



The Hon Dr Anthony Lynham MP  
Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy

Your ref A60104  
Our refs CTS 19892/20

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4 October 2020

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
Cnr George and Alice Streets  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 11 September 2020, concerning petition No. 3394-20 received by the House on 8 September 2020, regarding approval of the use of hydrocarbon refrigerants and appliances in Queensland.

In response to the petition I tender the following.

The *Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004* (P&G Act) came into force on 31 December 2004. Resources Safety & Health Queensland administers the use of fuel gas under the P&G Act, which includes hydrocarbon refrigerant.

Due to the emerging use of hydrocarbon refrigerant, provisions were written into the P&G Act to specifically outline the safety requirements for refrigeration and air conditioning devices.

The use of hydrocarbon refrigerant is not banned in Queensland.

The approach taken by the Queensland Government is consistent with safety requirements of the relevant workplace health and safety and electrical legislation, and relevant Australian Standards.

The P&G Act complements the other workplace health and safety and electrical legislation and does not add any additional impost, not already covered by the diligent application of the relevant legislation and Australian Standards.

The reported energy savings stated in the petition of 27 to 50 percent for Australian approved hydrocarbon refrigerant appliances are available to Queenslanders if the devices are approved in accordance with the relevant safety requirements.

Refrigeration devices using hydrocarbon refrigerant are approved based on test reports from accredited testing laboratories, or independent approving authorities, and must meet the safety requirements of the relevant Australian Standards and other legislative requirements in all jurisdictions to ensure public safety.

Hydrocarbon refrigeration devices that meet the relevant safety requirements will be approved for use in Queensland.

The use of hydrocarbon refrigerant is regulated in all States by various legislative instruments and there are provisions under the workplace health and safety and electrical legislation in each State to ensure refrigeration and air conditioning devices using flammable refrigerants are approved / certified by a competent person or entity to ensure public safety.

Over the past 10 years there have been three confirmed incidents in other State jurisdictions resulting in two deaths and four serious injuries as a result of the misuse of hydrocarbon refrigerant. There are no reports of serious injury resulting from hydrocarbon refrigerants in Queensland.

After discussion with the other State safety regulators a Flammable Refrigerants Position Paper was developed by the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) in November 2018 to which the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy was a contributor and signatory. This position paper was adopted by the various States and Territories as the instrument outlining the obligations of work health and safety duty holders in the use of flammable refrigerants.

As of 13 August 2020 there are 2800 models of refrigeration devices that use hydrocarbon refrigerant approved for use in Queensland, therefore the Queensland public has access to a wide range of hydrocarbon refrigeration devices if they choose to purchase them.

The petition does not provide any information to support the energy saving claims in relation to New South Wales shopping centres. There is no empirical data to support the energy saving figures quoted in the petition. In fact, the Energy Star rating for hydrocarbon refrigeration devices does not reflect the energy saving outlined in the petition. All approved appliances that use hydrocarbon refrigerant will be listed on the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council's Electrical Equipment Safety System (EESS) website database.

The petition does not provide any documentation to support any mismatch between the legal requirements for the use of hydrocarbon refrigerants in Queensland and the other States or Territories.

In summary, the P&G Act is aligned with the relevant regulatory requirements under the workplace health and safety, electrical legislation and the HWSA Position Paper. The legislation is proven by the lack of reported incidents and the support of many associated industry bodies. The Queensland public has access to approved hydrocarbon refrigerant appliances and the Queensland Government provides the appropriate level of industry oversight to maintain public safety.

This response is provided for tabling in accordance with Standing Order 125(3). Any enquiries regarding this response can be referred to Mr Simon Zanatta, Chief of Staff, on telephone 3719 7360.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Lynham', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Dr Anthony Lynham MP**  
Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy