

## Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

**Submission No:** 1  
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**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Attachments:**  
**Submitter Comments:**

# ***Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025***

QLD

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06 November 2025

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Master Electricians Australia (MEA) is a peak industry association representing electrical contractors and is recognised by industry, government and the community as a leading business partner, knowledge source and advocate. You can visit our website at [www.masterelectricians.com.au](http://www.masterelectricians.com.au)

MEA welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on proposed amendments to Queensland's Work Health and Safety framework. This response focuses specifically on the Work Health and Safety (WHS) elements of the Bill and their practical implications for electrical contractors.

The changes represent an important step toward restoring proportionality, accountability, and efficiency within workplace regulation. In particular, MEA supports reforms that streamlines information requests, prevent misuse of regulatory powers, and ensure that WHS oversight remains targeted at genuine safety concerns.

We have also taken the opportunity to provide additional recommendations to strengthen the practical application of WHS laws for electrical contractors and the broader construction industry.

## Changes to WHS Information Requests

MEA welcomes the proposed amendment removing the ability for Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) and WHS entry permit holders to directly request copies of improvement, prohibition, or non-disturbance notices from Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.

The existing unrestricted power is vulnerable to overuse, with no requirement to demonstrate relevance to a specific workplace or incident. Such unchecked access risks misuse and creates unnecessary administrative burden as businesses shift their focus from practical risk management to unwarranted levels of risk management. This could further impede construction productivity at a time when the industry is already grappling with acute skills shortages and increased demand to deliver

housing, infrastructure, and electrification projects in addition to preparing for the Brisbane 2032 Olympics.

MEA supports this proportionate and sensible reform, which restores balance between transparency and fairness. The new framework ensures enforcement information remains accessible to those directly involved in a matter while preventing vexatious requests. This provides greater certainty for employers, protects the confidentiality of resolved issues, and enables the regulator to focus on proactive safety outcomes rather than administrative management. It also ensures WHS regulators are efficiently utilising their resources to focus on regulating matters that need it most.

## Additional WHS Matters Recommended for Consideration

### HSR Powers to Shut Down Worksites

MEA commends the Queensland Government's recent amendments which required 24 hours notification to be given to a PCBU prior to entry. However, despite this positive change, further reform is needed to ensure cease-work powers are exercised reasonably and with appropriate oversight.

MEA previously highlighted concerns regarding the broad powers of HSRs to shut down worksites in our recent [submission to the Queensland Productivity Commission's Interim Report](#). This issue was also raised in our recent [response to the Best Practice Review of the Model Work Health and Safety Laws](#), emphasising the need for balanced powers that maintain workplace safety without unnecessarily disrupting business operations.

MEA supports a safety framework which allows a worker representative to identify a safety concern impacting worker safety. However, giving HSRs the ability to shut down a site can result in a misuse of such powers whether intentional or unintentional.

Specifically, the authority to shut down an entire site or a substantial portion of it (for example, where more than 25% of work is carried out) should rest only with inspectors. Alternatively, if powers are to remain with HSRs, we propose that where a HSR exercises a cease-work direction and the PCBU disputes its reasonableness, an inspector should be required to confirm (within one hour, via phone or video call if in person is not feasible) that the power has been reasonably exercised. This would provide a practical “sanity check” to prevent misuse of cease-work provisions for minor or trivial matters, while maintaining worker safety as the paramount consideration.

While it may be possible to bring an action to stop the site closure, this is challenging where it is the HSR’s decision and not a union decision. It is also costly and a large administrative burden for PCBUs to bring legal actions to prevent site closures or to have closures declared unlawful.

The proposed measure to require WHS Inspector involvement to confirm a prima facie requirement to shut down a site would improve productivity in the construction sector where there have been numerous (anonymous) complaints of unnecessary site closures that would otherwise be considered industrial action. However, it is acknowledged that this would also be a departure from the model laws.

## Conclusion

MEA supports a balanced and proportionate approach to work health and safety regulation that safeguards workers while enabling businesses to operate efficiently and productively. The proposed amendments are a positive step toward improving regulatory clarity, reducing administrative burden, and ensuring enforcement resources are directed to matters of genuine safety concern. MEA encourages the Queensland Government to continue engaging with industry to refine WHS laws that promote safe, fair, and practical outcomes across the construction sector, with a targeted focus on worksite shut down laws.