

**1998**

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**ELECTRICITY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1998**

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

**Circulated by authority of  
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Minister for Urban Services**

## **Electricity (Amendment) Bill 1998**

### **OUTLINE**

This is an amending Bill. It amends the *Electricity Act 1971* (the "Principal Act").

The Principal Act deals primarily with the registration of electricians and electrical contractors and the testing and registration of certain kinds of electrical articles before they are sold. However, it also contains a provision in section 33 that electrical installations must be successfully tested by a person authorised by the government before they are connected to the electrical distribution system. This forms the basis for a system of government inspections of electrical wiring work. Inspection, which includes testing, takes place after the installation, when the licensed electrician reports that the installation is complete. ACTEW, as the electrical distributor, is responsible for connections and also carried out the inspections until it was corporatised. Responsibility for electrical installations was then separated from responsibility for the distribution of electricity.

The amended legislation provides the basis for a new scheme based on electricians checking their own work ("self-certification"). An electrician who carries out an installation must do so in accordance with AS 3000, the Australian Standard for electrical installations in buildings, structures and premises. The electrical wiring work must comply with the standard when it is complete. If the installation is incomplete, the work has to comply with the standard when it is carried out. This means that an installation reported for inspection is not exempt from the standard if some part of it happens to be incomplete.

The electrician must have the installation tested in accordance with AS 3017, the Australian Standard on testing guidelines for electrical installations, and report the completion and the results of a successful test to the government and the owner of the installation in a standard form. AS 3000 requires the electrician to test the work but the legislation adds the requirement to report the results of a test to the government. The electrician must retain a copy of the report so that the test results are available to the owner or the government if the original is missing. An owner would obtain a replacement copy through the government.

The report may lead to an inspection. All new electrical installations must be successfully inspected before being connected to the electrical distribution system. Additions to existing installation may still require inspection but do not have to remain disconnected from the supply mains until the inspection has taken place.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications.

## CLAUSE NOTES

### Formal clauses

**Clauses 1, 2 and 3** are formal clauses that deal with the short title of the Bill and its commencement and provide that references in the Bill to “the Principal Act” refer to the Electricity Act 1971

### Inspection, testing and passing of electrical installations before connection to mains

**Clause 4** amends section 33 of the Principal Act by replacing the words “an electrical installation that has been the subject of electrical wiring work” with the words “a new electrical installation”. The words concerned specify what electrical installations require testing before connection to ACTEW’s supply mains and the amendment limits the requirement to new installations

### Insertion

**Clause 5** inserts *new sections 33A, 33B and 33C* in the Principal Act.

### *Compliance with Australian Standard 3000*

Proposed *new subsection 33A (1)* requires electrical wiring work to comply with Australian Standard 3000 when the work is completed, or, if the work is incomplete, at the time when the work is carried out.

A penalty of 50 penalty units for a natural person and 250 penalty units for a body corporate is provided for contravention of this provision

Proposed new subsections 33A (2) and (3) state that the disconnection of an appliance, switch, lighting point or socket outlet does not have to comply with this standard. Nor does the reconnection after disconnection or the replacement of an appliance, switch, lighting point or socket outlet have to comply with this standard, if the electrical load is not increased. The regulations may exempt other electrical wiring work carried out in prescribed circumstances.

### *Testing and reporting of electrical work*

Proposed *new subsection 33B (1)* requires the person who carried out an electrical installation to ensure that it is tested successfully in accordance with Australian Standard 3017. Within 14 days of carrying out the test, the person must supply a report of the test result to the Chief Executive and another copy to the owner of the installation. The report must be in a form approved by the Chief Executive.

A penalty of 5 penalty units for a natural person and 25 penalty units for a body corporate is provided for contravention of this provision.

Proposed new subsection 33B (2) requires the person to retain a third copy for two years. The Chief Executive may ask for a replacement copy and the person is then required to provide the copy within 14 days

A penalty of 5 penalty units for a natural person and 25 penalty units for a body corporate is provided for contravention of this provision.

***Exemptions from sections 33A and 33B***

Proposed ***new section 33C*** allows the regulations to exempt electrical wiring work from the requirements of sections 33A and 33B or to exempt it in specific circumstances.

**Entry upon land etc**

**Clause 6** adds to paragraph (1) (c) of section 91 of the Principal Act after the word "with" the words "section 33A and".

Inspection powers appear in sections 91 and 92 of the Principal Act. Paragraph 91 (1) (c) deals with the purposes for which entry upon land may be authorised and the amendment makes checking compliance with AS 3000 one of the purposes.