



Speech By
James Martin


MEMBER FOR STRETTON

Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2024

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 20 March (see p. 790), on motion of Ms Grace—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (12.20 pm), continuing: I rise to continue my contribution on the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As I was saying yesterday, I think it is fair to say that in pretty much all recent workplace deaths or incidents there was somewhere on that site a safety system, a hazard identification chart, a risk assessment or safety policies. However, whilst systems are important, they are not what saves lives. It is the daily work of people on the ground, working out solutions to small daily risks. Most often that is done by union members and in particular union delegates. I want to acknowledge all of the hardworking union delegates who are out there, as we are in here today—in factories, kitchens, building sites, mines, workshops or warehouses. They are often the people their colleagues will go to—

Mr Skelton: Fire stations.

Mr MARTIN: I take that interjection. They are at every workplace in Queensland. Union delegates are the ones who stand up and report to management what their members are telling them, what their workplace colleagues are telling them. Often that is a difficult role. Often delegates can be targeted. Often delegates can feel that they are not being listened to. It is a hard role, and I want to acknowledge every union delegate out there. To anyone who was a union delegate and anyone who is a union delegate: thank you for what you do. Quite often the union delegate is also the workplace health and safety rep. My father was a very proud union delegate at Hastings Deering for many years and also the workplace health and safety rep.

The point at which a workplace will go down the track of being a safe one, in my opinion, is when workers are actually listened to. When they are ignored, their workplace becomes unsafe. All of these small risks happen. They can often build and build, and when they line up with each other these small risks or things that are overlooked can become dangerous and cause major incidents and, sadly, sometimes even catastrophic events. Anything we can do to further improve communication between workers and workplace health and safety representatives to improve the culture in a workplace is a good thing, and I think that is what this bill does. I commend the bill to the House.