




Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT**

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

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (4.23 pm): I rise today to speak in strong support of the Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. At its core, this bill is about restoring some common sense and balance to our workplace laws. The Crisafulli government is focused on improving productivity, strengthening safety and ensuring that Queensland workplaces are respectful and fair for everyone. A big part of that is calling out and addressing behaviour that crosses the line, particularly the kind of systemic bullying and intimidation that Labor allowed to take hold in parts of the construction sector.

This bill is about getting things back on track. It is about ensuring workplace health and safety laws are used for what they were designed, which is keeping people safe, and not used as a tool for pressure or disruption. When you look at what the former Labor government did in 2024, it is hard to see how those changes were ever going to deliver better safety outcomes. Labor's amendments gave union officials very broad access to worksites. In reality, it opened the door to behaviour that many in the industry have described as intrusive, aggressive and at times completely unnecessary. At the time, the then industrial relations minister, the now shadow minister, said these changes would simply help officials do their jobs and reduce disputes, but that does not stack up with what we have heard from people on the ground.

What those changes actually did was create an environment that could be easily misused. They handed organisations like the CFMEU access to sensitive compliance information without proper safeguards, without clear limits and without thinking through the real-world impact on businesses and workers. That is exactly why this government is acting. This bill repeals those information-sharing provisions before they come into effect, and it is worth being clear about what those provisions would have allowed. Union officials and health and safety representatives would have been able to request detailed enforcement information directly from the regulator. That includes improvement notices, prohibition notices and non-disturbance notices in some cases potentially going back decades.

Most people would ask a pretty simple question: how does trawling through decades-old compliance records make a worksite safer today? The answer is simple: it does not. What it does is create an opportunity to gather information that could be used for other purposes. It creates an opportunity for that information to be used as leverage, to apply pressure or to target businesses. There were no real guardrails around it—no limits on how many requests could be made, no limits on how often and no clear boundaries on how far back those requests could go. It was, in effect, a blank cheque. Not only that, it would have placed a significant burden on the regulator. Every request would need to be reviewed manually to ensure personal or commercially sensitive information was not released. That takes time. It takes resources and it distracts from the regulator's core job. The regulator exists to keep Queenslanders safe; it does not exist to support fishing expeditions or to facilitate ongoing disputes on worksites. That is where the focus should be and that is exactly what this bill restores.

More broadly, this is part of a pattern we saw under the former Labor government. Time and time again they introduced changes that seemed to favour the CFMEU while ignoring the impact on the wider industry. This bill draws a line in the sand. It says clearly that workplace health and safety laws

should be about safety. They should not be used as a workaround for industrial leverage or influence. Of course those opposite are now trying to paint this bill as something that it is not. They are trying to suggest that it somehow weakens safety, but that simply does not reflect reality. In fact, the feedback from industry tells us a very different story. The committee that looked at this bill recommended that it be passed and a majority of submitters supported the repeal of these provisions. As Robert Maroney from Master Builders Queensland 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 ...

That is what this is about—getting the balance right. It is about ensuring safety remains the priority while also ensuring laws are not open to misuse. Importantly, the bill also strengthens Queensland's electrical safety framework. It clarifies the ability of electricity entities to use defect notices, it modernises the regulator's power around unsafe equipment and it ensures that those powers are clear, consistent and fit for purpose.

These are practical changes, they are sensible changes, and they are all focused on improving outcomes for Queenslanders. This bill really does come down to a simple choice: a system that prioritises safety, productivity and fairness or a system that enables overreach, misuse and intimidation; backing Queensland workers and businesses or continuing to enable the CFMEU and the culture that has too often accompanied it. Those opposite how have an opportunity to demonstrate that they have learned from their mistakes, to show that they are willing to put the interests of Queenslanders ahead of their longstanding allegiances, but if history is any guide I suspect that they will once again choose to stand with the CFMEU. They will choose to cue the scary music and whip up all sorts of concern and make all sorts of statements about how watering down these laws will impact on people's lives. We will probably hear statements from them such as if it saves one life it will have been worth all of these other pervasive and invasive conditions, that it will be okay to stymie business and hold business back from getting on with the job and creating more work.

Often when I hear those on the non-government benches railing about the LNP I am reminded of Robot from *Lost in Space*—'Warning, warning, warning, Will Robinson'. I am not referring to the modern re-release of *Lost in Space*; I am referring to the old 1970s version, where Robot was always warning about things unnecessarily, was always seeking to create a sense of drama around matters that perhaps did not need that level of attention. That is exactly what we have heard in the debate today and yesterday—lots of warning, lots of great protestations about saving puppy dogs, babies and little children and how it will change lives when at the heart of this legislation is protection for the CFMEU, the thugs who have been holding this state to ransom, the thugs who have prevented Queensland from getting on and delivering housing. We hear Labor talk about standing up for the battlers. What about the battlers who need a roof over their head? What about Queenslanders who need somewhere to live? What about young people who need hope and aspiration? We have seen so much of that stymied because of the behaviour of the previous Labor government over the last decade.

The Crisafulli government, on the other hand, is choosing to stand with Queenslanders. We are getting on with the job and fixing the mess left by Labor after a decade of debt, division and decline—and, I would suggest, also on many occasions deception and deceit. We are restoring integrity to the system, we are backing safer and more productive workplaces and we are making sure the focus stays exactly where it should be: on keeping Queenslanders safe and on delivering a brighter future for Queensland. I commend this bill to the House.