safety inspectors, a member of

35 the public, a member of the Queensland Police Service, journalists or member of the media, employer or industry representative, the Australian Workers Union, or any individual or entity engaged in allied industries.

40 Watson SC Report - the report titled Violence in Queensland CFMEU dated 17 June 2025 and prepared by Geoffrey Watson SC.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Gee. The inquiry is fortunate to have such a hardworking, experienced and committed public servant as you performing the role of secretary to the inquiry. The inquiry is particularly indebted to the impressive and

45 well-qualified team that you have assembled to constitute the Secretariat of the Commission.

The Terms of Reference that have just been read out by you set out what I am to do in this Commission. The terms of reference are wide in their scope, they identify the matters into which I am asked to inquire. As the terms make plain, there have been a number of reports into some of these matters already and I am required to have
5 specific regard to those reports. Those reports have followed concerns raised about possible misconduct in the construction industry. Some concerns were highlighted in the recent report of Mr Geoffrey Watson SC, entitled Violence in the Queensland CFMEU. The report was commissioned by the administrator of the CFMEU. In his report, Mr Watson described what he believed to be a culture of threats, coercion,
10 intimidation, bullying and violence. Mr Watson also cited allegations that workplace health and safety inspectors were intimidated in person and online, family members including women and children were allegedly threatened, public servants were allegedly harassed, and opponents allegedly vilified. Mr Watson observed that many potential witnesses remained silent, fearful of retribution. Mr Watson said that his
15 inquiry likely only scratched the surface.

Investigations by media outlets, including 60 Minutes, Nine Newspapers and The Courier-Mail have reported allegations of corruption, misuse of delegate roles, and links to organised crime. All in all, there appear to be significant questions as to
20 whether unlawful or improper conduct has taken root within the construction industry here in Queensland and within the CFMEU. A key function of this inquiry will be to ascertain the truth of these allegations.

Can I now say something about the administration of the union. On 23 August 2024
25 the former Commonwealth Attorney-General, Mr Mark Dreyfus KC, determined a written scheme of administration for all of the branches of the construction and general division of the CFMEU. This included its Queensland-Northern Territory branch. That determination was made pursuant to section 323B of the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009. The Attorney was empowered to make a
30 determination if it was in the public interest to do so. When making submissions in support of the actions that had been taken in relation to the administration of the CFMEU, the Commonwealth referred to a number of background facts. First, that over a five-year period across 62 separate proceedings the CFMEU and/or its officers were found to have contravened Federal industrial legislation on no less than 1,163
35 occasions. Secondly, that the CFMEU and/or its officers had been fined more than \$10.6 million. Thirdly, the Commonwealth referred to a finding in 2016 by her Honour Mortimer J, now the Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia. Her Honour said, in her words:

40 "That the CFMEU's abuse of industrial power occurs so regularly in situations with the same kinds of features that there is only one available inference."

The inference, according to her Honour, was that there is a conscious and deliberate strategy employed by the CFMEU and its officers to engage in disruptive,
45 threatening and abusive behaviour towards employers. With those responsible being impervious to the prospect of prosecution and penalties. Mr Mark Irving KC is a leading industrial relations silk and was appointed the administrator of the

construction and general division of the CFMEU and all of its branches. He remains in that position today. He remains in that position because on 18 June of this year the High Court of Australia unanimously dismissed a legal challenge to his administration. That challenge had been launched by the previous

5 Queensland-Northern Territory branch secretary, namely Mr Michael Ravbar and Mr Jade Ingham, over an unsolicited written commitment from Mr Irving to cooperate with this inquiry. I'm grateful for that commitment.

10 Unions play a vital role in Australian society. The movement is recognised as having a special role in keeping working people safe. Every family should trust that their son or daughter will return home safely from work at the end of the day. Workers in the construction industry face particular dangers. It goes without saying that the integrity of the Queensland workplace health and safety regime and the CFMEU's role in that system must be beyond reproach. However, the CFMEU is not the sole
15 focus of this inquiry. This inquiry will also examine misconduct in the construction industry that has been perpetuated by others. Indeed, the CFMEU or its members may have been victims of such misconduct.

