

Inquiry into scrap metal theft

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Commissioner for Electrical Safety

Committee Secretary
Transport and Resources Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Submission - Inquiry into scrap metal theft

1. Keith McKenzie is my name, and I am the Commissioner for Electrical Safety in Queensland. The appointment of the Commissioner for Electrical Safety is outlined in section 68 of the Electrical Safety Act 2002.
2. I note that the inquiry is into scrap metal theft, however after attending a recent round table meeting convened by the Attorney- General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and family Violence, the Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP, I understand that there is a significant amount of copper theft is occurring from electrical installations that are energised.
3. I understand that thieves are stealing electrical cables for their copper value, and in doing so, in some cases, after the theft, are leaving exposed LIVE cables which is a huge risk to the Queensland public.
4. Theft of cables that are for the protection of persons and property, known as electrical earthing mediums, such as earth mats/grids, earthing of metallic poles, earthing of electrical Sub stations and switchyard are also being targeted.
5. The inquiry will no doubt bring to the forefront the amount of theft occurring and the financial cost to consumers, contractors, Industry stakeholders, but the real cost could be the potential loss of life to the crooks themselves or members of the public.
6. Stealing copper or scrap metal is one thing, but where theft has occurred and in doing so, Queenslanders are at risk, strong action must be undertaken.
7. Higher penalties for theft where there is a protection to cause harm (Electric Shock or the potential for shock, Electrocutation, Property fire or the potential for fire)
8. Live database to record theft immediately, to assist those who purchase stolen cables to be made aware of what could be coming in, to be sold.
9. Qld Police could establish a dedicated unit (Voltaire) to investigate this type of activity as some of the theft could be organised crime syndicates.

Office of Industrial Relations
Level 11, 1 William Street
GPO Box 69 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
P: 3406 9884
Mob: 466 553 844

10. Consider a Round Table of Ministers and Industry Stakeholders from the other States and Territories, as this type of theft would be a national issue. Products stolen, could be sold in other jurisdictions as well as overseas.
11. The time for this inquiry could not come quick enough. Hopefully submissions made by Industry stakeholders, including the Queensland Electrical Safety Office, will highlight all the electrical safety hazards that occur.

If you require further information or assistance, please contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

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Keith McKenzie
Commissioner for Electrical Safety