



# ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY ELECTION PRIORITIES - 2022 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE ELECTION

## Policy Priorities for Master Electricians Members

Submitted responses to these policy priorities will be sent to Master Electricians members in the week before the 19<sup>th</sup> of March election, to inform members and their staff of your position on these crucial industry issues.



# Mandatory installation of safety switches on all circuits.

## **THE ISSUE**

The lessons of recent history including the average of 15 tragic preventable deaths a year and the deaths, injuries and fires from the Home Insulation Safety Scandal, has led to changes to the Australian Wiring Rules AS/NZ 3000 mandating the installation of safety switches on all new final sub-circuits. The time is now right to finish the job and install safety switches on all final sub-circuits in the stock of existing homes and businesses of Australia.

Additionally, in the wake of COVID-19 and changing work patterns favoring a greater proportion of “work from home”, every Australian home is now potentially a workplace and subject to relevant OH&S legislation mandating the installation of Safety Switches on power circuits.

Despite the lives that could be saved by safety switches, no state or territory in Australia requires safety switches to be installed on all safety switch capable circuits. AS/NZ 3000 mandates safety switches be installed on all new installations<sup>1</sup> but the considerable existing housing stocks will take many years to have safety switches installed unless legislation is enacted to facilitate this. In considering any program of installation of safety switches, special attention should be paid to increasing the safety of rental homes.

## **COMMITMENT SOUGHT**

- We call on a future South Australian government to take immediate action to change safety switch laws and support the mandatory fitting of safety switches on all safety switch capable circuits in all existing homes and workplaces.
- A phase in period to be incorporated into the legislation to allow the public to make the necessary changes without imposing an undue financial burden by mandating on the sale of a home or property or upon the change of a tenant in a rental property that the current owner upgrade the circuits to include safety switches on all circuits before sale or reletting the property.
- The funding of public awareness on the importance of safety switches being installed on every circuit in every home and the dangers of DIY electrical work.

<sup>1</sup> <https://masterelectricians.com.au/switchboard>



# Occupational Licensing – Automatic Mutual Recognition (AMR).

## THE ISSUE

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and with identified skills shortages affecting Australian Industry, it is imperative that as a nation we utilize any improvements in the productive capacity of our businesses and our citizens available to us. Maintaining multiple licenses across Australian Commonwealth jurisdictions is costly and inefficient, due to the mobile nature of its workforce and the specialized nature of many businesses, the electrical industry and its workforce is adversely affected by the current occupational licensing arrangements.

It has been estimated by PWC<sup>2</sup> that introducing a comprehensive AMR scheme could result in an increase in productivity of \$2.4 Billion over 10 years and benefit 168,000 people per year including 44,000<sup>3</sup> people that would not have been eligible to work across state jurisdictions previously.

Whilst the State Government has made good progress in this area, we feel that the job needs to be finished. Individual States could embrace AMR but maintain their own regulatory regimes, whilst working towards harmonisation of licensing through the existing COAG arrangements to encourage individual states to come up to the best jurisdictional standard and not down to the lowest common denominator. As a side benefit, a central AMR database would provide reliable statistics for national workforce planning.

## COMMITMENT SOUGHT

- We call on the South Australian Parliament to work with the Federal Government to create an independent authority (along the lines of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency model) to centralize the occupational licensing data under section 51(xx) of the Constitution.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://deregulation.pmc.gov.au/priorities/economic-impact-assessment-amr-occupational-licensing>

<sup>3</sup> <https://deregulation.pmc.gov.au/priorities/improving-occupational-mobility>



# Skills – Electrotechnology’s importance to the Australian economy.

## THE ISSUE

The Joyce Review <sup>4</sup> identified in recommendation 4.1 that; *“Industry-owned and government-registered Skills Organisations to be set up to take responsibility for the qualification development process for their industries and to control their training packages.”* we whole heartedly support this recommendation. Commissioner Joyce in his expanded remarks also said; *“Industry-owned organisations would be best placed to control the pace of change of qualifications for their industries and develop their qualifications more quickly and cost-effectively. Businesses in Australia already have processes for developing national representation and accounting for regional differences within their respective industries. SOs will be able to draw on these processes and bring industries together around their qualification process”* As it currently stands the Electrotechnology training curriculum is dangerously out of date.

The Electrotechnology sector is undoubtedly one of the most vital to the Australian economy, cutting across all industries like no other skill set. Using the definition of the Australian Industry and Skills Committee there are six <sup>5</sup> main industry sectors;

- Electrical Services (Electricians)
- Electrical Engineering
- Industrial Control
- Electronics and Computers
- Refrigeration and Air-conditioning
- Renewable and Sustainable Energy

Whilst all of these are important, in an increasingly connected world and with Net Zero being a central plank of National and International policy settings, *Electronics and Computers* and *Renewable and Sustainable Energy* are especially urgent in this term of government.

## COMMITMENT SOUGHT

- A future South Australian Government to support and advocate on behalf of the Electrotechnology industry to have its own Industry Skills Cluster, recognizing its unique reach across all facets of the economy and not just building and construction.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/strengthening-skills-independent-review-australia-vets\\_1.pdf](https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/strengthening-skills-independent-review-australia-vets_1.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://nationalindustryinsights.aisc.net.au/industries/electrotechnology>



# Distributed Energy Resources (DER)

## THE ISSUE

With the Federal Government committing Australia to Net Zero targets, DER will be a vital part of the solution to meet our international obligations.

To allow for a truly diverse DER strategy that does not overly rely on the large-scale solar farms and makes the best use of rooftop solar in domestic homes, soak tariffs need to work in concert with bi-directional Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers. Only by explicitly planning for this, can we best utilize the growing capacity of EV batteries to soak up the excess supply on the network during the day<sup>6</sup> to then provide the energy needed for nighttime requirements, without the need for other on call sources of generation.

With Solar PV now being a mainstream part of the market, we should consider moving subsidies away from Solar and towards batteries and EV, in concert with home solar to drive consumer behaviour to the DER phase to make the most efficient use of the stocks of rooftop solar in the market.

## COMMITMENT SOUGHT

- An future South Australian Government urgently accelerate the uptake of soak tariffs and other time of use (TOU) tariffs to drive consumption patterns and make the best use of the resource of domestic and commercial solar PV installations.
- A future South Australian Government promote a preference for bi-directional enabled EV's in consumer purchasing incentives.
- A future South Australian Government preference bi-directional enabled EV's in government fleet procurement policy.
- The future South Australian enhance or evolve funding into battery and EV incentives.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.volkswagen-newsroom.com/en/press-releases/convenient-networked-and-sustainable-new-solutions-for-charging-electric-volkswagen-models-7695>



# Power of Choice Metering (POC) – Delivering on the promise of “choice” and “efficiency”.

## THE ISSUE

Power of Choice (POC) metering reforms were designed to promote choice and efficiency in the delivery of energy to the end point consumer. Whilst they have partly delivered on the promise of choice however more work needs to be done with tariff reform in a DER environment and recognizing the potential of “smart” meters. The promise of efficiency has not been achieved and in fact the delivery of metering services has been made considerably more complex with an overall increase in delay for new connections and for metering changes.

One of the key objectives of the reforms was to increase Demand Side Participation (DSP)<sup>7</sup>. With the advances in technology since the POC review<sup>8</sup> in 2012 and the opportunities offered by battery technology and EV in being able to drive DER efficiencies in the energy market, we believe that this needs to be updated to reflect not only the changes in technology but also the government’s commitment to Net Zero and carbon reduction targets.

We note that the South Australian government is currently running a consultation on speeding up the rollout of Digital Smart Meters. MEA firmly believes that a review of the POC agenda could go a long way to facilitating this.

## COMMITMENT SOUGHT

- The South Australian Parliament to review the POC agenda and metering rules landscape with a focus on improved processes and DER opportunities.
- A future South Australian Government to change legislation to enable suitably qualified Electrical Contractors to become authorized service providers (ASP). Empowering them to install and exchange electrical meters to reduce delays and increase efficiencies for consumers and reduce costs for distribution network operators, metering providers and the consumer.
- The South Australian Parliament review the effectiveness of current “ring fencing” arrangements where DNSP’s have metering provider businesses in addition to their network provision status and the negative effect and delays experienced in coordinating metering changes.
- In line with our submission on DER, rationalize some of the agencies and processes in the retailing and metering environments to remove complexity and promote efficiency.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.aemc.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/e78d940f-7257-4e5b-8a0d-b7f968d1f988/Directions-Paper.PDF>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.aemc.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/2b566f4a-3c27-4b9d-9ddb-1652a691d469/Final-report.pdf>



# Harmonised Security of Payments Framework – Delivering on the Murray Review

## THE ISSUE

The Building and Construction Industry accounts for 20% of all insolvencies across all sectors<sup>9</sup>. As identified in the Murray Review<sup>10</sup> the most vulnerable businesses in the supply chain are sub-contractors and are especially vulnerable to interruptions of cash flow.

In the wake of the COVID19 Pandemic, with Job Keeper and relaxations to the rules regarding insolvency, coupled with a recent period of increased consumer spending from pent-up demand and government incentives. There is good intelligence<sup>11</sup> to suggest that there is a high probability of a wave of business failures in the next term of Parliament. This will be increased due to fixed price contracts entered into by builders, but massive upwards pressure on costs of builders with already tight margins and poor cash flow exposure

Whilst governments cannot control all aspects of the economy and prevent unprofitable businesses failing, it can ameliorate foreseeable risks to many SME's by taking decisive action on some of the outstanding recommendations in the review especially with respect to the use of statutory trusts as laid out in recommendation 85 of the Murray Review, and by driving a nationally consistent approach. The Commonwealth could use Section 51 (i), and (xx) of the Constitution to give effect to this.

## COMMITMENT SOUGHT

- The South Australian Parliament seek urgent agreement with other States for a one tier Nationally consistent Security of Payments system.
- Consideration of the implementation of deemed statutory trust accounts to secure monies owed to sub-contractors.
- The South Australian Parliament seek urgent agreement with the States for the nationally consistent application of recommendation 84 of the Murray Review regarding Unfair Contract Terms.
- Call for, and support industry in reviewing Australian Standards (AS) AS 2124 and AS 4000, which have not been reviewed since the mid 1990's and do not reflect current contract law standards .

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[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Economics/Insolvency\\_construction/Report/c02](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Economics/Insolvency_construction/Report/c02)

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[https://www.sasbc.sa.gov.au/files/1042\\_review\\_of\\_security\\_of\\_payment\\_laws\\_final\\_report\\_published.pdf](https://www.sasbc.sa.gov.au/files/1042_review_of_security_of_payment_laws_final_report_published.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.jirschsutherland.com.au/latest-news/australias-construction-sector-ticking-time-bomb/>

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# Return to Business as Usual.

## **THE ISSUE**

Businesses and the public have overwhelmingly complied with the extra legislative, red-tape and human resource challenges that have been borne by businesses in South Australia. These should now be removed as the end of the pandemic approaches.

## **COMMITMENT SOUGHT**

- The South Australian Parliament to repeal all COVID restrictions and emergency legislation
- All business and tracking information gathered during the pandemic for the purposes of contact tracing be destroyed.