



Speech By  
**Rebecca Young**

**MEMBER FOR REDLANDS**

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## **ELECTORAL LAWS (RESTORING ELECTORIAL FAIRNESS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs YOUNG** (Redlands—LNP) (6.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Electoral Laws (Restoring Electoral Fairness) Amendment Bill 2025. This legislation goes to the heart of trust in our democracy and fairness for communities such as mine in Redlands. At its core, this bill restores balance, transparency and confidence in Queensland's electoral system. Redlands is a community of families, small business owners, volunteers and retirees who are fiercely proud of where they live and expect honesty from those who seek to represent them. They expect elections to be fair and free from hidden influence, uneven rules or anonymous misinformation, particularly online.

One of the most significant reforms is the expansion of authorisation requirements for election materials. Currently, election advertising must only be authorised during the short campaign period after the writs are issued, but in today's world, especially online, political campaigning begins months and even years before the polling day. In Redlands, residents are exposed to digital messaging well before an election is formally called. Too often that material spreads quickly, lacks transparency and is designed to inflame rather than inform. Extending authorisation requirements to the 12 months before a fixed state election ensures Queenslanders know who is behind political messaging, whether it appears in a letterbox, on a billboard or on a social media feed. For Redlanders, this means greater transparency, fewer anonymous attacks and stronger accountability. It means clearer information when making decisions about the future of their community.

Importantly, the bill also allows candidates to use post-office boxes or other prescribed addresses when authorising material. This is a practical reform that protects privacy and safety, particularly for women and candidates with families, while maintaining full transparency for voters. Another key pillar of this legislation is restoring fairness by applying the same rules to everyone. Over time, Queensland's system developed uneven restrictions where some participants were singled out while others were not. This bill corrects the imbalance.

By removing the property developer donation ban for state elections, the Crisafulli government is fulfilling a clear election commitment and restoring a level playing field. In places such as Redlands, property developers are part of our local community. They are local businesses that employ our local tradies, support families and help to shape the neighbourhoods where we live. They build the pathways our children ride on, the playgrounds where they play and the houses that give people a place to call home. Throughout this debate we have heard rhetoric suggesting that participation in the democratic process is somehow about profit, but the people behind those projects are also creating jobs, building communities and helping Queenslanders to achieve the dream of homeownership. This reform does not remove donation caps, disclosure requirements or corruption safeguards. It ensures the same rules apply equally, which is an approach that Queenslanders supported at the ballot box in October 2024.

It is also important to note that the Crime and Corruption Commission's Belcarra recommendations were directed at local government elections where risks were identified. This bill keeps and strengthens the ban at the local government level, ensuring integrity protections remain exactly where they are needed.

The bill also improves fairness by allowing candidates and political parties to access loans from regulated financial institutions for electoral expenditure. Under the current framework, candidates without personal wealth may be forced to rely on private individuals or unregulated lenders to finance their campaign. That is neither fair nor sensible. Allowing loans from reputable regulated institutions broadens participation, reduces risk and supports candidates from diverse backgrounds to stand for public office. For Redlands, that means a democracy that better reflects the people it serves and not just those with the deepest pockets.

Transparency is further strengthened by aligning donation caps with the financial year. Queensland's existing framework is complex and difficult to navigate. Annualising caps simplifies compliance while keeping firm limits in place to prevent undue influence. Again, this reform delivers clarity, fairness and confidence for voters.

The legislation also removes Electoral Commission oversight of internal party preselection, bringing Queensland into line with every other state and territory. This change strengthens the independence of political parties and removes outdated, uneven regulation that is not applied consistently across the political spectrum. For my party and many others, democratic preselection is already embedded in our constitutions and our traditions. This bill respects that autonomy while keeping the focus where it belongs: on fair elections for Queenslanders.

Finally, the bill reflects the Crisafulli government's commitment to backing victims. By preventing prisoners serving sentences of one year or more from voting, the legislation restores an important boundary that aligns with community expectations and longstanding constitutional authority. For the people of Redlands, the impact of this bill is clear: it means elections that are more transparent, more consistent and easier to trust. It means knowing who is behind political messaging. It means fairer participation for candidates and stronger integrity where it matters most. Above all, it strengthens confidence that our democracy works for everyday Queenslanders, families, workers, volunteers and small business owners across communities such as mine in Redlands. This bill is about trust: trust in the process, trust in the outcomes and trust that Queensland's electoral system is fair for all.