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28 February 2014

Submission no. 056

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11.1.15

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.

As a licensed plumber, I had to undertake a four year apprenticeship to obtain my licence and develop a sound understanding of the intricacies of the trade. Anything less than a Certificate III in Plumbing (gained through an intensive four 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.

I am disgusted with the Government and the fact they would consider this legislative change which will harm my trade and small business. You are once again neglecting your key constituents and pandering to big business. If this bill goes through, you have had your last vote from me or my family.

Sincerely,

Robert Mackay
PlumbCall