




Speech By
Glen Kelly

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

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ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr G KELLY** (Mirani—LNP) (7.52 pm): I rise to speak on the Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. This bill is about ensuring the Work Health and Safety Act and the Electrical Safety Act work how they are intended, and removing the back doors that were put in place to give the CFMEU rights to information that would do nothing to help with worker safety but help enable their campaign on intimidation of non-union businesses.

In 2024, those opposite passed the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill which would give virtually unfettered access by union officials to worksites. While the then industrial relations minister claimed the amendments simply allowed entry permit holders 'to perform their intended role and functions effectively and minimise the opportunity for dispute', this is not the case. While the regulation has not taken effect yet, it is heading in the wrong direction. It opens the door to disruption on worksites, slows projects down, pushes up costs and does very little to improve safety. We all want workers to be safe and get home to their families—that goes without saying—but safety cannot be used as a shield to justify disruption and people being pushed around on worksites.

We are committed to fixing these issues and stamping out the bullying and standover tactics from certain unions. We will stop the additional avenue for health and safety representatives and WHS entry permit holders, like the CFMEU, to request the particulars of information contained in enforcement and compliance notices, often going back decades, with no bearing on how the businesses are operating today. By allowing them to request these documents directly from the regulator, this would waste critical resources of the regulator because there was to be no limit on how many, how often or how far back these requests can be made. It was nothing but Labor handing another blank cheque to the CFMEU.

The regulator's job is simple: keep Queenslanders safe. It is not there to help run campaigns against non-union workplaces. If it gets bogged down in these requests, that is time taken away from real safety work and without any costs attached there is no way to bring on extra staff to handle it. The job of the regulator is to ensure that businesses are operating with their employees' safety in mind and protecting the everyday Queenslanders who build and contribute to this great state. This amendment has been supported by both Master Builders and the Civil Contractors Federation Queensland because the change does not impact worker safety but helps protect the mental wellbeing of workers.

Rob Maroney from Master Builders Queensland summed up well what this bill is going to achieve when he said—

We also support the passing of this bill. We see it as an opportunity to move back to the model laws in relation to the misuse of power and workplace relations laws in this state by bad actors we have seen in the past. We feel that repealing this part of the amendment from March 2024 is the first step to doing that. This provides a platform for productivity to start to return to worksites in Queensland, in particular in the sense of supporting the cultural shift that we need to see in relation to how the industry operates.

Safety is not just about the physical side; it is about mental wellbeing, too. We have to get both right.

As Kristian Marlow from Civil Contractors Federation Queensland said—

Safety on the worksite is not just about avoiding incidents but also about ensuring the psychological safety and personal privacy of workers. Accordingly, we are supportive of the bill in its entirety and hopeful of its swift passage through the parliament. Anything that can be done to practically improve the safety of workers in the construction industry should be done.

These powers do not exist in other states, so removing them brings Queensland into line with the rest of the country.

This bill also makes changes to the Electrical Safety Act to make things clearer. It confirms that electricity providers, like Ergon and Energex, can issue notices when they find unsafe electrical equipment. This has been happening for more than 20 years, but the law was not as clear as it should have been. These changes remove any doubt and ensure those powers are properly defined. Most importantly, it gives certainty and helps ensure electrical equipment is safe to use. The bill also ensures that notices already issued in good faith remain valid moving forward. This makes it clear how to treat the existing notices before the changes come into effect.

We are ensuring that the regulator still has the power to prohibit the sale or use of electrical equipment by any person if the regulator believes the item does not comply with relevant safety criteria. While this is a significant power for the regulator to have, it is necessary to protect Queenslanders from safety risks with electrical equipment. This is important because it is people's homes, people's lives and also people's livelihoods. In my electorate, we have mills, manufacturing and at the next election we will have several mines. All of these rely on large-scale electrical units, all of which need to be safe to ensure that people's lives are not endangered by electrical equipment just for going to work. We do not want to see a Queensland where a dodgy switchboard or a dodgy appliance causes someone to lose their house or their life.

This bill is about removing the back doors for a campaign of bullying from the CFMEU and about improving safety in our homes and in our workplaces, goals that I fully support. I commend the Deputy Premier for bringing this bill to the House.