

Media Release

Industrial manslaughter sparks industry concern

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Master Builders Western Australia joins industry groups across the agriculture, livestock, transport, building and construction, electrical, communications, hospitality and property sectors in voicing strong concern regarding the State Government's proposed new industrial manslaughter laws.

The proposed new offences are set out in the Work Health and Safety Bill 2019. The bill, introduced in November, is currently before the Legislative Council of Parliament.

Master Builders executive director John Gelavis said a range of industries shared significant concerns about the impact and unintended consequences of the laws, which apply to businesses and the public sector across the state.

"The laws stand to negatively affect small businesses and those working in them. Given 97 per cent of West Australian businesses are small and medium enterprises, this has an enormous impact that does not seem to have been fully comprehended," Mr Gelavis said.

"Further, the laws also capture the public sector and may have a significant impact on the provision of essential services to the broader community across Western Australia.

"Most concerningly, the laws undermine improvements made in cooperation and safety culture over several decades and pose significant risk to safety outcomes.

"Without consultation on the impact of the laws, including the practical, legal and justice issues arising from them, the government cannot be said to have met due process. It is important to consult with safety experts and those on the ground dealing with safety risks every day."

Master Builders joins industry groups in asking for a meeting with Premier Mark McGowan to discuss the adverse effect of these laws.

"It is important that the State Government understands the business community's concerns. These concerns arise from lived experiences on-the-ground. The strong view is that the laws will not only fail to improve safety outcomes but have a significantly detrimental effect on safety in workplaces. That is not a good result for anyone," Mr Gelavis concluded.

For more information please contact: John Gelavis, Director – w: 9476 9800 m: 0428 884 392