

## Resources Safety and Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Committee Secretary

Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee

Parliament House

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Dear Committee Secretary

**RE: RESOURCES SAFETY AND HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024**

The Electrical Trades Union of Employees Queensland (the ETU) represents over 15 000 electrical workers in Queensland. The ETU is at the forefront of electrical safety in Queensland and is best placed to advocate for improved safety for electrical workers in all workplaces, including Mine Sites.

Electrical safety is, rightly, heavily regulated, and necessarily involves complicated and highly technical oversight. Electrical workers demand the highest level of safety representation.

The ETU is concerned that electrical workers are not adequately represented in the coal mining sector under the current legislation, and that the proposed Bill does nothing to address this.

The ETU has previously requested an amendment to include an Electrical Site Safety and Health Representative. The ETU reiterates this request.

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The ETU proposes the following inclusion into the Act:

***93A Election of electrical site safety and health representatives***

*(1) This section applies in addition to section 93.*

*(2) Coal mine workers, who are also electrical tradespeople, may elect one of their number to be an electrical site safety representative for the mine for the term decided by the group.*

*(3) An electrical site safety and health representative shall hold all of the same rights and obligations as a site safety and health representative referred to in section 93.*

*(4) An electrical site safety and health representative may only exercise his or her functions in relation to electrical installations and electrical equipment and any issues and risks arising from their use.*

Given the inherent high-risk nature of electrical work, the ETU considers that this approach is necessary and sensible. You will note that there is provision for an electrical safety and health representative in the New South Wales' corresponding legislation, the *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013*. The ETU is seeking that Queensland draw equal with New South Wales on this issue. You will also note this does not reduce or otherwise impact the role of other safety and health representatives under the Act.

Secondly, as part of this change, we also propose that section 198 be amended to include broader notice requirements to site safety and health representatives:

**198 Notice of accidents, incidents, deaths or diseases**

(1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), as soon as practicable after becoming aware of a serious accident, high potential incident or a death at a coal mine, the site senior executive for the coal mine must notify an inspector, site safety and health representative/s and electrical site safety and health representative/s and an industry safety and health representative about the accident, incident or death either orally or by notice.

At clause 39 of the Bill, section 98(B)(1)(a) is proposed apply to '1 or more unions involved.' To give effect to this there needs to be an amendment to the Definitions of Union in the Act to include the ETU and AMWU who have large numbers of members employed in mine sites. Unusually, only one Union is referred to under the legislation.


The ETU also seeks that Workplace Health and Safety permit holders be entitled to extend their existing powers under the Work Health and Safety Act to sections of a coal mine lease which are not directly related to the extraction of black coal. Specifically, workshops, shutdowns and construction sites on mining leases. The existing definition arguable extends to operations on the lease which are wholly separate to the Mine itself. The ETU says that its permit holders should be able to exercise their powers under the Work Health and Safety Act in these areas.

Currently, ETU members working on a coal mine are the only ETU members in Queensland who are unable to raise health and safety complaints with their Union, and have a duly qualified Organiser/permit holder utilise their WHS permit to investigate health and safety issues. It should be noted, as far as the ETU is aware, the ETU is the only organisation who employs permit holders with electrical qualifications. This experience and expertise cannot be underestimated.

ETU Permit holders exercise an important function in inspecting and maintain safety in other workplaces across Queensland. This proposal does not diminish the powers and functions of the ISHR's, but increases the ability for qualified persons to investigate safety related matters. This can only result in improved safety for electrical workers in the coal mining sector.

We thank you for considering our submission and trust that these important measures will be addressed.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Peter Ong.

Peter Ong  
**DIVISIONAL BRANCH SECRETARY**