20 As you have heard from the terms of inquiry that have been read out this morning, the inquiry will also look at other related matters. These include the impact of misconduct - whoever is responsible - on housing, infrastructure and productivity. The construction industry is a powerful engine of economic growth and facilitates the flourishing of communities. It builds the homes we live in, the schools children attend, and the hospitals that care for patients. It creates the infrastructure that
25 facilitates vital transport and urban development. Its ingredients may be steel and concrete, but its products are communities and prosperity.

30 Queensland has undergone and is undergoing a transformative period of development. Queensland is preparing to deliver major infrastructure, including for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Billions of dollars will be invested in transport systems, sporting venues and urban renewal. These projects must be delivered efficiently, transparently, and free from coercion or corruption. And, perhaps most importantly, Australia is in the midst of a housing shortage which has led to a housing affordability crisis.

35 The construction industry has a critical role to play in the fast, efficient building of residential houses and apartments. However, the Queensland Productivity Commission has recently found that productivity in the construction industry has fallen by almost 9 per cent since 2018. It identified procurement settings, including
40 the so-called best practice industry conditions, as contributing to cost increases of up to 25 per cent on some projects. That's why this inquiry matters for every Queenslanders, not just those who work in the construction industry.

45 Can I conclude by making some remarks about the workings of the Commission. This inquiry has strong powers. It can compel documents and witnesses, and it will not hesitate to use those powers where required. But the success of the inquiry also depends upon the willingness of people with knowledge to come forward whether at

hearings or by making a submission. I recognise that coming forward is not always easy; it can take courage to share what you know.

5 The Commission will conduct its work under the principle of open justice. Wherever possible, hearings will be held in public, live-streamed and transcribed. The public is entitled to see this work unfold. Shining a light on these issues helps ensure that the wider community can follow and understand the inquiry's progress. The Commission will also provide direct ways for the public to stay informed. A dedicated website has been established where information about hearings, transcripts and how to make a
10 submission will be published.

There is also a subscription service to enable the regular receipt of updates, and the Commission will maintain a presence on social media to ensure that the community can follow the inquiry that develops. And although the bar table today is full, today
15 is not the day to hear or consider any application for leave to appear. The Commission has published practice guidelines about a number of matters, including how to seek leave to appear. As those guidelines show, questions about leave to appear will for the most part be decided on the papers and they will be decided in relation to particular parts of the work of the Commission.

20 Although today marks the formal opening of the commission of inquiry, significant work has already been undertaken by the Commission in the past two months. There have been interviews with key people and potential witnesses. Investigations have commenced, and almost 100 notices and summonses have already been issued.
25 Further, the Commission has been contacted by a number of victims. The Commission is committed to ensuring the voices of victims are heard and that victims have a meaningful input into the Commissioner's deliberations. To this end, in coming weeks we will be announcing a framework which will ensure that our evidentiary processes can capture the lived experiences of this group. Similarly, we
30 will announce frameworks for industry reference groups as well.

At the conclusion of this inquiry a final report will be delivered to the Queensland Government. That report will set out findings and make recommendations. I now
35 invite senior counsel assisting, Mr Liam Kelly, KC, who appears with Ms Kate Juhasz and Ms Polina Kinchina to make some opening remarks. Mr Kelly.

MR KELLY: May it please the Commissioner. Commissioner, as you have noted it is the duty of this inquiry to inquire into possible acts of misconduct in the
40 construction industry in Queensland as that term is defined as set out in the Terms of Reference. And the Secretary to the Commission, Mr Gee, read out those definitions.

I would like to encapsulate some of the highlights of what is misconduct. Misconduct is defined in a broad manner. It goes beyond violence or intimidation, it goes beyond
45 acts of thuggery. It includes such conduct as abuse, bullying, harassing, threatening or menacing behaviour, or blackmail, bribery or corrupt conduct. It includes misogynistic conduct towards women, and it includes violent, or unlawful, or morally reprehensible behaviour by the standards of the community.

Although the Terms of Reference place particular emphasis on misconduct by the CFMEU, you have made the point, Commissioner, that the terms of reference also require an investigation of misconduct by other players in the construction industry in Queensland not just the CFMEU. And that has to be so, because if there is a
5 corrupt deal there is more than one person involved in the deal. If evidence is found by this inquiry of misconduct such as corrupt conduct, then the public can be assured that the inquiry will pursue that investigation with equal vigour against any person who is involved in it and any person who participated in it.

