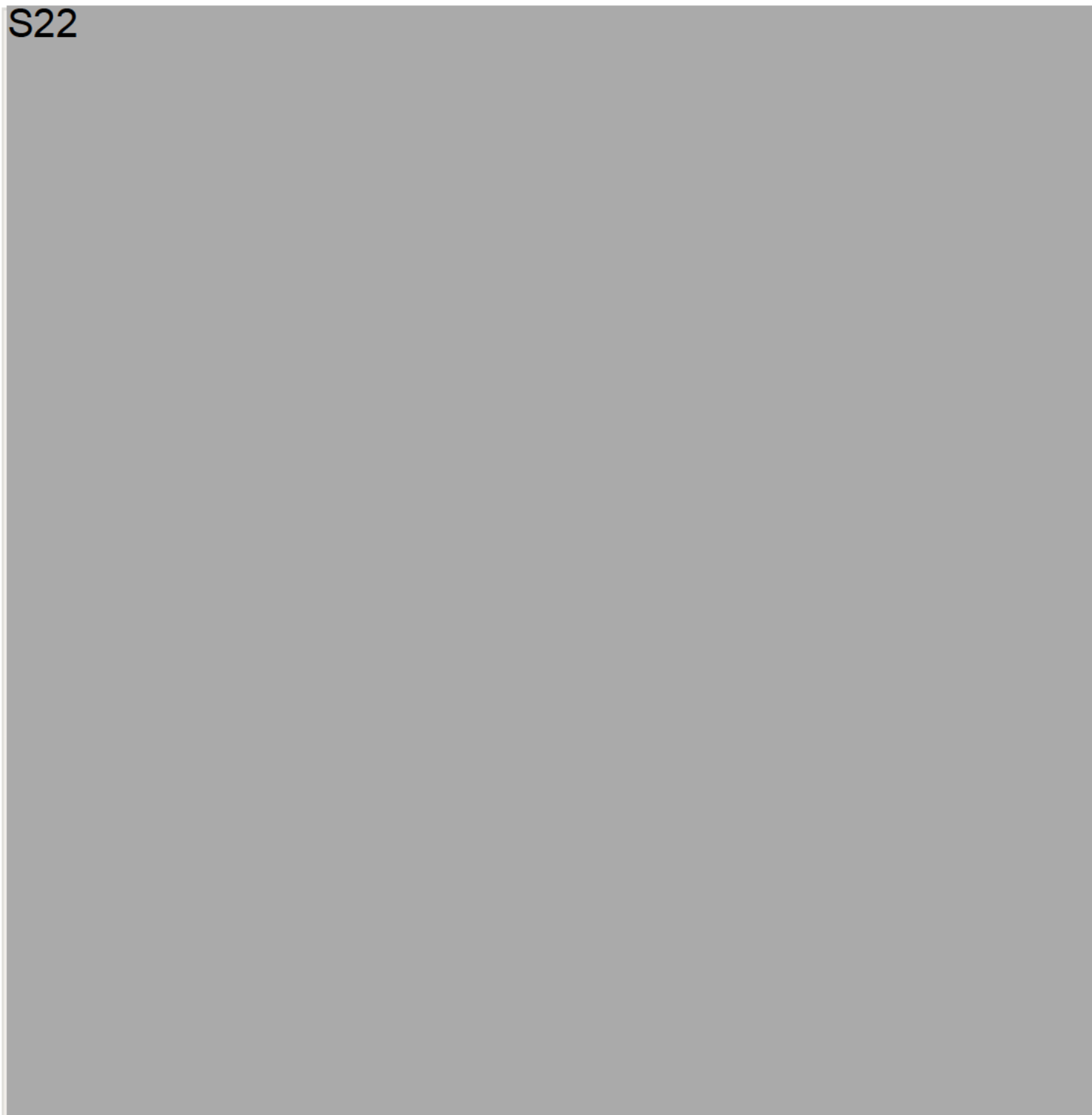


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Lambie's no stranger to union figures

Age, Melbourne, General News, Samantha Hutchinson Kylar Loussikian

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Lambie's no stranger to union figures

If **John Setka's** utterances are anything to go by, **Jacqui Lambie** isn't high up on the construction union's Christmas card list for the year, given her threats to support the union-busting Ensuring Integrity Bill if Setka doesn't step down first.

