



Submission on Work and Safety Bill 2019

As the peak industry association representing Wall and Ceiling manufacturers and installers in WA, The Association of Wall and Ceiling Industries WA (AWCIWA) are concerned about the severe impact and unintended consequences this bill will have on the wall and ceiling industry.

As an industry Association, AWCIWA strongly supports and encourages our members and the greater wall and ceiling industry in WA to have effective occupational health and safety programs in place to reduce and minimise workplace injuries and accidents.

It is our position that the introduction of these industrial manslaughter provisions set out in Part 2 of the *Work Health and Safety Bill 2019* (WHS Bill) will have a detrimental effect on employer, employees, apprentices, stakeholders and our industry at large. The AWCIWA is extremely concerned that this bill will

- Severely impact employment of apprentices, creating a contraction in skilled labour in our trade; The lack of skilled labour in our trade will lead to less qualified tradespeople on site
- Unqualified tradespeople will not have had any formal training through their apprenticeship and will therefore miss out on the valuable WHS training that assists in changing the culture of the workplace
- More unskilled labour will lead to more workplace accidents
- Less reporting from employers of all workplace accidents in fear of retribution/fines
- Illegitimate employment procedures – Employers will avoid directly employing tradespeople and only use them as sub-contractors – this will encourage more sham contracting.
- Sham contracting leads to less skilled workers, workers compensation premiums not being paid, superannuation not being paid, taxes not being paid.
- Concerns that larger well-funded building and construction organisations will abdicate all responsibility and “pass the buck” (or the liability) onto the contractor. Further to this, the larger well-funded construction organisation will intimidate and coerce a contractor into holding all responsibility rather than the appropriate PCBU being held accountable.

As prefaced in this Statement from Industry, AWCIWA strongly advocate for effective WHS programs in the workplace, we believe this should be achieved by supportive and well-funded training and education to promote a cultural change in the workplace. This should start with school students before they undertake a career choice and should be the responsibility of all workers, without end. It is unlikely the introduction of these laws will change poor workplace behaviour; our concern is that it will simply pass the buck.

An alternate to this proposed law that would benefit both our members and the industry would be the introduction of some form of mandatory registration. At present there is no minimum requirement to become a ceiling fixer. Increasing the skill level of the tradesperson will have a flow on effect to safety on the worksite.

The AWCIWA support this joint submission.

Rachel McMahon – President AWCIWA