




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR THEODORE

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ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (8.11 pm): I, too, rise to make a contribution to the Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. Before I talk about the bill itself, I want to comment on the amendments foreshadowed to be moved by the Deputy Premier. Those amendments go to a bill that I previously have discussed in this chamber, and that was legislation introduced back in 2017 called the University Legislation Amendment Bill. That legislation talked about changing structures. Part of the reason we are here today discussing these amendments is the changes that occurred with that legislation.

Concerns about that 2017 legislation were put forward by submitters who took the time to participate in the committee process. One of the submitters was the National Tertiary Education Union. The National Tertiary Education Union expressed grave concerns about the changes that the University Legislation Amendment Bill was trying to implement. Those changes are exactly what we are looking at amending today. It is interesting that back in 2017 the National Tertiary Education Union highlighted that there would be issues with how the board was set up.

Mr O'Connor: You're a soothsayer.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I take that interjection. I want to quote from a speech I gave then and which is exactly where we are at today. I will quote from the *Hansard* when I spoke on that legislation. I said—

The bill also allows the vice-chancellor to subdelegate powers to an appropriately qualified member of the university's staff. This change was welcomed by the universities themselves. Having said that, this change did cause some concern to the National Tertiary Education Union, as they believe that subdelegation should be controlled by the governing body for transparency; however, the department stated that it is a matter for the university's governing body to decide how these delegation powers should be monitored and reported. The NTEU also expressed concern about proposed reforms to the JCU council. They felt that empowering the governing body to determine its own size and composition would reduce accountability and concentrate power in the executive.

Hence we are here today with these amendments. We are here to change that and correct a wrong that was made by the former Labor government at that time.

I will now make my contribution to the Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The objectives of this bill are, firstly, to ensure Queensland's electrical safety framework continues to protect Queenslanders by minimising and, where possible, eliminating electrical risks to people and property; and, secondly, to reduce unnecessary administrative burden and re-align Queensland with other states and territories.

At its heart this bill is about two related principles. The first is that the Electrical Safety Regulation must be effective, swift and clear because electrical safety hazards do not wait for bureaucracy to catch up. The second is that our laws should be coherent, nationally consistent where appropriate and administratively workable, because the best designed safety framework is one that can actually be implemented and enforced without avoidable duplication.

I now turn to electrical safety when it comes to confirming powers and strengthening direction-making. The bill makes three key amendments to the Electrical Safety Act 2002 and the Electrical Safety Regulation 2013. The first is to confirm that electricity entities can continue to give electrical equipment defect notices by providing a clear power to prescribe this ability under the regulation. This is important for a practical reason: defects in electrical equipment often come to light at the point of supply, connection, inspection, repair or network interaction—exactly where electricity entities operate. When defects are identified, the system needs a reliable and understood mechanism to notify, record and require action. Defect notices are a preventive tool. They are not about punishment; they are about early identification, prompt communication and timely rectification.

By confirming that electricity entities can give these notices—and ensuring that the regulation clearly supports that function—this bill reinforces a frontline safety measure. It keeps the chain of responsibility intact. It supports a consistent approach across the sector and it reduces uncertainty for entities and workers about what can and must be done when unsafe or noncompliant equipment is encountered.

The second amendment empowers the regulation to give unsafe equipment directions to prohibit the sale, installation and use of unsafe electrical equipment by elevating the prohibition power from the regulation to the act itself. That is not a minor technicality. Placing a power in primary legislation can provide greater legal robustness. When the risk is significant—where equipment presents a danger of electric shock, fire or harm—Queenslanders expect that the regulator can act decisively and that the authority to act is clear.

When it comes to electrical issues and safety in our homes, the people of the Gold Coast are looking for that. They are looking for safety measures so that if there is faulty equipment there are procedures in place to ensure that it is dealt with swiftly and without bureaucracy slowing it down.

Elevating this power also reflects the seriousness of the subject matter. Unsafe electrical equipment can cause catastrophic outcomes: house fires, serious injury and fatalities. It can spread risk widely through supply chains: sold online, installed in homes, used in workplaces, distributed across multiple sites before defects are detected. The regulator must have a clear ability to stop harm at the source, not merely respond after an incident. That is certainly what residents are looking for in our system.

The third amendment clarifies the operation of unsafe equipment directions. Clarity is safety. When directions are unclear, compliance becomes inconsistent and enforcement becomes contested. Clarity about how unsafe equipment directions work—what they can cover, what they can apply and how they interact with other mechanisms—improves the likelihood that suppliers, installers, businesses and consumers understand their obligations and act promptly. Taken together, these electrical safety measures aim to do what the public expects of this parliament: maintain strong safety frameworks, confirm necessary operational tools and ensure the regulator can intervene early where equipment presents unacceptable risks.

Time and time again we read in our newspapers about fires caused by electrical faults and battery chargers which are not appropriate. That is why this type of legislation is critically important—to ensure the regulator can act promptly for the safety of Queensland residents. Not long ago a local veteran family's house burned down because they were charging their mobile phone with an improper device and it overheated. We need to ensure these devices are identified to ensure the safety of Queenslanders.