




Speech By  
**Lance McCallum**

**MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 24 March 2026

### **ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (4.33 pm): I send my very best to the member for Oodgeroo. After her contribution she must be feeling a little bit embarrassed in that she picked up the wrong set of speaking points to the bill. She talked a lot about productivity all through her contribution. She got nine minutes through and then finally, with one minute to go, she decided to start talking about the workplace health and safety regulator. She said absolutely nothing about electrical safety—nope, nothing in her contribution about that—but plenty that was completely beside the point of the bill that is before the House. When it comes to the electrical safety aspects of this bill—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr McCALLUM:** I can hear the member for Nanango chirping away with nonsensical interjections—the first law officer of the state acting—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence and I ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr McCALLUM:** I withdraw; I absolutely withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Thank you, member.

**Mr McCALLUM:** When it comes to making our workplaces safer, Labor will always support safer workplaces and reform that leads to safer workplaces. When it comes to the aspects of this bill that deal with the Electrical Safety Act, I am proud to support the work of all of the workers who are in the energy industry, particularly the work of the Electrical Safety Commissioner, which Labor brought back after the previous LNP government under Campbell Newman got rid of the Electrical Safety Commissioner. It was brought back by Labor and I am pleased to see that this bill will take the head of power that is currently in the Electrical Safety Regulation and hardwire that into the act itself.

Over the last couple of decades the way that we interact and use electricity in our daily lives has changed absolutely dramatically: whether it is solar PVs on rooftops, whether it is batteries that are being installed in our homes, whether it is electric vehicles and the first responders who might be responding to vehicle accidents—our fire, our police—whether it is our mobile phones and all of the electrical devices or devices that have batteries in our homes that we charge overnight. All of these things and all of the changes that we have seen in our lives because of technology when it comes to electricity are relevant in terms of the electrical safety elements of this bill.

I want to acknowledge the great work of the Electrical Safety Commissioner. The parts of this bill which will take the head of power in the Electrical Safety Regulation and hardwire it into the bill will help where an electrical safety inspector provides a written notice to a person in control of electrical equipment requiring them to rectify any defect which has rendered the electrical equipment unsafe. This is really common where workers from Energex or Ergon will attend a property to inspect electrical infrastructure and notice defects. A really great example of that is after the impact of natural disasters such as floods. Right now there are electrical safety checks happening in the Wide Bay thanks to the

wonderful work of our frontline energy workers. I want to give a shout-out to the Electrical Trades Union's Operation Energise, which is up there undertaking free electrical safety checks to premises that have been flood affected so that energy can be safely turned on to homes and businesses. The reform that is contained in this bill hardwires that practice into legislation. That is something that we in the Labor opposition certainly support.

When it comes to the elements of the bill that deal with the Work Health and Safety Act, however, we cannot support action from the Crisafulli LNP government that is going to make Queensland workplaces less safe, and that is what the amendments to the Work Health and Safety Act in this bill will do. The government argues that the repeal of section 155A is about increasing efficiencies and the usual lines of drivel about removing red tape, noting that those provisions have not yet been enacted.

It was interesting to see during the truncated committee process that when opposition committee members sought to have any evidence provided to the committee proving the assertion that there will be a greater administrative burden there really was not anything that was able to be provided that would substantiate it—nothing around processing times or improper or excessive use. The government has not met any evidentiary threshold to legitimise their reasoning for not proceeding with section 155. The suggestion that RTI processes could be used instead of these provisions is pretty ironic given that it will add more red tape, it is more costly and it will take longer.

A lot of the contributions from government speakers have been solely about the construction industry. It is important to understand that this reform will apply to every single industry in Queensland, not just the construction industry. When you consider that more than 90 per cent of Queensland workers are in industries other than construction—one in four Queenslanders work in health care, social assistance or retail trade industries—it is no wonder that submitters, who are the representatives of these workers, were raising concerns about the implications of this reform on their sector. This government will not listen to healthcare workers or to social or community sector workers—absolutely not. That is why the reforms to the Work Health and Safety Act will simply result in Queensland workplaces being less safe.

I think it is extremely important that the government consider that one of the reasons this reform was brought in was that health and safety representatives were fearing reprisal from employers. It is completely appropriate, therefore, to allow them to get information from the regulator so they cannot be targeted by employers that want them out because they want to cut corners when it comes to workplace health and safety. That is absolutely appropriate. I cannot believe that the Crisafulli LNP government wants to take us backwards so that people who are raising legitimate workplace health and safety issues at their work could be targeted by their employer. That is how we will end up with less safe workplaces because of this LNP government. When those accidents happen it will be on the shoulders of everyone in this government.