10 We have heard reference to the report of Mr Geoffrey Watson SC. I would like to say something about that. It led to the establishment of this inquiry in some ways and it's a predecessor to it, and it was commissioned by the CFMEU itself through its administrator Mr Irving KC, and it's about violence in the CFMEU in Queensland. In
15 preparing that report, Mr Watson, who is well-known as a very diligent investigator and thorough person, did not have the advantage of compulsory powers that belong to this commission of inquiry. Mr Watson's investigations were done largely through his own significant diligence and largely personal effort, and through the preparedness of people to speak to him voluntarily. And unfortunately, as he notes in
20 his report, numerous important people did not speak to him or were afraid to. Now, Mr Watson has described in his report matters about which he has been informed by people and also his observations of critical video footage of unsavoury incidents which he has reported on.

The opinions expressed by Mr Watson, Commissioner, in his report can only be
25 described as profoundly disturbing. There is no other appropriate way really to describe those conclusions. However, may I emphasise that Mr Watson's opinions do not bind this inquiry. It is, in fact, a part of this Commission to have specific regard to and inquire into Mr Watson's report, and in doing this the Commission will have the advantage of using compulsory powers to obtain evidence. It will be able to
30 compel witnesses to attend and to compel the production of documents. And then the Commission will form its own independent views about the matters into which Mr Watson inquired.

But one message that the Commission can make now is this: If Mr Watson's findings
35 turn out to be correct or broadly accurate, then those packs of thugs and people who operate in groups of numbers to intimidate people won't have that advantage when they come before this inquiry. And they may learn the difference between ganging up on innocent people and vulnerable people, and stepping into the witness box and learn the loneliness that one experiences when one is in the witness box.

40 Commissioner, may I say something about the duties of the inquiry. Counsel assisting this inquiry and you, Commissioner, have very difficult duties to discharge. There is much work to do and the work must be done. We must expect obstacles and interference. Some of which will be fair, some of which may not be, and we will
45 address those during the inquiry. But the main thing is the inquiry will not lose its focus upon its core duty which is to keep inquiry and reach conclusions. As you have noted, the subject matter of this inquiry could not be more fundamental. It is fair to

say that if - and I do say "if", because we have to inquire into it - the construction industry is either off the rails in Queensland or it is heading off the rails, then that has the capacity to affect the lives of most people living in this State in some way or measure.

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Can I say something about the other people who will be appearing at the inquiry. In that respect I acknowledge the other lawyers who represent people who will be affected by this inquiry and who also will face difficult tasks. And that is a reality of a commission of inquiry charged to investigate difficult issues. And I also

10 acknowledge the genuine benefit I've had of meeting my colleague from the Victorian bar, Mr O'Grady KC, who is senior counsel for the CFMEU, and he sits beside me at the bar table today. And as a fellow senior counsel I understand and respect the professional obligations which Mr O'Grady owes to his client in this matter.

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Commissioner, you also mentioned the nature of the inquiry and spoke to that. I would like to say some brief things about that. One is that this Commission is not an elected body. It's not an institution of democracy. It is ancillary to democracy and it's part of the instruments available to the executive government - I say executive

20 government, not judicial arm of government - of the day to make inquiries. The findings of this Commission will not be binding. If it is found by this Commission that relevant misconduct is occurring in the construction industry in Queensland, then it is up to our democratic institutions to address those problems.

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But beyond that, beyond the institutions, beyond the laws, beyond the rules and regulations, what we do know is that a civilised society can only work with the support of a large proportion of decent people who respect the rule of law. And ultimately people in Queensland will make a judgment about the work of this inquiry and whether it has been reasonable and fair. But we can say, and I do emphasise,

30 people in Queensland - when we look at the Watson report, which again has to be investigated - people in Queensland do not look up to or respect thugs or bullying in the workplace of any kind. The only weapon that the thugs and the bullies have is fear, and that is all. That's all that they have. That's the only armoury that they have. And it leads me into something that it's the people of this State who will ultimately

35 judge whether the inquiry has delivered on the terms of reference.

