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EXCLUSIVE

CFMEU accused of pressuring companies to strike workplace deals

Insiders claim companies working on Big Build projects are being pressured to strike workplace deals with the CFMEU, or risk missing out on further work.

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Broadcaster at 6PR Oliver Peterson says a royal commission is needed into how the Andrews government could allow a multi-billion dollar cost blowout over its West Gate Tunnel infrastructure project. "You need a royal commission into how this can go so disastrously wrong," Mr Peterson told Sky News host Peter Gleeson. "It is...

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Victorian businesses are being threatened and their workers dumped from taxpayer-funded construction projects as militant union the CFMEU wages a costly power grab.

The Andrews Government has been accused of enabling lawless behaviour, with major companies working on Big Build projects advised to strike workplace deals with the CFMEU to avoid putting future contracts at risk increasing the union's grip on the industry.

In what insiders say is blatant industrial coercion, the union this month shut down a level crossing removal project in Sunbury until a range of demands were met including extra delegates being allowed on site.

The project, which was already tipped to cause weeks of disruptions due to road and rail closures, was brought to a standstill for six days in a massive budget blow.



The CFMEU shut down a level crossing removal project in Sunbury until a range of demands were met

Project builders eventually conceded to demands, after the government stepped in.

Companies that had been hired to do work on the project were also told to leave and not come back by the CFMEU, because they were not aligned.

These included small contractors who had been relying on the work, with some fearing bankruptcy and employees being left without jobs.

One construction industry source said the government pandering to thuggery in the hope of less chaos on projects close to an election was like "giving a schoolyard bully your lunch money and hoping that will solve things".

A Tier 1 building company insider described it as "tantamount to giving a loaded gun to a monkey, you never know when its going to shoot you in the head".

"It's a disgrace to be honest, we are winding the clock back decades."

Another insider said the government was signalling to tier 1 companies – such as John Holland and CPB – they would risk missing out on major project work if they didn't have deals in place with the CFMEU.

“If they didn’t, their tender for the Melbourne Airport Rail was in danger,” the source said.

Another said that all four groups bidding for \$1 billion worth of work on the North East Link secondary packages were told they needed workplace deals in place with the CFMEU.

“It not only breaks industrial rules but it should be looked at by IBAC,” they said.

A spokeswoman for the CFMEU said “the only tactics the CFMEU use is to empower our members and fight for their rights”.

“As the major construction union, we negotiate with companies across the entire construction sector.”



Insiders claim the CFMEU is waging a costly power grab.

The union also said it “organises on the ground and not through politicians” when asked whether it had the tacit backing of the Andrews Government.

The Herald Sun revealed this week that [union representatives disrupted work](#) on a \$10.8 billion West Gate Tunnel construction site demanding all civil work be moved over to aligned companies rather than those backed by rivals at the Australian Workers’ Union.

Multiple whistleblowers have confirmed that the CFMEU, which one insider said was emboldened by Anthony Albanese’s promise to dismantle workplace watchdog the ABCC, had told business owners and rival union the Australian Workers’ Union that it was “taking over” civil construction jobs and work sites.

The AWU has warned the Andrews Government of the threat, which Tier 1 building sources say could see costs blowout on projects, and held a meeting with Treasurer Tim Pallas this month.

The ABCC is also aware of claims made against the CFMEU and a spokesman said it was making inquiries.

Opposition industrial relations spokesman Nick Wakeling said “allegations of coercion involving preferential deals with the CFMEU on Andrews Government projects are deeply concerning”.

A government spokeswoman said the Major Transport Infrastructure Authority was not aware of any encouragement for deals between companies and the union.

“Ultimately the selection of subcontractors and management of industrial relations is a matter for our construction partners, and we encourage all parties in the construction industry, including unions, to work cooperatively together,” she said.

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