

CFMEU

CONSTRUCTION

CFMEU CONSTRUCTION &
GENERAL DIVISION NATIONAL OFFICE
540 Elizabeth Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Ph 02 8524 5800
ABN: 46 243 168 565

24 July 2024

Dear Members,

I write to update you on the situation facing our union.

Within the next few days, I expect to receive an application from the Fair Work Commission to place a number of CFMEU branches into administration. The Federal Government has promised that if this administration application is resisted through the courts, it will immediately seek to pass special legislation through parliament that will force administration to occur.

I want to assure you the process does not affect your interactions with the functions of your union. Your organisers will remain active and engaged. Our offices and phone lines remain open. Our legal teams and our negotiating teams will work uninterrupted.

Nevertheless, the prospect of administration is very serious. The justification being provided is a range of stories in the media since Sunday, 14th July. Some of these allegations have been misleading and false. But I should also be clear about this: some are deeply worrying and warrant investigation.

I have never advocated a head-in-the-sand approach.

Last Monday, in fact, I wrote to you to tell you that the Victorian Branch would be placed into administration, with the National Office assuming all senior executive powers. This week I have been in the process of setting up a completely independent process, run by independent lawyers, to carry out an investigation into the issues raised. Before that, the National Executive of the Union has agreed to implement a national Code of Conduct for all delegates and workplace representatives.

I can't tell you exactly how things are going to play out over the coming weeks and months. But what I can guarantee you is that we will be doing everything possible to make sure you continue to receive the support you need from your union at work.

Your organisers will continue to do their job negotiating on your behalf and defending your safety and working rights. That will not stop.

And your union's leadership will continue to fight for your right to be represented by the union you joined.

Most of those decrying the union as a monster have no idea what it's like to work in this industry, and they certainly haven't bothered to ask any CFMEU members.

They've never thought about what it's like to see a mate killed or injured on site.

They've never thought about what it's like to arrive at work at 5am and find out the boss who owes you thousands has mysteriously gone into liquidation.

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They don't care that the CFMEU is the only force that goes into bat for people who find themselves in those situations.

They don't care that we're the only force that runs a million-dollar national campaign to ban the engineered stone that was giving workers silicosis.

CFMEU members are not fools. Most of you believe in your union because you have experienced firsthand the positive things we do. And you know that without your union your needs and rights will be trampled on by the nasty forces that are always ranged against us.

When you hear politicians or the business lobby say that the CFMEU causes costs in construction to be too high, be very clear about what they're saying: they think you should be earning less money. They don't think you should be able to provide your family with a decent life.

So, yes, I take criminality incredibly seriously. I am determined to stamp it out. But I will also never ever apologise for the important work this union does.

I will keep you informed as the situation evolves.

In Unity,



Zach Smith
National Secretary
CFMEU (Construction and General Division)