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MEDIA STATEMENT

Need for investigation into workforce practices

I have serious concerns about the casualisation of the workforce, and that's why I have joined with my colleague the Federal Member for Capricornia Michelle Landry in writing to the Fair Work Ombudsman and requesting an investigation into a number of claims relating to unfair work practices in the mining and mining services industry.

Both Michelle Landry and I have been contacted by several workers in relation to some of these work practices and job losses. That includes the job losses at BMA's Hay Point terminal and on BMA tug boats.

There are serious concerns which need to be addressed and that's why I have a question for the CFMEU in relation to their advertisement in today's Daily Mercury.

CFMEU organisers - If you're so concerned about the jobs and conditions of your union members, why have you cancelled the meetings I have attempted to hold with you on this issue on four separate occasions?

Michelle Landry and I have been working in the background on these concerns.

Employers cannot have de facto employees engaged as contractors; they can't dismiss workers using the downturn as an excuse but then have another worker fill their position.

And I think it is just plain wrong that we have full-time mining company employees working side by side with casual labour hire company employees, doing the same work, same hours, same rosters and yet getting different rates of pay and conditions.

Some of the labour hire company employees on mine sites have been working full-time for seven years or more on the site and yet they're still considered a casual.

That is why I have taken the step of alerting the Fair Work Ombudsman and asking for an investigation into claims about the erosion of pay and conditions for workers.

I joined my colleague, Michelle Landry, on a trip to Moranbah late last year to meet with workers and hear their concerns directly.

I have also attempted to hold meetings with CFMEU representatives on four separate occasions, but each time they have cancelled the meeting.

That's because they want to play the blame game rather than actively working towards a solution for the workers they represent.

The truth is that the casualisation of the mining workforce has been going on for years, including under the Gillard and Rudd Labor governments, and it is all happening under the Fair Work laws which were drafted and implemented by the Labor Party.

I'm serious about wanting to work with the CFMEU on this issue and I'm willing to meet with them to discuss their concerns, but the question is, are **CFMEU union organisers going to stand me up again?**

It's time for the unions and Labor to put the partisanship aside and work for the betterment of those affected in our local region.

ENDS