




Speech By  
**Hon. Lance McCallum**

**MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2024

## **WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. LR McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (3.20 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I thank all members of this House for supporting the Leader of the House's motion to extend the time for debate on this bill. I know that the ability to contribute to debates is a passion that is held very deeply by members right across this chamber, so it is wonderful to see cross-chamber support for the Leader of the House's motion.

Every worker deserves to come home safe at the end of their shift or at the end of their working day. Absolutely no-one should be killed at work. No family and no loved one should have to be informed that their dear father, mother, friend or partner has been killed at work. This legislation that is currently before the House is about making safer workplaces in Queensland.

The Miles Labor government leads the country with what is some of the most effective and some of the strongest workplace health and safety legislation that is protecting Queenslanders while they are at work. This bill is an important extension of the reforms that have happened here in Queensland under successive Labor governments. This bill is also a culmination of extensive reviews that have involved widespread consultation and input from experts in the field, and they really stand as a testament to this government's commitment to protecting the wellbeing of workers right across Queensland. It is a crucial step forward in enhancing our existing workplace health and safety laws. In my opinion, it really raises the bar nationally when it comes to workplace health and safety.

This bill recognises not only our hardworking health and safety representatives that help keep our workplaces safe but also the essential and crucial role that registered unions have in advancing workplace health and safety. It is beyond argument and the evidence is clear that they play a vital role, particularly through health and safety representatives, HSRs, when it comes to creating safer workplaces in Queensland.

In turning to the committee report—and I want to acknowledge the work of the Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee in their inquiry into this bill—I want to thank all of the organisations that took the time to make a submission to this bill. I note in the committee's report that one of those organisations is the Red Union Support Hub. I also note the statement of reservation to this report from the members for Southern Downs and Buderim. We have heard from the opposition spokesperson for industrial relations that the LNP will not be supporting this bill. That is a little bit confusing when we consider that so many contributions from the opposition on this bill have included the words 'every member in this House supports safer workplaces'. They will say it in here, but when we look at their actions in terms of their voting record when in government we see: stripping away common law workers compensation rights for around 9,000 injured workers, using workplace health and safety as a political football and removing the rights and entitlements of workers.

Even in opposition we saw them voting against industrial manslaughter laws; voting against industrial protections for workers subject to sexual harassment and gender-based harassment and improvements to birth related parental leave; and voting against the wage theft inquiry. If they really want to have safer workplaces, if they say they support safer workplaces, why on earth would their members, who purport to hold those positions and those beliefs, be voting against the interests of workers and the creation of safer workplaces in Queensland? Unfortunately, we are seeing it in this very bill and I suspect we are going to see it when it comes to a vote on this bill, based on the contributions of the opposition members who have spoken.

The statement of reservation to the committee report is clearly standing up for unregistered organisations that are not subject to the same rigorous, transparent and accountable registration requirements that come under federal legislation. We know the fake red unions have none of the strict and comprehensive reporting and accountability requirements that real registered unions that deliver for their members have. I acknowledge every single union member in Queensland—hardworking Queenslanders who keep our state moving forward, hardworking Queenslanders who are members of recognised industrial organisations that have been delivering for their members with higher wages—

**Mr Head** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Member for Callide, your interjections are not being taken.

**Mr McCALLUM**:—with good wages, creating more secure jobs and creating safer workplaces.

In relation to the Red Union Support Hub, which made a submission to this bill, I note there is a very close nexus between some people who are involved with red unions and the LNP. I will not give them the pleasure of naming them, but the managing director of the Red Union Support Hub is a member of the LNP. Then there is the president of the QUT LNP Club; the NPAQ president has been the state LNP candidate for Pine Rivers and Bancroft—that did not go too well, did it?; and the former NPAQ secretary is a director of the now seemingly defunct Business Union.

There have been a lot of contributions from the other side about links to political parties and about participating in the democratic process, but, when it comes down to it, it is nothing more than hypocrisy. We are not going to stand here and listen to the utter hypocrisy from those on the other side—saying that they support safer workplaces but then voting against legislation that delivers exactly that. It is completely hypocritical and they will stand condemned by their hypocrisy and their failure to back Queensland workers.