

Media Statement

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Landry slams CFMEU lies on important free trade agreement with China

The Labor Party and CFMEU is putting the future growth of regional business and jobs at risk by spreading lies about Australia's much anticipated free trade agreement (FTA) with China.

That was the view of Federal Member for Capricornia Michelle Landry in Parliament House today.

Ms Landry was responding to a flyer from Labor's CFMEU executive that claim Chinese companies would flood the region with underpaid Chinese workers, if an FTA was signed.

The MP said one of the hallmarks of the union was its constant attempt 'to dress lies up as fact.'

"Today I have sought assurances from the Federal Trade Minister Andrew Robb that the claims are simply not the case," Ms Landry said.

"The claims are completely false and xenophobic. Both the CFMEU and Labor are simply mounting an irresponsible scare campaign that only serves to harm the opportunity to grow Queensland business opportunities.

"It's extraordinary that they oppose a free trade agreement that will potentially result in new investment and new jobs for communities in Northern Australia and Central Queensland.

"The CFMEU know that the provisions in the China FTA are consistent with provisions in previous trade agreements signed by the Labor Party. And Labor has voted in favour of all of the other free trade deals that have been signed with other Asian countries over the past year," she said.

"Labor knows that the real story is that any clause for any temporary use of skilled labour is the same as any other trade industry. And that is the use of foreign workers could only be considered – and only under strict 457 visa arrangements - if there was a proven local skills shortage in a particular industry like we saw in iron ore a decade ago. There is no open gate on bringing in their own Chinese workforces."

Chinese companies must be registered in Australia and comply with all Australian laws and employment terms and conditions including paying Australian wage rates.

"This is a typical dishonest campaign by the union movement to simply scare and create false hysteria among Aussie workers," Ms Landry said.

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