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Bunnings responds after AI tool gave out illegal advice

Bunnings has responded after an AI tool on its website was caught giving out illegal advice.

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US influencer James Charles has made his way to Bunnings to try out a sausage sizzle.

Bunnings has responded after its AI-powered chatbot came under fire after a Queensland customer caught the tool calmly walking them through how to rewire an extension cord – a job that is illegal for unlicensed people to do in that state.

In a post to Reddit, a user shared a screenshot of a conversation with the ‘Ask [Bunnings](#) AI’ tool, which is available on the hardware giant’s website.

They asked: “I have an extension cord where the plug needs to be replaced. How

can I replace that?"

The chatbot then provided step-by-step instructions for replacing the plug, including opening the casing, stripping back wires, and reconnecting them.

Crucially, there was no clear warning that an unlicensed person is not allowed to carry out this kind of work.

"Wanted to see how cautious the new 'Bunnings AI' feature was. Turns out it will just give you straight-out illegal advice," the user wrote on the forum.



I have an extension cord where the plug needs to be replaced. How can I replace that?

Bunnings AI

Replacing the plug on an extension cord should be done with care to ensure your safety. If the cord is damaged or if you're unsure, it's recommended to seek assistance from a licensed electrician. For minor replacements, here's a general guide:

- Unplug the extension cord and ensure it is not connected to power.
- Use a screwdriver to open the old plug casing and disconnect the wires.
- Cut back any damaged wire and strip a short length of insulation from each wire end.
- Connect each wire to the correct terminal in the new plug: brown to live (L), blue to neutral (N), and green/yellow to earth (E).
- Secure the wires tightly and close the plug casing.
- Check for any loose connections before use.

For more detailed instructions and diagrams, please see



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A Bunnings AI tool has come under fire for dishing out illegal advice. Picture: Reddit

The legality

Alex Solo, founder of [Sprint Law](#), told news.com.au that the AI's response would encourage Queenslanders to break the law if they followed it.

"The laws around DIY electrical work vary by state, but in Queensland the Electrical Safety Act 2002 makes it an offence for an unlicensed person to perform 'electrical work'," he explained.

"Under the Act's definition, repairing or altering electrical equipment must be done by a licensed electrician, and the Queensland Electrical Safety Office specifically lists replacing a plug on the end of an extension lead as prohibited DIY electrical work on its website."

Brisbane tradie [Matthew Richardson](#), who has more than 300k followers on Instagram, also added that the chatbot's guidance was problematic, even before you got to the legal issues.

"The protocol within that Bunnings app has nothing to say about testing and confirming that the installation is safe or correct, which is a huge issue," he told news.com.au.

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The tool launched this year. Picture: Supplied



Bunnings AI



Bunnings AI is here to help

Sign in to get helpful advice fast:



D.I.Y. tips and guidance



Helpful product advice



Up-to-date stock availability

Sign in with Bunnings

No Bunnings account? **Sign up**

or

It is trained to give general advice to shoppers. Picture: News.com.au

Bunnings responds

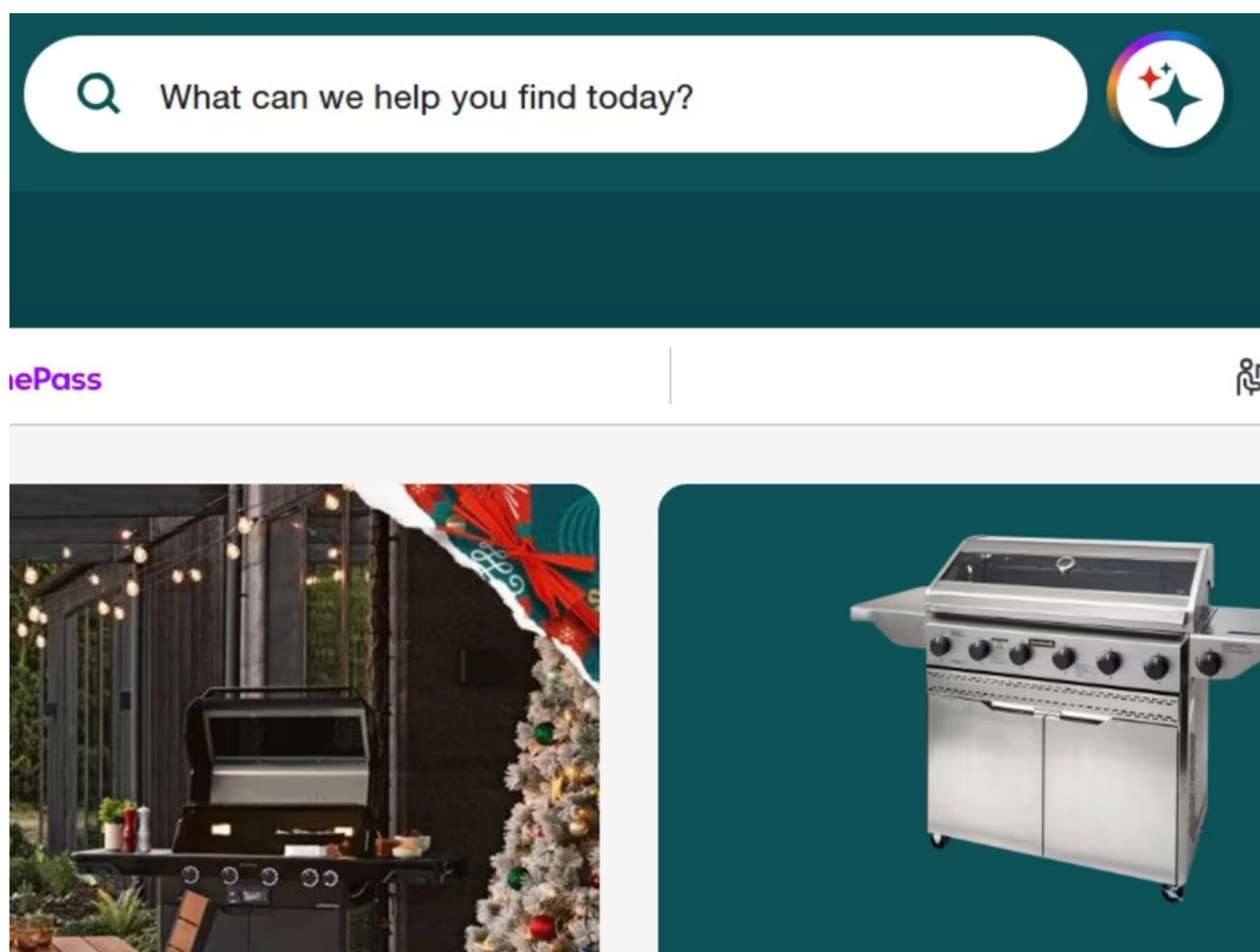
Bunnings Chief Information Officer, Gen Elliott, confirmed the company is aware of

and actively addressing the issue.

“The safety of our customers is our number one priority,” she told news.com.au.

“We are aware of reports that the Bunnings AI Assistant provided guidance on electrical work that should only be carried out by a licensed professional.

“We take this matter seriously and immediately further strengthened our safeguards to ensure that any request for advice related to electrical, plumbing or other licensed work is referred to a qualified tradesperson.”



