# **Electricity Safety Bill 2020 – Fact Sheet of its general contents**

The new Electricity Safety Act 2020 will:

* regulate the safety of electricity infrastructure, electrical installations, electrical equipment, and certain activities near electricity infrastructure and electrical installations; and
* apply current technical standards, to ensure the safety of electricity infrastructure, electrical installations and electrical equipment, so that they are designed, maintained and managed in a manner that protects persons and property.

Existing electricity safety laws are to be consolidated and maintained in the proposed Bill. Some provisions have been modified where appropriate, to reduce duplication and improve flexibility in adopting and managing new electrical technologies as they develop.

The Bill introduces:

* A new statutory authority, the Director of Electricity Safety (Director), who may issue electricity safety determinations and adopt or issue codes of practice. Director’s determinations and codes of practice allow the speedy adoption of new technologies and standard and better management of electricity safety issues.
* Mandatory Electrical Safety Management Schemes for owners of electricity networks, which must comply with an agreed national model.

The Bill clarifies and modifies existing requirements relating to:

* Work on electrical installations and infrastructure that is to be carried out with due care of the safety risks.
* Ownership of, and the access to an electricity supply for maintenance, which relate to the point of supply to premises, including of infrastructure that runs across several private property boundaries.
* Periodic inspection, testing and maintenance requirements of electrical installations, including overhead lines, non-residential installations, standalone installations and cathodic protection schemes, to mitigate risks of fires and electric shock. This adopts the findings of coronial inquests and various recent reports on bushfires.
* Safety requirements associated with:
	+ the connection of electrical installation to the network;
	+ energising electricity assets and verification of compliance with prescribed standards so they are fit for purpose;
	+ safe work envelope spaces, and vegetation clearance spaces, that are applicable to all electricity assets;
	+ restrictions on certain activities in proximity to electrical assets; and
	+ identification of electricity assets prior to commencement of certain activities, or new electrical work.
* Electricity Safety Officers appointed by an electricity entity will have limited powers in the new Act.
* Authorised Officers appointed by the Director will have powers to enforce the new Act.
* Mandatory reporting to the Director of electric shocks and serious electric accidents.
* Adoption of requirements of the national Electrical Equipment Safety System.
* Improved specifications for Electrical Safety Management Schemes including their approval, management and audit.
* Improved provisions for the management of cathodic protection systems.