



Speech by  
**Ros Bates**

**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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## **ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.31 pm): I rise today to make a contribution to the debate on the Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2009. It is in the best interests of suppliers and consumers to make sure that unsafe electrical products are removed from use. Consumers may suffer serious injury from such products and, if they do, suppliers can be liable under the product liability provisions of the federal Trade Practices Act, mirror state legislation or at common law.

The majority of state electrical safety regulators have mandatory recall powers and regard a voluntary recall as mandatory for the purposes of inquiry and subsequent review. Queensland is the only jurisdiction within Australia and New Zealand without the power to recall unsafe electrical equipment either under state fair trading or electrical safety laws. This potentially places the electrical safety of Queenslanders at risk.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Electrical Safety Act 2002 in order to introduce a legislative authority to enable the minister to make a recall order to compel a stated designer, manufacturer or importer to recall and make safe electrical equipment which may or will place persons or property at electrical risk. Since the development of the Electrical Safety Act 2002, the ES Act, it was generally understood that the chief executive had the authority to mandate a recall of unsafe electrical equipment by issuing an appropriately worded electrical safety notification, an ESN. In 2008 the ESN was tested in the Industrial Court of Queensland to recall electrical equipment where it was established that an ESN did not extend to a recall nor did it provide for other related actions to be undertaken.

The proposed amendments will enable the minister to require a mandatory recall and make safe electrical equipment if the minister believes the electrical equipment is placing, or will place, persons or property at electrical risk. Examples of safety recall measures for electrical equipment in other states and referenced by the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council include the following: the type of equipment including brand, trade names and model numbers; the fault and its expected consequence; how the fault came to notice; the number of units found to have the fault; the cause of the fault—for example, a design defect, manufacturing process failure or bad workmanship; the total number of units manufactured or imported; the number sold to wholesalers and/or retailers; the number of units known or suspected to have the fault; and how this number was determined.

I do find it extraordinary that the Smart State of Queensland is again behind other state governments with no safety net for consumers on the recall of faulty electrical appliances. Queenslanders are a wake-up to this government's hand on heart promise of even cheaper electricity and now know that it was yet another worthless pledge to consumers. Consumers are reeling from their latest power bills. This Labor government promised us cheaper electricity. All we have had is price hike after price hike. It has been 30 per cent in the past three years with more price hikes still to come.

The residents in Reedy Creek, where more than half of the suburb signed protest postcards to the proposed new underground powerlines in established residential areas, are still waiting for the outcome to underground 800 metres of powerlines in front of residential homes in Asperia Street. I thank the minister for the meeting with him last sitting week and the discussions relating to other design concepts for this

area, which I will take to the residents of Reedy Creek in the form of high-level community consultation. However, the decision remains theirs as to the proposal of their choice. The residents were not easily fooled and they said at the time that they would take this issue to the ballot box, and take it they did, with a strong resounding no to proposals presented thus far.

I note with interest that the Hon. John Mickel MP has recently lodged a petition from 262 petitioners requesting the House to not proceed with the construction of Energex powerlines for the Loganlea to Jimboomba network upgrade but to choose a better and safer route, preferably underground, from the numerous viable alternatives that are available. I look forward to ensuring that the residents of Reedy Creek get the outcome they deserve.

This bill gives the minister the power to intervene if he believes any electrical equipment is placing, or will place, persons or property at electrical risk. Residents of Springbrook would hope overhead powerlines and the lack of cold reduction burns, which have the potential to put persons and property at electrical risk when powerlines come down, are also considered to ensure that bushfire risks in rural areas are mitigated so as to prevent a recurrence of devastating bushfires such as those which occurred in Victoria. I commend the bill to the House.