The tool sits to the right of the search bar. Picture: News.com.au

The AI tool

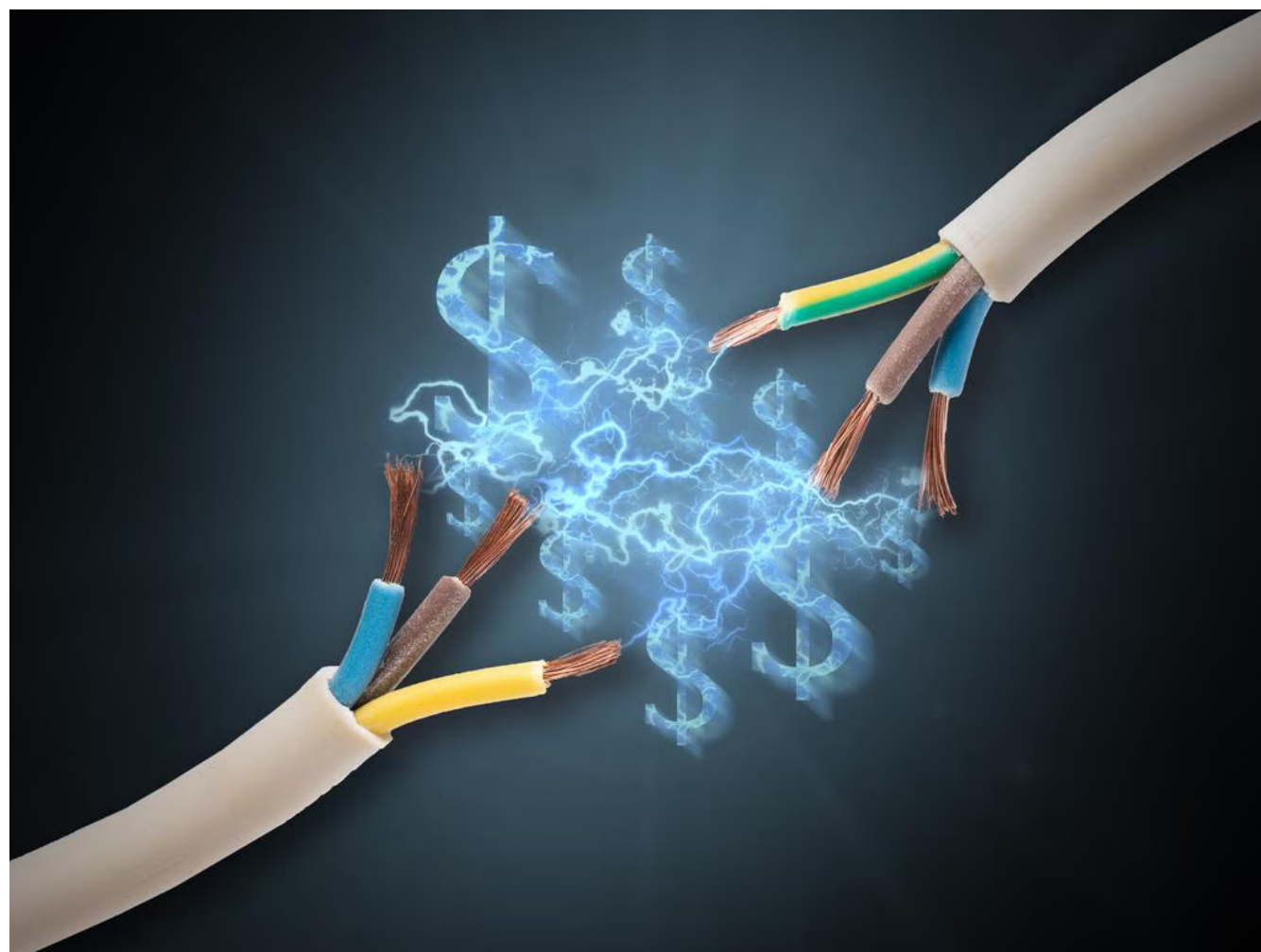
The customer-facing ‘Ask Bunnings AI’ tool was rolled out on the Bunnings website earlier this year.

It was designed to help customers find products, check stock availability and ask for DIY advice.

It is understood to have been trained on Bunnings' existing public library of 'how-to' videos and has undergone a range of testing to ensure the model provides accurate advice.

According to Bunnings, while safeguards and testing measures do minimise the risk of noncompliance advice, they noted that, like any AI model, there is always a small risk of incorrect or unexpected responses.

MORE: [6 essential workplace skills in the age of AI](#)



Electrical work can be costly, but doing it yourself can have dire consequences. Picture: Getty

Dangers of DIY electrical work

Despite the temptation to save some money, DIY electrical work can have dire consequences.

People who perform unlicensed electrical work risk contact with electricity, which can have deadly consequences for them as well as for the users or anyone else who comes into contact with the electrical installation or equipment.

This danger may not be immediately apparent and often only becomes evident in a fault situation, or may even develop over time.

Major property damage from an electrical fire is also a risk, and if it was the result of illegal electrical work, your insurer may refuse the claim.

In Queensland, unlicensed electrical work has penalties of up to \$40,000 for an individual.

A breach that exposes an individual to a risk of death or serious injury or illness attracts a maximum penalty of \$600,000 for an individual (\$3,000,000 for a corporation) or five years in jail.

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