

UEERA0051 Review

FED

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ELECTRICIANS
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Master Electricians Australia (MEA) is the trade association representing electrical contractors recognised by industry, government and the community as a leading business partner, knowledge source and advocate. You can visit our website at www.masterelectricians.com.au

MEA commends Powering Skills Organisation (PSO) for addressing stakeholder feedback regarding concerns with Unit of Competency (UoC) *UEERA0051: Install, commission, service and maintain air conditioning systems* and supports the proposed changes.

MEA wishes to take the opportunity to express its own concerns about air-conditioning and refrigeration mechanics working beyond the scope of their Restricted Electrical Licence (REL) and the necessity of ensuring tasks performed under the REL remains limited. MEA members have reported such breaches and raised significant safety risks regarding this type of work. It is crucial that REL holders are held to the highest standards of compliance, with strict enforcement for any breaches. Without this, there is concern that such violations could become more common, endangering the safety of customers, workers, and the wider public.

Recently in South Australia (SA) the scope of the SA REL was extended, without prior industry consultation, allowing Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics to select and install interconnect cables and cables that run from the isolator to outdoor and indoor units. These tasks are objectively electrical installation work, to be performed only by licenced electrical workers.

In response to significant industry pushback (including support from the Queensland Electrical Safety Commissioner) which stressed the safety, legal, and compliance risks associated with this concerning extension, the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs SA temporarily halted the implementation of these changes to allow for consultation with industry stakeholders.

MEA is alarmed by the ongoing advocacy from the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Industry to allow for this REL extension. MEA, and the wider electrical industry argues this should remain the responsibility of licensed electrical workers. Such an extension of the REL would not only jeopardise the safety of employees, households, and the general public, but also place air conditioning and refrigeration mechanics outside the limits of their REL. Such a shift could complicate the verification process and the issuance of compliance certificates for the installation work carried out by these mechanics.

MEA urges the PSO to take these concerns into account in any future amendments to the draft proposals, to prevent any further expansion of the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration REL's scope.

We look forward to the final outcome of the amended UoC *UEERA0051: Install, Commission, Service and Maintain Air Conditioning Systems*.