

Proposed licence exemptions for the construction of electricity and gas distribution systems by third party developers

Consultation paper

Protecting the integrity and safety of construction
through qualified licenced electrical contractors.

Master Electricians Australia (MEA) is the trade association representing electrical contractors recognised by industry, government and the community as the electrical industry's leading business partner, knowledge source and advocate. Our website is www.masterelectricians.com.au

As a leading representative body in the electrical industry, it is our duty to ensure the integrity and competency of skilled electrical work is performed by skilled licenced electrical contractors (and their workers) with Cert III qualifications. Whilst MEA does not hold an opinion whether property developers and other third parties developing electricity distribution networks should obtain a licence or exemption, we do have a responsibility to ensure the supervision and testing of electrical work conducted is performed by licenced electrical contractors and their workers.

The electrical industry has very high entry barriers including:

- Four year apprenticeship;
- Post-trade qualifications;
- Relevant licencing & insurance requirements; and
- Inspection auditing and reporting regimes.

This is required to ensure the safety of the industry is maintained. Work completed incorrectly can and will result in electrical deaths of not only those undertaking the work but possibly other contractors, consumers and the public.

It is for these reasons MEA strongly urges the explicit formal recognition (in either the regulations or conditions) of the mandatory requirement for qualified licenced electrical contractors to be utilised in the electrical construction, testing and supervision functions throughout construction. While it is already a requirement under the *Electricity (Licencing) Regulations 1991*, we expect to see it unequivocally declared with consequence if failed to be achieved.

We look forward to seeing the outcome of the licencing/exemption decision and are available for further discussion regarding the inclusion of licenced electrical contractors in the creation of mandatory requirements.