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Mr Gee, the Secretary to the Commission, read out the terms of reference. And one of the things he read out, which is in my respectful opinion, Commissioner, important, is the word that we are to make a careful inquiry. And of course "careful"

40 means to be thorough and to be cautious, but it means a lot more than that. It also means to be careful in the way that the reputations of individuals are affected by the inquiry. It's not the duty of this inquiry to cause damage to the reputations of any person for no proper reason. And being careful also means that the inquiry must proceed in a way that is focused and relevant and disciplined. And to the extent

45 possible the inquiry will proceed, as you have indicated, Commissioner, as transparently as possible in the evidence that it relies upon through public hearings.

May I talk about the balancing act that has to occur on the public interest side of things, because there is a balance to be drawn. And that's a balance to be drawn between the public interest in transparency and a competing public interest particularly in a highly charged inquiry of this kind, where there is intimidation in the background, that individuals do not have their reputations tarnished when that is not necessary and the vulnerable are protected. Now, it will be impossible for this inquiry to get that balance perfect because it depends upon human judgments, albeit they will be diligently applied human judgments and they will be informed human judgments. But we can undertake to the public that the Commission will strive to achieve that balance as best as it possibly can.

As to the duties of this inquiry, can we be very clear that to all members of the public and the State of Queensland the Commission must act impartially. It must not leap to conclusions before making careful inquiries. It has a serious obligation to provide procedural fairness which has been well enshrined in Australian law for many years. If anyone considers they are adversely affected by the path this inquiry is taking, or has a concern, Commissioner, that what occurs is unfair to them, I invite any such person to contact the Commission and to express that concern. Any concern about procedural fairness will be dealt with seriously, and if necessary and appropriate it will be addressed in a public hearing. But at the end of this inquiry our determination is to arrive at a destination where no one can say that they did not have a chance to be heard properly.

I would like to talk about the union aspect of this inquiry briefly. It would be a genuine misapprehension for any person to see the inquiry as anti-union. It is not. It is not that. In fact, this Commission acknowledges that trade unionism has played a critical part in the development of the Australian economy and the body politic in our democracy since federation. Numerous prime ministers of this country have been trade unionists, some of them are rightly held in the highest of esteem by most Australians. It also bears emphasis that Australia is one of the oldest and most stable democracies in the world, and that's something that's worth protecting. History also demonstrates that if capitalism is left to operate without restraint, the unavoidable consequence is that workers will be taken advantage of. For the rights and freedoms that we enjoy as citizens of this country derived from the freedoms guaranteed by democracy and the law of the land. Capitalism does not confer civil liberties, nor does the deployment of capital guarantee the rights of workers in the workplace.

As such, the union movement is part of a complex but very important part of the system of checks and balances under which our democracy operates. If reliable evidence emerges of any systemic misconduct in the construction industry in Queensland, then that would have very grave implications for damage to our legal system and our economy, and worse to the social fabric. The social fabric within which the people of Queensland live.

I mentioned some difficulties that we are going to face. The obvious difficulty is that the inquiry will face a difficulty that people will be disinclined to speak out about wrongdoing in the construction industry because of the potential for intimidation or

repercussions against them. Commissioner, we all know that at times - important times like this, and this is an important inquiry - good people have to stand forward, have the courage of their convictions to speak up about wrongdoing. And this is such an occasion. And we recognise the courage that is involved in that exercise.

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I would like to mention something about unlawful behaviour. This Commission wants to assure the community at large that confidentiality will be protected if a person is vulnerable or at risk. The problems of violence, intimidation, and unlawful conduct that are identified in the Watson Report and which will be investigated - and if found to be true but standing as they do - are diametrically opposed to a properly working construction industry. And people in a civilised community cannot opt in and opt out of the rule of law.

15 For example, criminals cannot be permitted to use the law to their advantage but to break it when it suits them. And as Mr Watson describes, if it's found to be correct, to break the law is a badge of honour to establish the reputation of their ability to break the law and flout the law. If the legal system is held in disrespect by powerful bodies such as a trade union or a large corporation, or a wealthy developer or wealthy individual, this will have knock-on affects. Others inevitably will copy 20 unlawful behaviour if they see others getting away with it, and it does provide an avenue for organised crime to get into the industry.

