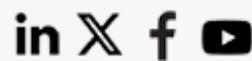


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# BUILD

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### Victoria's Big Build faces massive corruption scandal

 17 Feb, 2026

A **bombshell report** has thrust Victoria's \$100 billion Big Build infrastructure initiative under intense scrutiny, with claims that up to \$15 billion in taxpayer funds may have been lost to CFMEU-linked corruption and organised crime infiltration.

The allegations, detailed in a 136-page investigation by barrister Geoffrey Watson KC, emerged during a Queensland inquiry into construction industry misconduct and have been referred to police, though no court findings have been made.

Commissioned amid 2024 exposés on union graft, Watson's report (initially redacted) estimates cost overruns of 15 per cent on Big Build projects, equating to \$15 billion, based on interviews with industry insiders who cited blowouts from 10-30 per cent due to union actions.

This figure, described as "rough but conservative", allegedly funnelled money to criminals, with sites reportedly used as drug hubs by bikie gangs and women from strip clubs hired as high-paid "cleaners" who performed for workers.

Underworld figures purportedly profited tens of millions, exacerbating delays and waste on projects like the Metro Tunnel and rail upgrades.

Watson accuses the Victorian Labor government under Premiers Daniel Andrews and Jacinta Allan of knowing about the issues since 2010 but failing to act, fearing industrial disruption that could halt the program.

Redacted sections claim officials monitored blowouts yet "did nothing", intimidated by the CFMEU's power.

Fair Work Commission manager Murray Furlong corroborated the estimate, noting it aligned with Victorian officials' reports of up to 30 per cent spikes.

Premier Allan, who oversaw infrastructure as minister, has rejected a royal commission, calling the union culture "rotten" and insisting allegations were referred to authorities.

She disputes the \$15 billion as unverified, highlighting administrator Mark Irving's reforms since the national union administration in 2024.

Opposition Leader Jess Wilson and Shadow Attorney-General James Newbury demand a full probe, labelling it the state's worst corruption case amid a \$150.9 billion net debt as of mid-2025.

The CFMEU administrator confirmed referrals to Victoria Police, the AFP, and Fair Work, emphasising that matters remain untested.

As Victoria grapples with debt-driven pressures (interest bills hitting \$6.8 billion), public frustration mounts over potential household impacts exceeding \$5,000 each.

Political fallout intensifies ahead of scrutiny in state parliament, with calls for accountability echoing as investigations proceed.

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