Inquest into the death of Matthew Trent Ross

Matthew Trent Ross died on 11 July 2013 at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. Matthew sustained a fatal electrical shock whilst working to install guttering and fascia at a construction site. The coroner found the source of the electrical current was a light fitting timed to activate at dusk which came into contact with the scaffolding Matthew was holding.

Deputy State Coroner John Lock delivered his findings of inquest on 13 April 2018.

The Queensland Government responds to recommendations directed to government agencies at inquests by informing the community if a recommendation will be implemented or the reason why a recommendation is not supported.

The departments named in this response will provide implementation updates until the recommendation is delivered. Further information relating to the implementation of recommendations can be obtained from the responsible minister named in the response.

**Recommendation 1**

The Electrical Safety Office reconsider the various options for the extension of the requirement for the mandatory fitting of residual current devices (including cost benefit analysis), and a draft discussion paper be circulated to key stakeholders and the public for consultation prior to finalisation of its policy position or advice to state government.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Office of Industrial Relations.

On 9 December 2019 the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations responded:

The Office of Industrial Relations is continuing to evaluate options for responding to this recommendation.

On 4 June 2020 the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations responded:

On 23 July 2019 the Honourable Grace Grace MP, Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations wrote to the Commissioner for Electrical Safety requesting he convene an industry roundtable to discuss: safety in the solar farm industry, options for legislative amendment to ensure the Electrical Safety Act 2002 (Qld) (ES Act) keeps pace with this fast growing industry, and emerging technologies and matters that should be addressed in a long term review of the ES Act. The roundtable met three times on 7 August 2019, 9 October 2019 and 20 November 2019.

On 20 January 2020 the commissioner delivered his report, Improving Electrical Safety in Queensland, to the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations. The report makes nine recommendations aimed at ensuring Queensland’s electrical safety laws keep pace with emerging technologies and improving electrical safety in Queensland. The Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations has referred the report and its recommendations to the Office of Industrial Relations for analysis and advice on next steps.
Recommendation 2:
The Office of Industrial Relations in conjunction with the Electrical Safety Office review the circumstances of this case and consider if there should be amendments to the *Demolition work Code of Practice 2013* and/or the *Managing electrical risks in the workplace Code of Practice 2013* that mandate:

- an electrical isolation certificate be obtained by the principal contractor for any demolition or dismantling working in any building structure
- further that any electrical isolation certificate should provide sufficient information (a plan may be one solution but there may be others) to identify the precise area that has been isolated, including any cabling and fittings which have been removed, and if there is any remaining cabling and fittings of the relevant area, as well as details of the method of isolation, including use of lockout and tag-out means and testing to prove de-energised protocols
- a further electrical isolation certificate be mandatory where there is any extension of the scope of demolition and dismantling work.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is in progress.

Responsible agency: Office of Industrial Relations.

On 9 December 2019 the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations responded:

The Office of Industrial Relations supports the coroner’s recommendation to consider whether there should be amendments to the *Demolition Work Code of Practice 2013* and/or the *Managing electrical risks in the workplace Code of Practice 2013* in light of the circumstances of this case.

The Office of Industrial Relations is developing a work program for the five-yearly review of all 40 codes of practice. The recommendations regarding possible amendment to the *Demolition work Code of Practice and/or Managing electrical risks in the workplace* will be considered in the context of the review of the codes.

On 4 June 2020 the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations updated:

As reported in December 2019 the recommendations regarding possible amendments to the *Demolition work Code of Practice and/or Managing electrical risks in the workplace* will be considered when these codes are next reviewed in the work program for the five-yearly review of all 40 codes of practice.