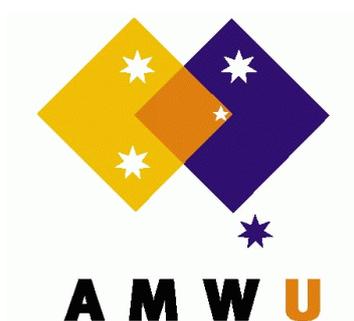


AUSTRALIAN MANUFACTURING WORKERS' UNION



Submission to the Finance and Administrative Committee

June 2015

Enquiries:

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This submission is made on behalf of members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union ("AMWU"). The AMWU, as known on a collective and public basis, is made up of the Automotive, Metals, Engineering, Printing and Kindred Industries Industrial Union of Employees, Queensland (the state registered Union) and the "Automotive, Food, Metals, Engineering, Printing and Kindred Industries Union" known as the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) (the federal registered Union). The AMWU represents over 110,000 members working across major sectors of the Australian economy, including in the manufacturing sectors of vehicle building and parts supply, engineering, printing and paper products. Our members are engaged in maintenance services work across all industry sectors. We cover many employees throughout the resources sector, mining, aviation, aerospace and building and construction industries. We also cover members in the technical and supervisory occupations in engineering and across diverse industries including food technology and construction. The AMWU has members at all skills/classification from entry level to degree. The AMWU Queensland/NT Branch represents over 17,000 members, with the vast majority employed in Queensland.
- 1.2 The AMWU welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Finance and Administration Committee in respect of *Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015* ("the Bill").

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The AMWU supports the Palaszczuk government's restoration of vitally important health and safety provisions by way of the proposed amendments to the *Work Health and Safety Act*. The stripping away of key work health and safety protections by the Newman LNP government has resulted in an increased risk to workers in relation to illness and injury, and has effectively removed the ability for workers and their representatives to take proactive and preventative measures to ensure safe workplaces.
- 2.2 The AMWU further submits the Newman LNP government's legislative changes are inconsistent the nationally harmonised work health and safety legislation.
- 2.3 The AMWU therefore strongly supports the following initiatives of the Palaszczuk government in making Queensland workplaces safer:
- (a) Reinstatement of the right for WHS Permit holders to enter a workplace immediately if they reasonably suspect the occurrence of a safety contravention, and notice of entry is provided as reasonably practicable¹.
 - (b) The restoration of the rights of duly trained health and safety representatives to direct workers in their workgroup to cease unsafe work;

¹ Notice of entry is to be provided to the relevant person conducting a business or undertaking and the person with management or control of the workplace.

Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

- (c) The restoration of the ability for healthy and safety representatives to request immediate assistance of any person at the workplace;
- (d) The reinstatement of the historical requirement for the notification by employers to the Regulator when a worker is absent from work for more than four days due to a work related injury or illness; and
- (e) The reinstatement of the Electrical Safety Commission, the Electrical Education Committee and the Electrical Equipment Committee.

2.4 In summary, the Bill restores important protections for workers in respect of health and safety, and ensures Queensland's legislation is consistent with the national harmonised health and safety framework. Importantly, the Bill includes important preventative provisions that will reduce the risk of injury and illness to workers in Queensland.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Every worker has the right to return home from work each and every day free from injury and illness. Regrettably, the Newman LNP government instituted legislative changes that increased the risk to workers in respect of workplace injuries and illness. The actions of the Newman LNP government, to put it bluntly, made Queensland workplaces less safe.
- 3.2 The AMWU congratulates the Palaszczuk government's initiatives in restoring and reinstating these important work health and safety protections that were stripped away by the previous State government.

Submission end.