

# DRAFT SECOND READING SPEECH

HON. ADAM BROOKS MP

## *Occupational Licensing National Law Repeal Bill 2016*

*\*check Hansard for delivery\**

Madam Speaker

The licensing of occupations such as electricians, plumbers and gas fitters is administered through Tasmania's *Occupational Licensing Act 2005*.

Each State and Territory has their own legislation for the administration of licensing and these differ significantly between jurisdictions. This makes it expensive and complicated for practitioners and companies that work across jurisdictions.

For this reason, a meeting of COAG in 2009 agreed to pursue national licensing laws that would harmonise the requirements for licensing in each State and Territory, allowing practitioners to easily move between jurisdictions with just one licence.

As a result of this agreement, the *Occupational Licensing National Law Act 2011* was established in Victoria. This national Act established the National Occupational Licensing Authority (NOLA) as the body responsible for the administration of the national licensing system.

Each state, including Tasmania, was then required to adopt this national law. The Act was passed by the Tasmanian Parliament with some parts proclaimed in December 2011, thus making these parts of the national Act the law in Tasmania.

Although the now Government supported this legislation in March 2011, at the time we expressed concerns about how it was going to work in practice. There were always going to be winners and losers as policy makers sought to reach agreement on what a national licence would look like, and how the differences between States and Territories would be addressed, to ensure that licensees had the knowledge they needed to operate effectively in any jurisdiction.

I know that considerable time and effort was expended just on specifying the electrical licence – my own particular area of interest as a former holder of an electrical worker's and contractor's licence – and it soon became clear that the whole exercise was going to be too expensive and take too long to accomplish.

These concerns led to COAG deciding in December 2013 to wind back the reforms by disestablishing NOLA and requiring each jurisdiction to repeal their legislation that applies to the national Act.

The Government therefore seek to repeal the Occupational Licensing National Law Act 2011 to fulfil the Tasmanian Government's commitment to the COAG agreement.

Although some sections of the Act have been proclaimed and commenced in 2011, the administrative processes to implement these sections have not been initiated.

None of the required licensing bodies or funds have been established and no changes have been made to existing processes.

The National licensing law has no effect on the Tasmanian *Occupational Licensing Act 2005*.

This means that repealing the legislation is very straightforward because there are no processes or administrative bodies to unravel.

Discussions continue at a national level with regard to National Mutual Recognition as an alternative approach to simplifying cross-jurisdictional licensing by allowing any practitioner with a valid licence in one jurisdiction to automatically be granted a licence in any other jurisdiction, and I will be supporting this government's continued involvement in these discussions.

Madam Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.