

## Introduction

Recommendations from independent reviews into Queensland's electrical safety regime during 2001 were the main catalyst for change in electrical safety in Queensland and the driving force behind the development of the new *Electrical Safety Act 2002* (the Act) and *Electrical Safety Regulation 2002* (the Regulation).

The new stand-alone electrical safety legislation fundamentally changed Queensland's approach to electrical safety; establishing a Commissioner for Electrical Safety, an Electrical Safety Board and three Board committees to advise the Minister on electrical safety issues. Additionally, an independent State-wide electrical safety inspectorate was established to administer and enforce the new legislative requirements.

One of the responsibilities of the Electrical Safety Board is the development of a five year strategic plan for improving electrical safety in Queensland. The intent of the plan is to identify priority areas for improvement in electrical safety, and strategies to reduce electrical incidents and subsequent fatalities, serious injury and property damage in these priority areas.

The first such strategic plan, the *Electrical Safety Plan for Queensland 2003–2008*, was launched in late 2003. Implementation of strategies contained in the inaugural plan has seen an overall improvement in Queensland's electrical safety performance. Over the life of the first plan, the five year moving average rate of electrical fatalities has decreased from 1.97 electrical fatalities per million population as at June 2003 to 1.19 as at June 2008.

The *Electrical Safety Plan for Queensland 2009–2014* (the Plan), has been developed to build on the achievements of the past five years and to further improve electrical safety for tomorrow's Queensland. The Plan's goal over the next five years is the elimination of all preventable electrical deaths. The Plan uses an evidence-based approach to specifically target areas where past electrical fatalities have occurred and also increasingly focus on areas of concern related to serious electrical incident reports and possible emerging issues. This approach aims to reduce electrical fatalities by reducing serious electrical incidents, which are often precursors to fatalities.

## Factors underpinning the Plan

### Role of the Electrical Safety Board

The primary function of the Electrical Safety Board is to give advice and make recommendations to the Minister about policies, strategies and legislative arrangements for electrical safety in Queensland.

The Board's role includes:

- developing a five year strategic plan for improving electrical safety in Queensland;
- periodically evaluating and annually updating the five year strategic plan;
- advising the Minister about state, national and international electrical safety issues;
- considering and making recommendations on issues the Minister refers to it;
- reviewing the appropriateness of provisions of the Act, including any regulations, ministerial notices and codes of practice made under the Act;
- establishing working parties as appropriate and setting their procedures;
- ensuring industry has been adequately consulted on proposed codes of practice;
- promoting electrical safety in workplaces and the broader community; and
- giving advice and making recommendations to the regulator under the *Electricity Act 1994* about the energy efficiency and performance of electrical equipment.

## Role of the Electrical Safety Office

The Electrical Safety Office is located within the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations. The Electrical Safety Office is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of strategies to improve electrical safety in Queensland.

The role of the Electrical Safety Office includes:

- development of the legislative framework, subordinate legislation and standards for electrical safety;
- strategic policy advice to the Minister on electrical safety matters;
- advice to statutory bodies including the Electrical Safety Board, the Electrical Safety Education Committee, the Electrical Licensing Committee and the Electrical Equipment Committee;
- inspection (including audits, incident investigations and some fire investigations), advisory and enforcement activities to promote compliance with electrical safety laws and standards;
- information, education and training activities to assist industry employees and the community reduce the risk of death and injury from electrocution, fire and explosion and improve electrical safety; and
- management of registration, licensing, approval (electrical equipment) and accreditation regimes required under the Act.

## Electrical Safety Office business plan

There is no direct accountability relationship between the Electrical Safety Board and the Electrical Safety Office, but the priorities of the Electrical Safety Office are driven by the five year Electrical Safety Plan for Queensland developed by the Board.

This plan outlines the high level strategies, goals and targets to support improvements in electrical safety in Queensland over a five year period. It is supported by the business plan of the Electrical Safety Office, which describes the annual activities and milestones to be undertaken. The Electrical Safety Office's business plan will prioritise the implementation of five year strategies, taking into account available resources.

Further, the Electrical Safety Office supports the Board's strategy development and decision-making through the provision of data, information and analysis.

## Relationship between the Electrical Safety Board and Electrical Safety Office