25 So if as a community we give up on enforcing laws, we allow bribery - if we were to allow intimidation and violence or corruption to be an ordinary part of the landscape of Queensland construction, that, Commissioner, is a path to social and economic failure. It is a road to ruin.

30 No reasonable person wants our society to have an economy distorted by corruption and the building costs that come with it which are too high. Nor do we want to pay the cost or see other people pay the cost to the community in people's lives. That is, people who are harmed by intimidation, people who in good faith set out to run a small business and have their business ruined by the tactics of the bad. And the worst thing about such misconduct is that the people who actually are suffering as the first line of victims are the genuine members of the CFMEU because that type of conduct 35 betrays the values for which the CFMEU stands. And those people who are honest people, who are working people, members of the CFMEU, these are men and women who often have to work in the most difficult and challenging and hard conditions, and they deserve a union that respects their rights and that protects them.

40 Commissioner, one premise we can accept: If there is any bribery going on, if there is any collusion, there are any paybacks, if there is sham contracting that we find it's not being done to benefit workers, it's not being done to benefit the ordinary members of the union, it is being done to benefit wrongdoers. And the other body that it's not benefitting is the community at large.

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Now, Commissioner, it's no part of this Commission's role to dishonour or denigrate the honourable and courageous work done by unionists over many years protecting

the rights of workers. And the Commission also wishes to be very clear, as you have indicated, that it will not tolerate intimidation or threatening of witnesses who seek to give evidence to this Commission. Such conduct constitutes a criminal offence under various laws of the laws of Queensland.

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This Commission encourages people with relevant information to have the courage and conviction to assist the inquiry with its work. If we get one person prepared to do so others will follow. As you have indicated, we have already got more than one person who has come forward. There will be more and it will grow. People should be reassured that the Commission has already had assistance from people who have come forward.

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What is expected of the ordinary citizen is expected of us all, including an official or delegate of the CFMEU. It is also expected of an official of a major contracting company or a building company. It is expected of a developer. It is simple: Abide by the law. That is where the people of this State expect people to behave. That's what they want. And it is fit and proper that they have that expectation. Just follow the law. That's what Queenslanders expect. And if we give up on that principle then the consequences for Queensland and indeed the broader Australian community could hardly be more serious.

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I will end by just saying something, Commissioner, about the productivity issue. As was read out in the terms of reference, and as you have indicated, this inquiry is also charged with having regard to the final report of the Queensland Productivity Commission to be delivered on 24 October this year and to ensure there is no duplication of the economic focus of that inquiry. But there has been an interim report delivered by the Queensland Productivity Commission and that productivity issue is of great significance.

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One reason it is of great significance, Commissioner, is the sheer daunting cost of building things in this State. People are daunted by it. It's not just the costs, it's the delays in construction as well. It is hard to build things and it is costly. The other thing is that why productivity is important and why it's in the terms of reference is that there is this very real and now omni-present struggle of ordinary people in Queensland who seek to purchase a home or to build a home. It is also the fact that the Olympic and Paralympic Games start relatively soon - in seven years, in 2032 - with major infrastructure yet to be built. And besides that, there is the other infrastructure that needs to be built that goes with the development of a growing state.

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I mentioned briefly three things from the interim report of the Queensland Productivity Commission. It raises matters that should concern us all. One is this: If Queensland is to meet its current infrastructure needs and deliver the 2032 Olympic Games, productivity must increase. That's the first one. The second is, the construction industry accounts for a massive 10 per cent of workforce involvement in this State. And the third one is, regrettably, productivity in construction has fallen by 9 per cent since 2018 which goes against the trend that is set by the statistics and in

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the broader labour market. Now, those three things are issues - that's not a full quote from the report, but those are things which go to the viability of the Queensland economy and the ability of the Queensland economy to perform to expectations both domestic and international.

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In conclusion, a successful inquiry will in a balanced and mature way reveal what is actually occurring in terms of any misconduct in the Queensland construction industry, and it is the solemn and dedicated aim of this Commission to get to the truth of the important matters that it is charged to inquire into and to make a positive contribution to the future of this State. May it please the Commission.

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Kelly. Please now adjourn the Commission.

<THE HEARING ADJOURNED AT 11.04 AM