



Speech By
Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 20 April 2016

CRIME AND CORRUPTION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (6.00 pm): I move—

That this House—

1. notes that Queensland is already well serviced by thousands of registered local electricians and contractors who provide effective, high-quality electrical services, and provide jobs, training and skills to apprentices in Queensland; and
2. calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to abandon its plans to create a taxpayer funded monolith company to compete against mum-and-dad small business electricians and local electrical contractors.

I was first elected to this place almost 10 years ago—and I notice the member for Ashgrove over there, who was elected at the same time. At that time she was a bright young spark. How things have changed! I thought she was going to take offence at that. In my first speech in this place on 11 October 2006 I said—

We should strive for the best and government must get out of the way when those services can be better delivered by private enterprise. We must allow and we must encourage the small business operators of Queensland to go about doing what they do best, innovate and compete, without the cold hard hand of government regulating them out of existence.

Those were the principles that I believed in a decade ago, they are the principles that I spoke about in my first speech and they are the principles that we are talking about tonight—that is, the opportunity for the hardworking small businesses, the more than 400,000 of them in this state, who make up the vast range of innovation, of employment, of training across this state. They make a huge contribution to our local communities—from Currumbin to Cooktown, from Brisbane to Bedourie—and make up the social and economic life of our state.

Tonight, those business are under threat and they are under threat because of a capricious, heavy-handed plan by a Labor government that, when it comes to dealing with the private sector, is out of control. We already know in Queensland that the small business community thinks that the government has a policy to put them out of business. We already know that business conditions, as viewed in Queensland, are the second worst in Australia. We already know that unemployment is on the rise and that, while this Labor government dithers, small business is doing it tough.

We are finding out through the media that the government has an even worse plan—to set up a government owned monolith to compete against registered, trained, licensed, hardworking mum-and-dad electrical contractors. In speaking to tonight's motion, we have to understand why that is the case. It is because Labor effectively misled the electorate. We need to remember what it said in the lead-up to the 2015 election campaign. Labor promised all things to all people. It promised to pay down debt by \$12 billion over 10 years by using the future dividends of government owned businesses. We knew then—and Labor has found out now—that those dividends are not going to be in the same amount that Labor thought they would be. Those dividends are shrinking. The Australian Energy Regulator has already made that decision for Labor. The debt is still heading towards \$80 billion. Labor promised to reduce the size of the ministry to 14. That has gone by the way. Labor promised to merge the power

generators CS Energy and Stanwell, but had to walk away from that—as we knew it would have to when the ACCC said what a crazy idea that would be and that it would not allow that to happen. Despite making the absurd promise that it could save \$150 million a year by driving efficiency savings, Labor promised no forced redundancies in government owned businesses. That has proven not to be able to be done as well.

What is Labor doing? It is creating a government business to house all of those employees whom it would otherwise have to put out of business because its promises cannot be kept. What is Labor going to do? It is going to drive mum-and-dad small businesses out of business. It is going to put at risk those people's jobs—people such as Owen Blamires, who came down from Wondai to stand beside Andrew Powell, the member for Glass House, and me. He almost cried when he said that, if this proposal goes ahead, he would have to put off six of his people. We have people who are at the cutting edge of innovation, who are delivering electrical contracting services the length and breadth of the state.

We had the absurd claim from the member for Mulgrave that those services cannot be provided by anyone else, yet if members go on to the Clean Energy Corporation's site to look for accredited service providers they can find them the length and breadth of state. How many are there? There are 70 in Townsville, one in Clermont, one in Capella, one in Moranbah, one in Blackall and one in Chinchilla. There are two in Longreach and two in Charters Towers. There are 11 in Mount Isa, one in Cloncurry and one in Winton. There is Peter Worth from Peter Worth Electrical in Hervey Bay, Tammy Stanton from Platinum Electricians at Wynnum West, Janelle Miller at Wishart, Ian Kennedy at Yatala and Chris Lehman from Arana Hills. They are all providing those services.

This is a flawed plan that is designed to put small businesses on the rack. It destroys opportunity and destroys innovation. This heavy-handed socialist government does not know what it is doing in the state of Queensland.