




Speech By
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ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr HUTTON** (Keppel—LNP) (8.30 pm): I thank the member for Mermaid Beach for reminding us yet again that this is around the safety of Queenslanders. A fair day's pay for a fair day's work begins with a fair and safe workplace—a workplace that is free from fear, free from intimidation and free from interference. The Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 is a bill that goes to the heart of restoring balance on Queensland worksites, strengthening safety and delivering fairness for the very people who build our communities—that is, our hardworking Queensland tradies. When we talk about workplace health and safety in this place, we are talking about Queenslanders' safety. We are talking about the carpenter in Yeppoon trying to get a job done before the rain sets in. We are talking about the electrician working late to ensure that a family gets the opportunity to move into their home that day. We are talking about small business owners across the Capricorn Coast who are juggling jobs, staff and rising costs—just trying to keep their doors open. What they deserve and what they expect is a system that supports them—not a system that burdens them, not a system that intimidates them and certainly not a system that can be weaponised against them.

This bill delivers that balance. At its core it does something very important; it repeals Labor's uncommenced information-sharing laws—laws that would have handed the CFMEU unprecedented access to sensitive compliance and enforcement information. Let's be clear about what those laws would have done. They would have allowed CFMEU officials to request enforcement notices—improvement notices, prohibition notices and non-disturbance notices—directly from the regulator. This is not just recent notices and not just relevant notices, but potentially decades worth of information—with no limit on the number of requests, no limit on how often those requests could be made and no clear requirement for those requests to be tied to genuine safety concerns. That is not about safety; that is about power. The people who would have felt the weight of that power are not the big end of town. They are our small contractors. They are the subbies, the local tradies, the family businesses and the people who live in communities like mine in Keppel.

What happens when that kind of information is handed over without safeguards? It creates an environment where compliance history—sometimes going back decades—can be used not to improve safety onsite but to pressure, intimidate and disrupt. I have spoken to tradies in my electorate who are deeply concerned about exactly that. They do not want less safety; they want clarity and consistency and, most importantly, they want to be able to get on with the job without unnecessary interference.

The regulator exists for one purpose: to protect the safety of Queenslanders. It is not to act as a data source for fishing expeditions, not to facilitate campaigns of coercion and not to be bogged down in an administrative burden that takes resources away from real safety outcomes. Let's think about the practical impact. Every single request for information would need to be manually reviewed to ensure no personal details are being released and to ensure commercial-in-confidence information is protected. Yet, under the legislation, there was no ability to charge a fee and there was no limit on the volume of requests. It was inefficient, it was unsustainable and, as it has been described by other speakers today, it was a blank cheque.

This bill closes the door before it even opens. Importantly, it brings Queensland back into alignment with other states and territories, ensuring that our system is consistent, proportionate and focused on what matters—keeping Queensland workers safe. I want to be very clear about this point. The safety of Queensland workers must always come first. Every tradie deserves to go home at the end of the day—every family deserves that peace of mind—but safety cannot be used as a shield for behaviour that undermines workplaces, damages productivity and erodes Queenslanders' trust. When our worksites become battlegrounds instead of places of work, everyone loses. Jobs slow down, costs go up and projects get delayed and, ultimately, it is Queensland families who pay the price.

I offer my thanks to the committee for their report. The industry stakeholders who gave feedback—Master Builders, the Civil Contractors Federation and Master Electricians Australia—were united in their support. They spoke about restoring proportionality, reducing misuse of power and ensuring that workplace health and safety is about safety, not industrial leverage. Most importantly, they spoke about ensuring that, when we balance Queensland workers' safety, we also achieve productivity because safety and productivity go hand in hand. Productivity is not just an economic term; it is the foundation of opportunity for Queensland families. When we achieve high productivity, it means there are more jobs, higher wages, stronger businesses and better value for taxpayers. As one submitter put it, it is a win-win-win.

Alongside these important workplace health and safety amendments, the bill also strengthens Queensland's electrical safety framework. It clarifies the longstanding ability of electricity entities to issue defect notices, providing certainty and continuity in a system that has been operating effectively for over two decades. It modernises the regulator's powers to prohibit unsafe electrical equipment, elevating those powers into the act itself and ensuring they reflect contemporary drafting standards. It provides greater clarity, transparency and accountability in how those powers are exercised. These are practical, sensible reforms—reforms that ensure our safety framework keeps pace with modern risks and reforms that give Queensland workers, businesses and the broader community the confidence that our workers get to come home safely.

This bill is about backing tradies, not burdening them. It is about supporting small businesses, not stifling them. It is about ensuring safety laws are used for their intended purpose—that is, to protect Queensland workers. This bill will not enable bad behaviour, and that brings me to the broader point. This bill is ultimately a test for those opposite. Will they stand with Queensland workers and businesses, or will they continue to back a model that has for too long enabled intimidation, disruption and inefficiency on Queensland worksites? The truth is that this is not an isolated issue; it is part of a broader pattern that we saw over a decade of decline—a pattern of giving more power, creating fewer safeguards and turning a blind eye to the consequences for Queenslanders.

The Crisafulli government is taking a different approach. We are restoring balance, we are restoring accountability and we are restoring confidence for Queensland workers in our workplaces because when tradies can focus on their work, when businesses can operate without fear and when safety is genuinely about safety, our entire community benefits. In regions like mine in Keppel where construction, trades and small businesses are the backbone of our local economy, that matters. It matters for our jobs, it matters for our growth and it matters for the future of our communities and our families. I commend this bill to the House.