




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 24 March 2026

ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (8.50 pm): First of all, speaking of safety, when I was last speaking on a similar bill—the Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, and this bill now seeks to address some of those issues—I was sitting here with a bugged up finger from my own safety incident. In that speech I reminded Queenslanders to ensure that they keep their fingers out of the way when they are putting steel posts in the ground in particular. I noted that only just before when I was revisiting my speech that I delivered on electrical safety not even two years ago in this House.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection from the Minister for Primary Industries. I had had a fair bit of training but apparently not enough and, I dare say, not as much as you when it comes to putting steel posts in the ground when you are out on the land. Nonetheless, in that speech and also in the statement of reservation from the opposition committee members at that time—that is, the member for Condamine, the member for Toowoomba North and myself—we highlighted this particular clause. We referenced the Queensland Law Society, which at the time expressed concern regarding the changes to clause 20 of the Work Health and Safety Act in relation to the power for an investigator to compel the production of documents and answers to questions on behalf of the regulator. In July 2024 the LNP, which was then in opposition, raised concerns around these particular clauses in the Electrical Safety Act, and now that we are in government here we are with a hardworking Deputy Premier fixing these issues. We know why Labor moved these at the time. If you look back through the *Hansard* record, various speeches, including the now Deputy Premier's contribution at that time, highlighted how—and there were other provisions that were brought in in that bill that we have addressed in previous legislation as well—the Labor Party once again was doing the bidding of the CFMEU.

The CFMEU is the master of the Labor Party, and we see that time and again with those opposite. They walk in here and make out that they are on the side of Queenslanders and then all we see is them moving legislation and taking positions to back in the CFMEU. Especially now that there is a commission of inquiry into some of the CFMEU's antics that is thankfully highlighting a lot of the atrocities that it has committed over the years, one would think that members of the Labor Party would be a little more cautious of their relationships, yet they are in here again raising concerns about changes that we are making to strip the power away from the CFMEU which we are not afraid to say because, frankly, it is running riot over this state. It has cost us many billions of dollars through its antics, through backroom deals and direct lines to former deputy premier Jackie Trad, as we have heard many a time. One would have thought that those opposite may have reconsidered how they are approaching things, but no. At the end of the day, once you have sold your soul to an entity like the CFMEU, I do not think you are ever going to get it back. That is the unfortunate reality. They might change their spots and put a new coat on and wander out into the public and make out that they do not have any particular affiliations with the CFMEU, but at every opportunity they are in here putting forward positions that clearly align with the views of the CFMEU. That is what we get under the Labor Party. That is what we get under opposition leader Steven Miles. That is what we get under the whole Labor Party frontbench. They back in the CFMEU over Queenslanders.

Having sat on that committee previously—I was not on the current State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee this time, and I do thank the committee for its work in reviewing this legislation before it came to the House—I went to the effort personally to revise the submission from the Consultative Committee for Work-related Fatalities and Serious Incidents, because I remember having its representatives in front of us in the committee process previously and Mr O'Connor, who lost his sister many years ago, was in front of us and sharing his story. I note that it was supportive of these amendments and that it firmly believed that the proposed amendments outlined in that bill, specifically to the Electrical Safety Act 2002 and Electrical Safety Regulation 2014, were integral to advancing electrical safety in Queensland. I think that is a worthy mention, because that committee does do a lot of great work. It worked with the previous government in terms of some of the changes that were good in that previous legislation and it worked with us in this instance. It was a shame once again, even though there were some good provisions in the bill in 2024, that the Labor Party could not help itself at the time and ensured it was looking after the CFMEU when it brought what could have been good legislation forward at the time.

What are the consequences if we do not bring this legislation forward? As I have outlined, Labor's laws unjustifiably enable the CFMEU to collect enforcement information on businesses dating back decades which would serve limited purposes in making worksites safer. I know those opposite are trying to make out that this is how you make things safer. Giving a militant union the ability to access decades of information without cause and without reason is a can of worms that I do not think Queenslanders should open. That is giving power to people who, I dare say, are hardly fit to participate in modern society given some of their antics. This morning in question time the Attorney-General was referring to a circumstance at a picket line of the CFMEU where members at a mine were threatening to rape people's family members if those workers were to choose to go into work. Through the commission of inquiry we have seen plenty more circumstances that highlight very questionable behaviour. Giving the CFMEU powers and access to this information throughout the changes made in 2024 was the wrong move, but here we are. The Crisafulli LNP government is correcting it because we are not beholden to the CFMEU. I ask Queenslanders to imagine the vendetta that could be undertaken if they could go through and willy-nilly access that information. I also outline that this does not block the release of that information. There are the right-to-information processes and the rest, but this ensures that there are due processes, as there are with all other government information to be released.

In the final moments of my contribution I want to touch on the change brought in with regard to James Cook University. I second the comments that the member for Mermaid Beach made. Our public institutions—our universities—do need to be reflective of the modern day. Other university boards have a certain structure and in this instance it was clear that the university was perhaps not utilising the structure it had available with the best of discretion.

The media reports around them considering changing the name of the university which reflects a huge part of Australia's history were certainly concerning. We cannot rewrite history. I think that we just need to get on with the job of focusing on delivering good education, rather than running around going off on tangents and changing university names. I commend the bill to the House.