

FACT SHEET

ELECTRICITY SAFETY BILL 2020

The new Electricity Safety Act 2020 will:

- regulate the safety and maintenance requirements of electricity infrastructure, electrical installations and electrical equipment; and
- regulate the safety requirements of certain activities near electricity infrastructure and electrical installations; and
- apply current technical standards, to ensure the safety of electricity infrastructure, electrical installations and electrical equipment, so that they are designed, maintained and managed in a manner that protects persons and property.

Existing electricity safety laws are to be consolidated and maintained in the proposed Bill. Some provisions have been modified where appropriate, to reduce duplication and improve flexibility in adopting and managing new electrical technologies, as they develop and are introduced.

The Bill introduces:

- a new statutory authority, the Director of Electricity Safety (Director), has the electricity safety functions and powers formally assigned to the Regulator and workplace health and safety Secretary under the *Electricity Supply Industry Act 1995* and Secretary under the *Electricity Industry Safety and Administration Act 1997*. The Director may issue electricity safety orders, make determinations and adopt or issue codes of practice. Director's orders, determinations and codes of practice allow the speedy adoption of new technologies and standards, and improve the management of any related electricity safety matters.
- the adoption of the national Electrical Equipment Safety System requirements, in respect of the approval, marking, supply and management of in-scope electrical equipment, to replace the existing electrical appliance legislative requirements.
- mandatory Electricity Network Safety Management Systems for electricity entities that own or operate electricity networks, to comply with the nationally agreed standards.

The Bill also has taken the opportunity clarify and modernise existing requirements relating to:

- the interpretation of electricity infrastructure and electrical installation, to ensure simplicity and consistency in understanding.
- the maintenance and operation of electricity infrastructure and electrical installations, that is to be conducted with due care of the electricity safety risks and good industry practice.
- the ownership of, and the access to, electricity supply lines and aerial wiring systems for maintenance.
- the periodic inspection, testing and maintenance requirements of non-residential installations (including aerial wiring systems), electrical installation not connected a network and cathodic protection systems, to help mitigate electric shock and fire risks. This adopts the findings of coronial inquests and recent reports into bushfires.
- the electrical safety requirements associated with:
 - the connection of electrical installation to the network and verification it is safe to connect;

- energising electricity assets and verification of compliance with prescribed standards to ensure they are safe to energise for the first time or after being isolated;
- safe work envelope spaces, and vegetation clearance spaces, that are applicable to all electricity assets;
- restrictions on certain work in close proximity to electrical assets; and
- identification of electricity assets, prior to commencement of work activities.
- Electricity Safety Officers, appointment and management by an electricity entity, and their limited powers relating to safety in the new Act.
- Authorised Officers appointed by the Director will have powers to enforce the new Act.
- mandatory reporting to the Director of serious electrical accidents.
- updated specifications for Safety Management Systems (replaces electricity safety management schemes), including their acceptance, management and audit.
- updated provisions for the coordination and management of cathodic protection systems.

This Bill will initiate;

- the repeal of the *Electricity Industry Safety and Administration Act 1997*.
- consequential amendment to the;
 - *Electricity Supply industry Act 1995*; and
 - *Occupational Licensing (Electrical Work) Regulations 2018*.