McKenzie, N. & Maddison, M. 2026, ***Construction giant's failings exposed: Exclusive***, Melbourne, Vic.

A construction giant overseeing mega-infrastructure projects in NSW and Victoria used sub-contractors engaged in suspected tax evasion, worker exploitation, safety breaches and insurance fraud, a damning inquiry has found.

The independent inquiry, which will reverberate across Australia, led by barrister Max Kimber, SC, examined the building of Sydney Metro train stations at Australia's newest international airport.

The inquiry, commissioned by the NSW government, found about 10 sub-contractors working for global construction giant Webuild may have broken a range of civil or criminal laws on one of the biggest projects in the state's history.

In response, the Minns government has urgently called in multiple state and federal agencies to conduct further inquiries, including the National Anti-Corruption Commission, the NSW Crime Commission, the Tax Office and the Fair Work Ombudsman.

NSW Transport Minister John Graham said he had issued a ministerial directive making it clear to Sydney Metro directors that the government expected the issues to be fixed, saying there was zero tolerance for impropriety on taxpayer-funded building sites.

"The disturbing findings of investigator Max Kimber, SC, will now be put in the hands of the right agencies with the coercive powers to investigate this matter fully," he said.

The aggressive action by the NSW Labor government in ordering the Kimber Inquiry and demanding Webuild take urgent probity measures to deal with the accused sub-contractors, including high-profile construction firm Future Form, starkly contrasts with the Victorian government's handling of alleged rorting on its Big Build mega-projects, including those overseen by Webuild.

Webuild fired Future Form after being told by the NSW government to do so last week. Neither company would comment but have previously denied wrongdoing.

The Minns government is also refusing to discuss Webuild's demands it is owed up to $2 billion in taxpayer funds until it reforms its anti-corruption system and purges its projects of sub-contractors accused of wrongdoing.

The significant stand-off could lead to major project delays in NSW and also shows up the Allan government's far softer response to Victoria's rolling Big Build rorts scandal.

Webuild is the first large, or "tier one", infrastructure company to face intensive scrutiny from a state government as a result of the Building Bad scandal.

The scandal led to the CFMEU being plunged into administration and the sackings of dozens of senior union officials, but little action against major companies accused of turning a blind eye to rorting on state and federal government-backed projects worth billions of dollars around the country.

Kimber, a leading silk, interviewed multiple Webuild staff and other insiders from the airport train station project, reviewed emails and other communications and made detailed findings about the suspected misconduct of multiple Webuild sub-contractors, led by a company called Future Form.

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Multiple sources, including project insiders, have briefed this masthead on Kimber's findings but did so anonymously because they were not authorised to talk publicly.

The Kimber Inquiry was sparked last year in response to this masthead's Building Bad series about Future Form, a firm previously favoured by the corrupt and since jailed CFMEU boss Darren Greenfield.

Future Form was then publicly accused by union reformist turned CFMEU administrator Michael Crosby of suspected worker exploitation and allegedly threatening a union organiser whose car was firebombed.

Future Form is a leading formwork contractor working on major government infrastructure projects, including federal police facilities at Sydney's new international airport and the Australian War Memorial redevelopment.

The Kimber Inquiry focused on the activities of Future Form and nine other sub-contractors handling works worth an estimated $10million on Webuild's airport train station project. It found the 10 firms engaged in suspected underpayment of workers, suspected workers' insurance fraud, suspected tax evasion and suspected safety breaches.

The $11 billion project is funded by the Minns and Albanese governments.

Kimber also uncovered evidence of a culture of cash payments among the 10 sub-contractors, with one worker providing detailed evidence showing how he was paid in cash and hired in a manner designed to obscure his true employer.

The CFMEU alleges dozens of workers may have been exploited by multiple subcontractors working for Webuild.

Kimber was unable to substantiate the accuracy of some of the multimillion-dollar invoices Future Form sent to Webuild, querying why Future Form and its allied sub-contractors used encrypted communications apps with disappearing messages to send records about how workers were hired and paid.

Key individuals and organisations had refused to be interviewed as part of the inquiry, with Kimber inhibited by a lack of powers to compel witnesses or documents.

While Webuild did not directly engage in the suspected wrongdoing, as the major contractor on the airport project it had an obligation to ensure sub-contractors such as Future Form did not engage in misconduct.

CREDIT: Nick McKenzie and Max Maddison

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