




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 24 March 2026

ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (4.17 pm): Queensland Labor welcomes any improvements to worker safety. Workplace health and safety risks are constantly evolving, and the protections we put in place should evolve too. Workplace health and safety laws must be regularly reviewed and strengthened, not stripped back, diluted or dismantled.

Queensland Labor supports amendments to the Electrical Safety Act and Electrical Safety Regulation. Maintaining the longstanding practice of electricity providers issuing defect notices is something that we can support, but let's be clear: the LNP's proposed changes to the Work Health and Safety Act, through this electrical safety bill, that would repeal section 155A should be of enormous concern to many workers across Queensland. The Queensland Labor opposition will always stand up for the rights of workers to ensure workplaces in Queensland are safe. The same cannot be said for this LNP government. Under this government, workers' safety is under attack.

Section 155A supports workers by allowing their representatives to request relevant notices, avoiding the risk of employer reprisals. This allows a health and safety representative to obtain relevant notices in a less adversarial and timely way rather than filing a dispute and circumventing issues by applying to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, a body seeing a lot of issues under this government. With the repeal of section 155A, the LNP government has chalked their agenda up to efficiencies, citing this would impose administrative burdens on the regulator beyond the scope of usual business. Let's be clear: this repeal represents this government's ongoing disdain for workers—a part of a wider pattern of poor industrial policy that aims to erode workers' safety under the guise of productivity.

Section 155A is not regulatory red tape; it is protection. When Labor committee members asked for evidence to support the government's argument—anticipated processing timeframes or documented misuse—departmental officers were unable to provide answers during the committee hearing process, explicitly indicating that some matters would need to be taken on notice, and I will come back to that.

What did we hear in some of these hearings from unions? The SDA stated that section 155A represents a 'strong measure to ensure timely, reliable and independent access to information'. The SDA even spelled out alternatives for the government. They outlined actions that the LNP government could take instead of simply choosing to repeal section 155A. Alternative approaches were outlined such as amending the section rather than repealing, including clear request criteria and privacy safeguards, and implementing a 12-month pilot. The government ignored every solution offered. The government that promised to listen to the experts has so far ignored every concern raised by the experts.

This Crisafulli LNP government completely failed to properly consult with workers, unions or other stakeholders on the Work Health and Safety Act changes in this bill. It is just common sense that consultation on workplace reforms impacting safety should include industry workforce partners. Consultation should not be exclusive or isolated at the discretion of parliamentary committees. It should occur early and never with only select individuals. Ensuring the safety of Queensland workers should

never be compromised. The Queensland Council of Unions' submission places on record the Crisafulli LNP government's abject failure to engage with the very workers affected by these changes. The Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union justly called out the LNP, noting that this government

... demonstrates a pattern of poor public policy ... and a dismissal of the evidence and informed recommendations of the 2022 *Review of the WHS Act*. This forms part of a broader and alarming trend of policy regression by the Government in the area of workplace health and safety ...

They are right. Workers' safety is under attack by this Crisafulli LNP government. As the QNMU acknowledges, the changes in this bill do not occur in isolation. These attacks are just part of a pattern from this government, including requiring workplace health and safety permit holders to provide 24 hours notice to access sites and the repeal of the provision allowing health and safety representatives and workplace health and safety permit holders to take measurements, photos and videos and conduct tests in the workplace—all core functions of their roles.

We know that the Queensland Law Society have raised similar concerns. They note that the omission of section 155A means that safety representatives and workplace health and safety entry permit holders will no longer be entitled to request specific information from the regulator. They argue—

The provision of relevant information to enable those with health and safety roles to assist workplaces to respond to safety risks is important.

Workers' safety is at risk. This LNP government claims that the provisions in section 155A would allow information to be accessed illegitimately. There is, of course, one singular case of a third-party information application—an application that came from the Deputy Premier for 10 years worth of notices from the regulator. Does this amount to an admittance of guilt from the Deputy Premier? It is clear that this government is putting politics before people.

There is even more concern when we look at the written responses received to our questions on notice from the director-general of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. His response failed to appropriately address the questions asked, providing no new information and making a mockery of the committee process. The responses asserted that answers to these issues had been provided during the committee briefing despite, in the clear, strong view of anyone watching those hearings, the record clearly demonstrating that no such answers were provided.

The shameful way that this LNP government have conducted themselves throughout this consultation process just shows how little regard they have for Queensland workers. Here we have a Deputy Premier as Minister for Industrial Relations so blinded by his intense hatred of particular unions that it is influencing his ministerial responsibilities by deliberately excluding and ignoring them and the workers they represent. In introducing this bill the Deputy Premier claimed that the LNP Crisafulli government is committed to restoring productivity and stamping out systemic misconduct and bullying. You do not restore productivity by winding back safety measures. You do not stamp out misconduct by removing worker protections. Workplaces deserve to be safe places for workers, and the government must ensure that changes to legislation strengthen worker protections, not weaken them.