

## Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

**Submission No:** 3  
**Submitted by:** Civil Contractors Federation QLD  
**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Attachments:**  
**Submitter Comments:**

The Committee  
State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee  
Parliament House, George Street, Brisbane QLD 4000  
Via Email: [SDIWC@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:SDIWC@parliament.qld.gov.au)

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

### **Introduction**

The short title of the Bill is the Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (the Bill).

The Civil Contractors Federation Queensland Limited (CCF QLD) represents the interests and enhanced prosperity of the civil construction industry in Queensland. CCF QLD prides itself on being the voice of the civil construction industry and advocates for the interests of industry to all levels of government. We are responsible for representing the Queensland civil construction industry; from as far north as Cairns to as far south as Northern New South Wales.

Civil Contractors Federation Queensland Limited (CCF QLD) has three Queensland Civil Industry Training Centres (QCITC) located in Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns, with Brisbane being our head office. CCF QLD is a Registered Organisation under the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009. CCF operates as a non-profit entity governed by a constitution approved by Fair Work Australia.

### **Background**

The Bill aims to maintain electrical safety standards whilst also ensuring workers and businesses have appropriate privacy and personal safety in their workplace. The Bill does this by amending the *Electrical Safety Act 2002* (“ES Act”) and *Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024* (“WHS Act”).

Legislation passed in the previous Parliament had conferred upon a relevant Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) entry permit holder or Health and Safety Representative (HSR) the right to seek information directly from the WHS regulator. This right permitted the extraction of content from an Improvement Notice, Prohibition Notice, or Non-disturbance Notice pertaining to the workers represented by that individual. Notably, this included permit holders from the CFMEU. This very broad power is now being removed by the Bill.

CCF QLD supports the Bill, noting commentary in both the Parliament and the media around its purpose. We support the current administration of the CFMEU and are cooperating with the inquiry into the CFMEU being undertaken by the State Government currently.

## **Electrical Safety**

The changes to the ES Act made by the Bill are rightfully targeted at reducing the risk of death and injury caused by electricity in construction.

Allowing electricity entities like the major electricity distributors to give electrical equipment defect notices through a clear right contained in the ES Act and accompanying regulation is a simple, sensible change that will encourage greater transparency and encourage a more proactive culture when it comes to safety.

Similarly, clarifying how the regulator prohibits the sale or use of equipment it believes to be unsafe to enhance how easily this prohibition is communicated can only be viewed as a positive step in encouraging both a “culture” of proactive attitudes towards safety broadly as well as likely having the effect reducing incidents.

Both these changes to electrical safety are positive and pragmatic and have our full support.

## **The Industrial Environment in Civil Construction**

The changes to the law proposed by this Bill have not come about in a vacuum. There is an enormous macroeconomic impetus to improve safety and productivity in civil construction in Queensland.

Queensland, particularly South-East Queensland has had enormous population growth in recent years. Population projections suggest that South-East Queensland will have 6 million people by 2046, up from approximately 4 million in the middle of 2024<sup>1</sup>. The economic and social hub of South-East Queensland, Brisbane, is already Australia’s most congested city<sup>2</sup>. Population growth, driving the need for new housing and transport and the Olympics have created a perfect storm in the civil construction industry in Queensland. The Olympics, when combined with this population surge is projected to create approximately 90 thousand full-time “job years” over a 20-year period, with a need for almost 20 thousand additional construction workers each year from now until the Games are held. Crucially, a peak shortfall of 50,000 construction workers is expected over the 2026-2027 period<sup>3</sup>. Ensuring a collaborative, collegial industry culture is crucial to ensuring workers and investment is retained, as well as maximising the productivity of both.

The Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU) is Australia's largest union in the construction, forestry, maritime, textile, clothing and footwear production industries. Members of CCF QLD often come into contact with the CFMEU given the CFMEU is the relevant union for some of their workers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (2024) ShapingSEQ2023, Planning. Available at: <https://www.planning.qld.gov.au/planning-framework/plan-making/regional-planning/south-east-queensland-regional-plan> (Accessed: 13 October 2025).

<sup>2</sup> Brisbane is Australia’s most traffic-congested city (no date) Drive. Available at: <https://www.drive.com.au/news/brisbane-australia-most-traffic-congested-city/> (Accessed: 13 October 2025).

