



Senator Malcolm Roberts
One Nation Senator for Queensland

19 March 2020

Mr Tony Maher
General President
CFMEU Northern Mining & NSW Energy District
PO Box 364
CESSNOCK NSW 2325

Dear Mr Maher

I write to express my concern in regard to the abuses of casual black coal mine workers at Mt Arthur Mine in New South Wales.

I was concerned to hear about your Division's part in the abuses these everyday Australians have endured and seek your response and support to put things right.

I am informed that Chandler Macleod Group (CMG), as the labour-hire employer, may have colluded with the CFMEU Northern Mining and NSW Energy District to rip-off casual workers by negotiating a 'sham' agreement. I am told that they underpaid the workers 40% knowing these workers were slipping through the 'cracks' in the industrial relations and workers insurance systems, which to everyday Australians is just plain immoral.

CMG both underpaid and then under-declared the number of people on site and the types of jobs they did, declaring that the casuals who were working in the pits were 'administrative staff', just to save money on insurance premiums. Additionally, it is disappointing that you did not act after casual miners raised this with your union.

I believe that the CFMEU Northern Mining & NSW Energy District, as the representative of many of the Hunter Valley casual black coal mine workers, let these and other mine workers down. You were happy to take their membership fees – "a fee for no service", which sounds just like the banks.

In the recent McKell Institute Report "Wage cutting strategies in the Mining Industry" March 2020, the author refers to abuses at Mt Arthur Mine on page 16, but conveniently ignores that your Division of the union was a party to the agreement that led to the underpayment and abuses of so many casual black coal mine workers.

Your division of the CFMMEU seems to have done a 'deal with the devil' in agreeing, through its actions, with a letter from CMG that bought that company industrial peace. Specifically, the CFMMEU implicitly agreed that it would not dispute and therefore not stand up for workers' rights.

It concerns me that the CFMMEU did not launch a class action on behalf of these disadvantaged workers when it did for others nearby.

I understand that your union is a part-owner of the insurer that rejected these workers' claims for compensation, leaving them with just over \$400 a week on which to live.

In my opinion your division's recent public statements on this atrocious behaviour shows apparent careless ignorance of the core issues or an attempt to divert people's attention from your division's many failures on the issue.

It is time for you and the CFMMEU to step forward and to declare why it did nothing to protect these casual black coal mine workers, many of whom were members of the union.

This will require you to tell the truth because the issue is about much more than casualization. It is about your Division knowingly condoning and supporting the exploitation of workers.

I request that you join with me to contribute to this effort to put things right for these everyday Australians and for casual miners everywhere.

Yours sincerely



Malcolm Roberts
Senator for Queensland

c.c. Mr Grahame Kelly – General Secretary