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Daily Media Overview



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AFP looking at Setka's 'intimidation' of MPs

Australian Financial Review, Australia, General News, David Marin-Guzman

19 Sep 2019

Page 11 • 548 words • ASR AUD 6,715 • Photo: Yes • Type: News Item • Size: 332.00 cm² • National • Australia • ABCC - Press • ID: 1173978335

Victorian construction union secretary John Setka's comments that key crossbenchers could face abuse if they voted for the government's anti-union laws have been referred to police. Centre Alliance senator Rex Patrick told the Senate on Wednesday morning that the Australian Federal Police were "now looking into the matter" after Mr Setka was caught on tape saying that crossbenchers would "wear the consequences" if they voted for the Ensuring Integrity Bill, which makes it easier to disqualify union officials and unions.

[View original](#) - Full text: 548 word(s), ~2 mins

Audience

38,015 CIRCULATION

Keywords

action(1),building industry
watchdog(1),CFMEU(3),construction(1),government's(2),John(2),law(1),laws(3),Setka(11),union(5),unions(1)

Questions of workplace integrity face Albanese

The Australian, Australia, Editorials

19 Sep 2019

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Holding unions and employer groups accountable is fair If Anthony Albanese's so-called charm offensive to woo corporate Australia is to be taken seriously he needs to back it up with meaningful shifts on policy. This must include industrial relations, which is an important determinant of productivity. The Opposition Leader's move to dump Bill Shorten's ludicrous anti-business, class-warfare rhetoric makes sense. So does Mr Albanese's move to have Victorian Construction Forestry Maritime Mining and Energy Union boss John Setka dumped from the Labor Party. Mr Albanese's efforts would be more credible, however, if he took a constructive approach to the government's Ensuring Integrity Bill.

[View original](#) - Full text: 488 word(s), ~1 min

Audience

94,448 CIRCULATION

Keywords

amendments(1),At(1),Australia(1),Australian(1),CFMEU(3),Construction Forestry Maritime
Mining(1),deregister(1),deregistered(1),employer(2),employers(1),Energy Union(1),Ensuring Integrity
Bill(4),for(5),industrial(2),law(2),legislation(3),lower(1),policy(1),relations(1),union(1),unions(3),wages(2),workplace(1),workplaces(1)

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AFP looking at Setka's 'intimidation' of MPs

David Marin-Guzman
 Workplace correspondent

Victorian construction union secretary John Setka's comments that key crossbenchers could face abuse if they voted for the government's anti-union laws have been referred to police.

Centre Alliance senator Rex Patrick told the Senate on Wednesday morning that the Australian Federal Police were "now looking into the matter" after Mr Setka was caught on tape saying that crossbenchers would "wear the consequences" if they voted for the Ensuring Integrity Bill, which makes it easier to disqualify union officials and unions.

Senator Patrick spoke shortly after Mr Setka told the ABC that his comments, which included that the senators could expect to be abused on the street, were just campaigning.

However, Senator Patrick argued the "remarks made by Mr Setka go beyond threatening to run a campaign against Centre Alliance at the next election – an action that one would correctly characterise as just politics.

"Rather, Mr Setka foreshadowed members of his organisation crossing paths with myself and [fellow Centre Alliance] senator [Stirling] Griff at some future time and engaging in abuse."

He said the comments had to be considered in the context of the CFMEU's "regular contravention of law and apparent comfort with use of coercive conduct".

Senator Patrick said he had already been "the uncomfortable and concerned witness" to two CFMEU members accosting former senator Nick Xenophon at a Perth airport lounge when the government's building industry watchdog laws were voted on in 2016.

Senator Patrick will move a motion on Thursday for the Senate to refer Mr Setka's comments to the Senate privileges committee on the grounds that the union leader's com-

ments amounted to intimidation.

"No one in this chamber should

ever cast a vote a particular way on the basis that, if they don't, they will be subject to abuse," he said.

He said "a very clear signal needs to be sent that this is not a situation that will ever be tolerated by the Senate" and he expected "unanimous support" for the motion.

Mr Setka was recorded telling a recent shop stewards' meeting that the crossbenchers would "wear the consequences" if they voted for the bill and the union would "start a campaign".

He said in 20 years the Centre Alliance senators could expect to be abused when walking down the street.

Earlier on Wednesday, speaking on

ABC radio, Mr Setka denied his comments were a threat. "Maybe they should toughen up a little bit because it's called campaigning," he said. "And if they're not used to campaigning, maybe they're in the wrong job."

He said if crossbenchers were considering referring his comments to police he could also say the same about them. "Talk about blackmail – I've been [told] they'll vote for laws unless I step down."

In the interview, Mr Setka denied that he had downplayed his conviction for harassing his wife through abusive text messages when he sarcastically referred to it as "big deal" at the shop stewards' meeting.

