

24<sup>th</sup> August 2020

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP  
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change

Via Email [lily.dambrosio@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:lily.dambrosio@parliament.vic.gov.au)

Dear Minister,

### **Safety Switch Legislation**

I write on behalf of Master Electricians Australia (MEA) regarding the urgent need for the Victorian state government to pass legislation that mandates the retrofitting of safety switches on all capable domestic and commercial circuits in older homes.

You would have no doubt observed the tragic event which saw an electrician killed while working at a Melbourne property last week. Although the full details of this event are not yet known, it should serve as a salient reminder that even qualified electrical professionals can fall victim to electrocution. It also highlights the need to have the most stringent electrical safety standards possible.

Every year, 15 people are killed in Australian homes in electrical accidents that could be prevented if a safety switch was fitted on the electrical circuits. In addition to preventing electrocution, safety switches can also prevent fires from ravaging a property and jeopardizing the lives of the occupants. A safety switch will cut the flow of electricity faster than the critical phase of a heartbeat. In Victoria, it is not mandatory for older homes to have a safety switch installed on each circuit and this poses a severe safety risk.

The new industry standard now requires that safety switches are installed on all domestic and commercial circuits. It is therefore only logical that the state government introduces legislation that brings the laws regarding safety switches into line with the industry practice. The longer the delay in implementing laws that upgrade electrical safety, the more lives we will see lost in Victoria.

Older homes rarely get upgraded and many homeowners have difficulty distinguishing between a safety switch and a circuit breaker. Legislation that requires that safety switches are fitted on all electrical circuits at the point of sale would be an effective way to ensure that existing homes receive the necessary safety upgrades needed.

MEA fully appreciates that governments at all levels are focused on navigating the health and economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this would be a simple but effective way of plugging a legislative gap that would reduce the number of Victorians who die from electrocution each year.

I look forward to hearing back from you and can be contacted on 0400 765 607 or at [mrichards@mea.asn.au](mailto:mrichards@mea.asn.au).

Yours sincerely



**Malcolm Richards**  
**Chief Executive Officer**