

## Herald Sun

# CFMEU must come to heel

**H**OW can the law sit back and allow the CFMEU to pick and choose whether it will obey court orders?

The question was posed by Justice Anthony Cavanough in the Supreme Court, but only the size of the fine is to be decided.

The Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union ignored orders that made it illegal to blockade the Melbourne Emporium site on five separate occasions in August last year.

The inner city came to a standstill as thousands of demonstrators, including bikies and union thugs, clashed with police trying to escort workers on to the site.

This was not the first time that the CFMEU has been involved in violent confrontations with police on construction sites it is determined to control. Grocon has called for the union to be fined \$5 million while the CFMEU's lawyers suggest a far lesser figure is appropriate.

The size of the fine suggested by Grocon provoked laughter from the union's lawyers.

But this is no joke. Such a fine would send a clear message to the CFMEU that it can no longer afford to ignore court orders. The CFMEU is a threat to the Victorian economy with concerns that major projects will be shifted to other states.

Union members who want to work should throw out the leadership of the CFMEU, which is controlled

by its recently elected secretary, John Setka, who has a history of violent clashes with police.

Another major concern is the acceptance of the union by the Labor Party Socialist Left faction, a move which has given CFMEU representatives a voice at the policy-making state Labor conferences.

The union has long been on a collision course with the Victorian Government, which is concerned about its influence on major projects and the risks this poses for business investment.

The CFMEU is also accused of engaging in illegal secondary boycotts by intimidating companies from dealing with Grocon supplier Boral.

Further proof of the union's confrontational tactics, if it were needed, is disruption at level crossing works in Mitcham, where the CFMEU is harassing non-union-affiliated contractors.

This is illegal under the freedom of association provisions of the Fair Work Act, but it will take the return of the Australian Building and Construction Commission, promised by Tony Abbott and the Coalition, to restore some semblance of law and order on major construction sites.

The commission was disbanded by Labor under former prime minister Julia Gillard. This served only to encourage stoppages and intimidation on major projects. Protecting the economy calls for the CFMEU to feel the full force of the law instead of taking it into its own hands.