"I think people are sort of stretching it a little bit," he told ABC. "Everything's got its own context. People are accusing me and calling me a wife basher and bashing kids – that's totally incorrect."





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THE AUSTRALIAN

FOR THE INFORMED AUSTRALIAN

Questions of workplace integrity face Albanese

Holding unions and employer groups accountable is fair

If Anthony Albanese's so-called charm offensive to woo corporate Australia is to be taken seriously he needs to back it up with meaningful shifts on policy. This must include industrial relations, which is an important determinant of productivity. The Opposition Leader's move to dump Bill Shorten's ludicrous anti-business, class-warfare rhetoric makes sense. So does Mr Albanese's move to have Victorian Construction Forestry Maritime Mining and Energy Union boss John Setka dumped from the Labor Party. Mr Albanese's efforts would be more credible, however, if he took a constructive approach to the government's Ensuring Integrity Bill.

The legislation, passed by the lower house seven weeks ago, will be voted on in the Senate next month. The legislation, which would apply to employer organisations as well as trade unions, would make it easier for the Federal Court to disqualify rogue officials and deregister law-breaking organisations. That would include the CFMEU, which seems to regard lawlessness as part of its business model and has no compunction about inflicting costly delays on taxpayer-funded infrastructure projects such as roads, hospitals and schools. The union has been described by the Federal Court as the biggest corporate offender in Australian history. It committed 2164 breaches of industrial law since 2004 and has 32 matters before the court.

As independent senators Jacqui Lambie and Rex Patrick have researched the issue in preparation for the vote on the Ensuring Integrity Bill, they have complained of intimidation

by Mr Setka. Last week, he said the senators could "f..king vote for it but they will wear the consequences of it" and that they should "toughen up". The senators should not be swayed; the legislation is even-handed and would boost productivity and, therefore, help wages and living standards. At the outset of major infrastructure building around the nation, it would save taxpayers' money.

In his address on Wednesday, Mr Albanese reminded business leaders of his Whitlam Oration last year, when he said successful Labor governments "collaborate with unions, the business sector and civil society to achieve positive outcomes in the national interest". Such remarks made eminent sense and encapsulated the approach of the successful Hawke and Keating governments. Yet it was criticised inside Labor for undermining Mr Shorten.

Unlike his predecessor, Mr Albanese owes the CFMEU nothing, which is one reason he should do the opposition a power of good and take the wind out of the government's sails by backing the Ensuring Integrity Bill. On Thursday the Morrison government will show its willingness to be even-handed by standing up to rogue employers guilty of wages theft and underpayment.

In his final years Bob Hawke, who as prime minister deregistered the rogue Builders Labourers Federation in 1986, despaired that Labor had turned a blind eye to the criminality of the CFMEU for so long. The Ensuring Integrity Bill, which could face Senate amendments, should help create fairer and more productive workplaces.



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Setka faces inquiry over ‘threats’ to senators

Dana McCauley

Victorian construction union secretary John Setka is set to be hauled before a Senate committee to defend serious allegations – carrying penalties of jail or fines – that he threatened crossbench senators to improperly influence their votes on the government’s industrial relations bill.

Centre Alliance Senator Rex Patrick will move a motion today to refer Mr Setka’s comments to the Senate standing committee on privileges to probe “whether there was an attempt to improperly interfere with the free performance by any senator of their duties”.

Senator Patrick revealed in the chamber yesterday that Mr Setka’s expletive-ridden tirade against him and Tasmanian senator Jacqui Lambie had been referred to the Australian Federal Police, “who are now looking into the matter”.

It is understood that Labor will back Senator Patrick’s motion, meaning it will pass easily with the government set to back the push.

Mr Setka, the CFMMEU’s Victorian construction secretary, told a union meeting last week that “f---ing crossbenchers” would “wear the consequences” if they voted in favour of the union-busting Ensuring Integrity Bill.

In a radio interview yesterday, he rejected Senator Patrick and

Senator Lambie’s allegation the comments amounted to “threats” aimed at influencing their votes, telling ABC Radio National he had only been “campaigning against draconian laws that people are considering passing”.

Mr Setka also defended his comments, recorded at a meeting of about 300 shop stewards last week, that played down his June conviction for harassing his wife and breaching court orders, dismissing his criminal behaviour as a “few bad text messages” between a husband and his wife and saying, “Big deal”. He said no “threat” had been made against the senators, who should “toughen up”.

“When you’re a politician, you’ve got to get used to campaigning. It’s a two-way street; they have their say, I have my say,” he said.

But Senator Patrick said the remarks made by Mr Setka at the union meeting went “beyond threatening to campaign against Centre Alliance at the next election – an action which one would correctly characterise as ‘just politics’”. Rather, Mr Setka foreshadowed members of his organisation crossing paths with myself and Senator [Stirling] Griff at future time and engaging in abuse.”

For Setka, it’s always someone else’s fault

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