But the Tasmanian independent is adamant she is supported in her position by a handful of senior-ranking construction union figures, including five senior, former and current members and officials of the CFMMEU, who say they want Setka gone.

She says she has also been contacted by a number of women inside the union who have said the same thing.

"They're particularly upset and very supportive," a spokeswoman for Lambie said.

Setka has been vocal, pointing the finger at ACTU president **Michele O'Neil** for the senator's views.

But it's worth noting Lambie's links with the construction union stretch back years.

Lambie hiked the Kokoda Track in 2015 alongside Victorian union executive **Robert Graauwmans** as part of a fundraiser for the CFMMEU's "Helmets for Hardhats" jobs program, which helps former Defence Force vets find jobs and careers in construction.

Presumably the friendship forged on the battlefield still exists, given that CBD can also reveal it was Graauwmans who accompanied Setka to Lambie's house in

Tasmania earlier this year for a now-famous Sunday roast.

Lambie spent the meeting attempting – repeatedly – to persuade the union boss to resign. She was unsuccessful.

Lambie is also understood to have a reasonable relationship with former construction deputy **Shaun Reardon**.

Graauwmans wouldn't comment yesterday, and Reardon didn't respond to CBD's calls. Meanwhile, Lambie's office declined to say which union officials and members they have been talking to.



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Senators mull police over Setka

Dana McCauley

Key crossbench senators have condemned union leader John Setka's remarks over their response to the government's industrial relations bill, saying they are considering referring them to police.

Tasmanian senator Jacqui Lambie said her vote would "never be determined by who bullies me the most" as she renewed her call for Mr Setka to stand down as Victorian secretary of the CFMMEU.

Mr Setka was caught on a tape leaked from a meeting of several hundred union activists on Thursday warning that "f---ing crossbenchers" would "wear the consequences" if they voted in favour of Prime Minister Scott Morrison's union-busting Ensuring Integrity bill.

"The money we are saving by not giving to the ALP, we will start a f---ing campaign," Mr Setka said. In 20 years, when the Centre Alliance senators were walking down the street, they could expect to be abused," he said.

Centre Alliance senator Rex Patrick, whose party holds two Senate votes, said Mr Setka's remarks were "a very serious matter". "There should be zero tolerance for

anyone who seeks to influence a senator's vote by way of a threat," he told the Senate yesterday. Senator

Lambie has said she would vote for the bill, which would make it easier to deregister law-breaking unions and ban officials, if Mr Setka - who pleaded guilty in June to breaching a court order and harassing his wife - does not resign. Centre Alliance may support the bill if the government agrees to amend it to ensure union officials are not held to a higher standard than corporate leaders.

In an impassioned speech in the Senate yesterday, Senator Lambie again appealed to Mr Setka to step down. "My vote will never be determined by who bullies me the most. I won't be swayed by threats, or the people who make them," she said. "To John, I can only appeal to whatever is left of your sense of decency and honour and ask you to consider doing what is plainly in the best interest of your members ... I will urge you once again to stand down and resign."

This was met with a chorus of "hear, hear" from Coalition senators.

Senator Lambie said "to seek to influence a vote in this chamber by threat or intimidation is inappropriate", and Mr Setka's comments, revealed by *The Age*, were "entirely beyond the pale". "Politics can be brutal, but it should never become violent," she said.

Senator Patrick said the senators were considering reporting the comments to police and/or referring them to the Senate standing committee of privileges, which investigates conduct perceived to obstruct the work of the Senate. Mr Setka might also be "invited to appear before the education and employment committee", which is conducting a Senate inquiry into the bill.

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