

## Question on Notice

No. 1940

Asked on Thursday 15 November 2007

**MR MOORHEAD** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (MR MICKEL)—

QUESTION:

What initiatives are being undertaken to promote electrical safety in the festive season?

ANSWER:

The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations' Electrical Safety Office (ESO) is undertaking a number of activities focusing on electrical safety during this festive season.

ESO inspectors are conducting an audit of decorative Christmas lights offered for sale in Queensland. Decorative Christmas lights are classified as prescribed electrical equipment. Such equipment must meet Australian Standards and have a certificate of approval prior to being offered for sale. Lights, plugs and cords, transformers and figurines are being inspected, as well as the bulbs themselves on Christmas lighting decorations. In the past, approved Christmas lights have caught fire when they have been modified with unapproved parts.

This audit is part of the ESO's 2007/2008 state-wide compliance campaign program and involves electrical inspectors visiting retail and wholesale outlets which specialise in the sale of decorative Christmas lights. The audit seeks to confirm that lights offered for sale are safe to use and appropriately approved.

I am advised that as at 17 December 2007, electrical safety inspectors have visited 17 outlets that specialise in the sale of decorative lighting, and audited 36 items. Two electrical safety protection notices have been issued for the sale of non-approved decorative lights and power adaptors, requiring the items to be withdrawn from sale. An electrical safety improvement notice has been issued for the failure of a retail outlet to provide safety information with the decorative rope light offered for sale.

The ESO has developed a media strategy to raise consumer awareness of potential hazards associated with the inappropriate use, handling and placement of decorative Christmas lighting. This strategy includes presentations by an ESO inspector on current affairs television programs and the distribution of a revised brochure providing safety hints on the purchase and use of decorative lights, as well as the development of media releases for circulation to all media outlets.

ESO officers are also working with staff of the Department of Emergency Services in providing media information in respect of the risks of fire and electrocution associated with the use of faulty, damaged or unapproved decorative lights.