




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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ELECTRICITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.45 pm): I rise to oppose the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I speak on behalf of hundreds of electrical contractors who run small businesses all across this great state but, in particular, within the Nanango electorate and the thousands more who are extremely concerned about this legislation and the impact it is going to have on these mum-and-dad businesses and their employees and also the offshoot of that—all of the small businesses across Queensland. Firstly, I think it is important to note in this great House that there is no recommendation by the Transportation and Utilities Committee to pass this bill in its entirety, and I agree: this bill should not be passed.

I also note that the LNP members of the committee were blocked in their attempts to extend the time frame for considering this bill. They were also blocked in their attempts to hold regional meetings. I note the comments from the member for Whitsunday in relation to the Mackay hearings. This is extremely disappointing for the people living in those regional areas who have, once again, been deliberately ignored by this Palaszczuk government.

This bill will severely impact our regional areas and I am very worried for those mum-and-dad electrical businesses who can only lose from this bad government policy. For example, Pete Stevenson, who owns his own electrical business in Toogoolawah, Let There Be Light, emailed me shortly after Labor announced this plan. If I may, I will read his words. He states—

We are writing to you as our Member for Nanango about alarming reports that State-government owned Ergon & Energex were developing their own business division to enter into the Electrical Contractors Market.

As an Electrical Contractor & Solar Installer in the Somerset Region, our business is our livelihood ... Having to compete with a tax-funded Electrical Contractor is a blatant abuse of power.

As well as competing for business, this may drive down prices for consumers in the short term and reduce our profits. In the event that Ergon & Energex reduce the competition in the long time, they could then drive prices up for consumers.

As our State Government Representative, please, I'm asking that you do everything you can for the local small businesses and employers. Our business success allows us to stay in this beautiful part of the country.

"Pete Stevenson, Let There Be Light, Toogoolawah.

That is why we are in this House: to represent our constituents. I would also like to note that my good friend and colleague the member for Callide has a constituent named Owen Blamires, who owns Wondai Electrical Services and also does a lot of work in the South Burnett area right through both of our regions. He felt so passionately about this issue that he joined the LNP's 'Save our Sparkies' campaign to speak on behalf of the hundreds and hundreds of mum-and-dad electrical businesses across Queensland. I was proud to run the 'Save our Sparkies' campaign across my electorate in

support of our local contractor small businesses. Mr Blamires then travelled to Brisbane on several occasions to help us fight this move. He has taken valuable time out of his business to stand up and say that this simply is not fair.

In the South Burnett Wondai Electrical Services is just one of the many progressive electrical businesses working very hard every day to provide professional services to our region. These businesses have been forward planning and building their businesses with many spending much time and effort focused on the field of future electrical technologies and solar installations. However, they are now under threat from this Palaszczuk Labor government, which simply wants to steal their customers. There is no demonstrated need for a government sponsored, taxpayer funded organisation. I condemn this legislation.