

ROY WALKER PLUMBING
(RODSTAR PTY LTD t/a)
Established 1967
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Members of: The Master Plumbers Assoc of Qld

Submission No. 012
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11.1.25
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-----Plumbers protect the health of the nation-----

25 February 2014

The Research Director
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Committee Members,
RE: Water Supply Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

I am writing to put forward my submission for the Water Supply Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 (the Bill). I am appalled that the Queensland Government is potentially allowing this Bill to be put through. This Bill proposes to deregulate the installation of water meters and allow unlicensed persons to carry out such work; **this cannot and must not proceed.**

The plumbing industry is a licensed industry for a reason. Defective work performed within the water or sanitary systems can have catastrophic and dangerous results to the health and wellbeing of the community and therefore only appropriately trained and licensed plumbers should be allowed to install, maintain and repair water meters.

This proposed change to the plumbing legislation will permit unskilled, unlicensed persons to enter into my trade with a fraction of the skills I am required to hold and allow them to compete with my business. The unskilled, unlicensed persons will also effectively be taking food out of my family's mouths in order for the water supplier (big business) to obtain a higher annual turnover by keeping work in-house and not outsourcing.

Who will these unlicensed persons answer to? As a licensed tradesman I had to complete a five year apprenticeship, keep upgrading my skills **continuously** over the years, and as a point of interest at age 67+ I am about to complete another 2 day training course this week end to keep abreast with current legislation. I have to complete form 4's and pay a fee to PIC to work on water meters now and numerous other classes of work. I don't object to this as it keeps the water coming out of your taps safe for you to drink.

Who will monitor their work if they are unlicensed, untrained and unanswerable to a regulatory body and do they have to by law fill out form 4's etc?

As a licensed plumber my licence developed a sound understanding of the intricacies of the trade. Anything less than a Certificate III in Plumbing (gained through an intensive five year apprenticeship) would not provide the relevant skills and knowledge to be achieved to competently and successfully perform plumbing work, and the installation, maintenance and repair of water meters is plumbing work.

My fear is that water meters are just the beginning. I believe that if this Bill becomes legislation, it won't stop there. Next the water service providers will want to work on sub-meters and have access onto the property and once there, where will it stop? If the Government is bending to the will of big business now, it won't stop in the future. What does this mean for my small business, my family and employees, given that this country is primarily run on small business? I see this legislation change resulting in the eventual deregulation of the plumbing industry all together.

The Government argues that they are doing this for red tape reduction. Yet, with the claim that there will be "no net reduction in employment", there will be plenty of additional red tape to transfer this task from plumbers who already do the work, to water service workers that would need training, compliance measures and management. Again, this Bill is just Government bowing to big business and creating additional red tape.

Please explain how this will reduce red tape when all licensed Plumbers must now answer to:

- Local Government
- Plumbing Industry Council
- Plumbers Drains & Gas Licensing Board
- QBSA now called QBCC
- Workplace Health and Safety

To keep the plumbing in your home safe

How will unlicensed workers answer to anyone or to any of the above and pay the fees to a body to complete unlicensed work?

Licensed plumbers protect the Health of the Nation but bringing in unlicensed plumbing work will be to the detriment of the health of all concerned and leave those responsible open to repercussions.

I am disgusted with the Government and the fact they would consider this legislative change which will harm my trade and small business by once again neglecting key constituents and pandering to big business. I request your intervention on my behalf to protect the years of training I have undertaken in the Plumbing profession.

Sincerely,

ROY WALKER