

IF YOU USE ELECTRICITY, YOU NEED TO READ THIS

My name is Clem Capdevila, owner of Clems Electrical. Over the past two weeks I have been publishing electrical information relating to safety around electricity.

Today, I write to you personally as one who uses and is surrounded by electricity and electrical gadgets, at home, at work and in public.

A brief introduction: I commenced as an electrician, following in my father's footsteps, knowing that one day I would take over the company. In the many years since then, I have asked probing questions regarding the safety, hazards and risks relating to electrical safety in Queensland, but found no satisfactory answers.

As a progressive society we have advanced in the **use** of electronic and electrical gadgets but have limited knowledge about **how** electricity works. In fact, most of us think we are electrically safe already!

Being informed is one way to ensure your safety. So, let us get informed together right now starting from the top.

The main purposes of the **Queensland's Electrical Safety Act 2002** are:

- (a) To prevent people from electric shock
- (b) To prevent property destruction due to electrical fires

But the current infrastructure of the electrical industry has not and cannot achieve the main purposes of the Act.

I prepared and submitted a document in 2019, outlining my concerns over the current problems in the industry. The document identified current problems,

advocated solutions and recommended the need for immediate changes required to comply with the Queensland Electrical Safety Act 2002 and to create a safer Queensland for all of us.

The document was presented to the following industry leaders and politicians, some of whom I met with:

- The Queensland Electrical Safety Office
- The Queensland Commissioner for Electrical Safety
- The Queensland Office of Industrial Relations
- The Queensland Premier
- Politicians in Queensland
- The Prime Minister of Australia

The full document is available on request by emailing me at clem@es1.com.au

The following is a shortened version.

Electrical Safety Report (Solution of Prevention)

(Authored by Clem Capdevila, Electrical Contractor and Entrepreneur in Brisbane) **Date: October 19, 2019**

Electrical shocks, fire and death by electricity occur every year and will continue to do so without adequate preventative measures which can identify a risk **before** a fatal electrical event.

There is a **current, urgent necessity** for an action plan to predict and prevent electrical shocks and deaths, as well as electrical fires, in all electrical installations throughout Queensland.

The 'Solution of Prevention' (eliminating the risk of electric shock and fire) presented in this paper will identify **why**

current systems are inadequate. It suggests some additional adjustments to the existing electrical infrastructure which will eliminate risks to persons and property. This is in line with the core purpose of the Queensland Electrical Safety Act 2002.

Why is the current Electrical Industry infrastructure unable to implement a 'Solution of Prevention'?

There are some main reasons:

1. Electrical testing set by Electrical Industry Standards

Under the rules of mandatory testing, we test 'dead', meaning the power is turned off. To know what an electrical cable is really doing, it must be tested 'live', with the power on. Like a crocodile, you can tickle it whilst it sleeps and keep your arm, but tickle it when it is awake, and you will lose more than your arm! An electrical cable is the same, it responds differently de-energised (turned off) to energised (turned on).

2. Deteriorating electrical components

All electrical components have a life span, at the end of which they can breakdown. An electrical cable has a life span of 30 to 50 years. Prolonging the use of these cables will cause deterioration to the point of creating an electrical hazard resulting in fire or shock.

Electrical power cables in building infrastructures prior to the 1970's and, in some cases as early as the 1990's, are most at risk if original

3. The existing testing requirements set by Electrical Industry Standards

When electricians test, legally they do

not have to perform tests other than what they are called out for.

For example, an electrician visits your home to check your air conditioner. Unknown to you, you have a low voltage on your bathroom taps. The electrician fixes your air conditioner and leaves. This leaves you living with the hidden electrical danger of shock if the voltage reaches a dangerous level.

4. Queensland Government contributions towards Electrical Safety

The Queensland Government has made significant efforts to educate Queenslanders with TV advertisements, websites with valuable information and road shows.

Unfortunately, on a practical level, the information does not go far enough. For example, a TV advertisement states that one safety switch may not be enough. But what does that mean in practical terms for you in your home? Out of the over 8,000 customers I have provided electrical services to over the last 13 years, most people believe that a single safety switch protects everything in their home.

The truth is that add is correct.

Without enabling a 'Solution of Prevention' described below, we are all in some form of electrical danger every day. In the original document I explain these points in greater detail. For now, it is important to know that just because we do not receive an electrical shock every day or have a fire, that electrical danger does exist in new and old homes.

Continued next page



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