<sup>3</sup> (No date) Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games preliminary economic, social. Available at: <https://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/publications/categories/reports/assets/2032-qld-games-economic-analysis-summary-report-final.pdf> (Accessed: 13 October 2025).

In recent months, Geoffrey Watson SC published a report into violence and intimidation by the Queensland Branch of the CFMEU. At the Federal level, the union is under administration with a view to a permanent cultural shift and governance restructure, following allegations of links to organised crime. Naturally, these matters have a deleterious effect on safety and productivity for all involved in the sector.

The Queensland Productivity Commission has also recently released its interim report into productivity in the construction sector. The key finding we wish to highlight here is that productivity in the Queensland construction industry today is only 5 per cent higher than it was in 1994-95. In comparison, productivity in the market economy grew by 65 per cent<sup>4</sup>. We note that the interim report suggested there be a for a new "independent arbiter to negotiate disagreements and/or a watchdog to reduce illegal or anti-competitive conduct on work sites. We would like to place on record here our support for an independent construction regulator being created to administer a set of rules for the construction industry with a focus on ensuring all parties; including both head contractors and unions are compliant with the law. Whilst this may best be set up at a Federal level, it is likely that there may be scope for the State to create a similar body for infrastructure projects funded by the State Government.

One of the key causes of this poor productivity growth, in our view, is the deliberate use of industrial rancour as a tactic of the leadership of the CFMEU. This has both discouraged workers from entering the sector and made those in the sector less productive for a variety of reasons. In addition, we would note that the now paused BPIC also hampered construction productivity in our view.

CCF QLD have advocated for some time for appropriate changes to legislation around industrial relations and workplace health and safety to help concurrently drive productivity and safety. Whilst much of this regulatory power sits with the Federal Government, the intersection CCF QLD members have with capital works programmes operated by the State Government means procurement and supplier policies can also impact on industrial relations matters. Construction projects, particularly large, complex infrastructure projects necessitate a large volume of well-coordinated and productive labour to be completed within reasonable time frames.

CCF QLD believe unions must represent their members fairly and with integrity, ensuring that the rights and interests of workers are upheld in a manner that contributes positively to the industry's overall health. The ongoing inquiry into the CFMEU is an important opportunity to ensure that violence and disrespect for industrial law are thoroughly investigated and elements of the union who do not engage in lawful and respectful bargaining are removed. We are hopeful as an organisation that this inquiry leads to a positive new era in the construction industry, where collaboration and productivity are key principles by which the relationship between workers and businesses is defined. Ultimately, productivity will be the tide that lifts all boats in the sector.

---

<sup>4</sup> Queensland Productivity Commission (2025) *Summary Report - Opportunities to improve productivity of the construction industry*. Brisbane: Queensland Productivity Commission. Available at: <https://qpc.qld.gov.au/docs/construction-productivity/Summary%20Report%20-%20Opportunities%20to%20improve%20productivity%20of%20the%20construction%20industry%201.pdf> (Accessed: 5 November 2025).

## **Workplace Health and Safety**

CCF QLD believe every individual has the right to a safe working environment. A civil construction industry that can ensure the well-being of the workforce has a greater chance of achieving sustainability and increasing productivity. Safety on the work site is not just about avoiding incidents but ensuring the psychological safety and personal privacy of workers.

The existing provisions of the WHS Act allow health and safety representatives and entry permit holders to access and receive information directly from a PCBU including right of entry notices, prohibition, notifiable incidents, information regarding the work health and safety of those they represent, and relevant documents for the investigation of a suspected contravention.

Legislation passed, though not operational, is to be repealed via the Bill. This would have seen entry permit holders able to request information contained in improvement notices, prohibition notices or non-disturbance notices (relevant notices) directly from the regulator. This would have included union officials from the CFMEU, which has many recorded instances of intimidation as outlined above. This undermines the privacy of business owners and would have substantially increased the administrative burden on the regulator, for no positive safety outcomes and a host of risks to many of our members. This was an enormous overreach which went beyond a reasonable and balanced approach to safety.

## **Conclusion**

We are supportive of the Bill in its current form and look forward to it being passed by the Parliament. As outlined above, there is much more work to be done to reform the construction sector to drive productivity, deliver the Olympic Games and manage Queensland's population growth in a responsible fashion. CCF QLD hopes this is the first of many bills to pass through the Parliament with these goals in mind.

Kind regards,



Damian Long  
Chief Executive Officer CCF QLD