



Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Wednesday, 11 November 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Electrical Apprentice Safety Pilot Program

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.17 am): Electrical safety is a prime concern for the Bligh government. Yesterday I outlined to the House some changes that have been made to improve safety for insulation installers and householders. Today I want to highlight an initiative that is improving safety for electrical apprentices—our electricians of the future. The Bligh government has been conducting a pilot program to raise safety awareness among apprentice electricians. This program was developed in response to the high number of electricians involved in serious electrical incidents in the past two years. There were 28 serious incidents involving electrical workers in the past two years, including two fatalities. The most recent fatality involved an electrical tradesperson who was only nine months out of his apprenticeship. Those are the tragedies that we are trying to avoid.

Today I will meet with three fourth-year apprentices who have recently completed the 12-week electrical safety pilot program run by the Electrical Safety Office. Safety in the workplace is of paramount importance, especially in a trade where work is often conducted in close proximity to live wires. During the 12-week program, the apprentices have been working in the field with safety inspectors assisting with process audits, electrical installation verification and some safety investigations. The three apprentices have received invaluable experience working alongside experienced inspectors. When the apprentices embark on the next phase of their careers, they will be able to promote a stronger emphasis on electrical safety.

The program, which has industry support, aims to help improve the apprentices' knowledge and awareness of electrical safety and promote the role of the Electrical Safety Office. It is important that safe workplace practices are learnt at the start of a worker's career and that is exactly what this program can achieve. Given the success of this program, the Electrical Safety Office will expand it next year, hosting a total of nine fourth-year apprentices for 12 weeks each. This initiative is a practical response to a significant industry issue and is part of the Bligh government's aim of making Queensland a safer, stronger state.