

CFMEU boss John Setka threatens to hunt down ABCC officials as rallies disrupt sites

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Updated Jun 20, 2017 – 6.20pm,
first published at 2.26pm

Senior union leaders have urged members to hunt down building inspectors in their communities and "expose" where they live as tens of thousands of workers disrupted construction sites across the country to protest the building industry watchdog.

The national stop-work rallies organised on Tuesday by the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union also saw union leaders heap praise on Australian Council of Trade Unions secretary Sally McManus for her comments that workers should break "unjust laws".

In Melbourne, which saw an estimated 20,000 protesters, CFMEU Victoria secretary John Setka issued a "dire warning"

[<https://www.facebook.com/CFMEUNational/videos/1739684576061470/>] to all Australian Building and Construction Commission inspectors, who he said led "secret little lives because they're ashamed of what they do".



CFMEU secretary John Setka has threatened to expose ABCC inspectors where they live in what the government has called a "disgraceful" act of intimidation. **Joe Castro**

"We will lob in their neighbourhoods, we will tell them who lives in their house and what he does for a living, or she. We will go to their local footy club, we will go to their local shopping centre.

"They will not be able to show their faces anywhere, their kids will be ashamed of who their parents are when we expose all these ABCC inspectors."

"So if they think they're going to walk around and desecrate construction workers, take away our rights and then ride off into the sunset and there's going to be no consequences, well they're in for a big surprise"

He said people could not avoid three things in life – death, taxes and construction unions – "because when we come after you, you better be careful".

The state secretary, who is facing blackmail charges for threatening concrete company Boral with a secondary boycott, also referred to federal police as "Turnbull's henchmen" and a "political police force".

CFMEU 'out of control'

The rally protested the Turnbull government's reintroduction of the ABCC, higher penalties for unlawful strikes in construction, the new building code and cuts to penalty rates.

The Master Builders Association said the stop-work actions affected up to 100 building sites in Melbourne, 30 in Brisbane, 14 in Adelaide and about five in Sydney.

Employment Minister Michaelia Cash said "the actions and behaviour of Mr Setka and the CFMEU today were absolutely disgraceful". "The CFMEU is absolutely out of control."

She said "the CFMEU think nothing of breaking the law" and its "thuggery and intimidation show why our building industry reforms are so important".

"Bill Shorten and Labor must stop taking donations and sever ties from these thugs."

'Industrial Woodstock'

In Sydney, Maritime Union of Australia branch secretary Paul McAleer likened the thousands of workers at Hyde Park to "an industrial Woodstock".

"The fact you've all turned out today demonstrates to all those rotten bosses and all those rotten politicians that no law is big enough, tough enough, or ugly enough for us not to fight it or for us not to break it!"

He called for the crowd to applaud Ms McManus and her comments to the media in March that it was okay to break "unjust" industrial laws

[<http://www.afr.com/news/policy/industrial-relations/actu-secretary-sally-mcmanus-called-on-to-withdraw-comments-on-breaking-unfair-laws-20170315-guz7uy>].

"How good is it to have a leader of our union movement who says if there is a law that is unjust, then that law must be broken?"

Mr McAleer called on workers to defeat inequality through a "rise in militancy", respond to "attacks on the working class" with "attacks on the ruling class" and argued that "a rise in the power of capitalism can only be defeated by the rise in the power of socialism".

'Sally was right'

Australian Manufacturing Workers Union NSW secretary Tim Ayres, a factional leader in the Labor left, told the crowd in Sydney unions were "not going to be cowed into submission by bulls**t bureaucracy and laws".

He said the labour movement would campaign in the next election to ensure workers "have a right to strike".

"Sally McManus was right comrades... The system is broken. We need to fight for the right to strike, and I'll tell you what, you don't fight for the right to strike by stopping going on strike."

An ACTU spokesperson said Ms McManus did not attend the rallies due to "an important commitment in Queensland" and had no comment.

The rallies come as the Senate crossbench is set to vote in August on a motion to disallow the new building code, which prohibits certain union conditions in enterprise agreements for builders doing Commonwealth-funded work.

MBA chief executive Denita Wawn said that "the building unions have again shown their complete disdain for their members and the community".

"Shutting down building activity costs workers and taxpayers millions in lost wages and more expensive public infrastructure."

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