

Review into the NSW Home Building Act

Submission by the Australian Council of Trade Unions to the Review into the NSW Home Building Act

ACTU Submission, 13 October 2021
ACTU D. No 52/2021

Since its formation in 1927, the ACTU has been the peak trade union body in Australia. There is no other national confederation representing unions. For over 90 years, the ACTU has played the leading role in advocating in the Fair Work Commission, and its statutory predecessors, for the improvement of employment conditions of employees. It has consulted with governments in the development of almost every legislative measure concerning employment conditions and trade union regulation over that period.

The ACTU consists of affiliated unions and state and regional trades and labour councils. There are currently 43 ACTU affiliates. They have approximately 2 million members who are engaged across a broad spectrum of industries and occupations in the public and private sector.

In making this submission the ACTU supports and reiterates the submission made by the Electrical Trades Union of Australia (ETU). Safety at work is a principal concern for working people, and at each opportunity it is incumbent upon Governments to improve practices and guidelines to ensure workers have a safe working environment, free from physical and psychosocial hazards. As a matter of principle, the union movement supports harmonisation of standards between jurisdictions to the highest common standard. This ensures that workplace standards across the country reflect best practice in terms of safety, rights, and opportunities afforded to workers.

As a signatory to the Intergovernmental Agreement for Regulatory and Operational Reform in Occupational Health and Safety, the NSW Government adopted objectives to improve the health and safety of Australian workers, and to work cooperatively to harmonise OHS legislation. The Government should seek to achieve these objectives, as their principles are applicable to electrical licensing and electrical safety.

As the ETU submission outlines, the current regulatory framework in NSW is substandard and other states have laws and regulations which better achieve the common objective of no workplace deaths and the minimisation of property damage. Each state and territory has made significant progress in certain areas to improving the regulation of home building. The NSW Government should ensure it is replicating best practice in these states including, dedicated industry safety officers for effective and specialist workplace compliance, a dedicated inspectorate, independent apprentice testing, and effective certification of safety equipment.

The ACTU urges the NSW Government to engage with unions representing workers in the building and construction industry, like the ETU, to develop best practice improvements to the home

building industry. The voice of workers is critical to ensuring a safe workplace and effective laws and regulation.

address

ACTU

Level 4 / 365 Queen Street

Melbourne VIC 3000

phone

1300 486 466

web

actu.org.au

australianunions.org.au