

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND SKILLS COMMITTEE
REPORT NO. 2, 57th PARLIAMENT
on the
WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

INTRODUCTION

On 30 November 2023, the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 (the Bill) was introduced into Parliament.

Following its introduction, the Bill was referred to the former Education, Employment and Training Committee for consideration with a requirement to report to Parliament on the Bill by 23 February 2024. Following changes to parliamentary committees and their portfolios, the Bill was transferred to the Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee (the Committee) for consideration.

On 23 February 2024, the Committee tabled its report in relation to the Bill.

The Queensland Government response to the recommendations made by the Committee is provided below.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends the Bill be passed.

Government response

The Government thanks the Committee for its detailed consideration of the Bill and notes the Committee's recommendation that the Bill be passed.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Office of Industrial Relations develop guidance and resource materials, in consultation with a range of industries, to train and support health and safety representatives in utilising the new powers proposed in the Bill to implement new operational obligations being introduced.

Government response

The Government accepts the Committee's recommendation.

The Office of Industrial Relations will develop guidance and resource materials in consultation with relevant parties to ensure health and safety representatives have the necessary training and support to exercise new powers as proposed in the Bill. Subject to the Bill passing, this material will be developed to support commencement of the relevant provisions in the Bill, which will be fixed by proclamation.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Office of Industrial Relations include consideration of how industry specific knowledge is incorporated into HSR training as part of its review into HSR training, particularly in high-risk industries such as Health, Construction, Transport and Manufacturing. This is to ensure any sector specific aspects of health and safety are covered.

Government response

The Government accepts the Committee's recommendation. The Office of Industrial Relations will consider how industry specific training, particularly in high-risk industries, can be incorporated in health and safety representative training as part of the current review of this training being carried out. The Office of Industrial Relations anticipates the review of health and safety representative training will be completed by April 2025.

Recommendation 4

The Office of Industrial Relations should consult with registered employer and employee organisations as part of its review into HSR training.

Government response

The Government accepts the Committee's recommendation. The Office of Industrial Relations will consult with registered employer and employee organisations as part of its review into health and safety representative training.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that, if the Bill is passed, the OIR consider undertaking an awareness campaign so relevant organisations and workers are fully informed about the changes to who can lawfully represent workers under the new definitions contained within the Bill.

Government response

The Government accepts the Committee's recommendation. The Office of Industrial Relations will implement a communications strategy to promote awareness of the changes brought about by the Bill (subject to passing), including changes relating to which parties are permitted to represent workers on work health and safety issues.