

Annual Activities Report

FINANCIAL YEAR 2019-2020

STANDING COMMITTEE OF OFFICIALS (SCO)

Secretariat: c/o Electrical Safety Office Queensland
GPO Box 69, Brisbane QLD 4001

✉ eess.secretariat@oir.qld.gov.au

Prepared for: EESS Ministerial Oversight Committee (MOC)

Reviewed by: EESS Standing Committee of Officials (SCO)

Author: SCO Secretariat.

Date approved: November 2021

Message from the SCO Chair

Donna Heelan, Executive Director, Electrical Safety Office, Queensland



This is the first annual report of activities overseen by the Standing Committee of Officials (SCO) for the Electrical Equipment Safety System (EESS). This report covers the financial year 2019-2020 and gives electrical safety regulators the opportunity to highlight activities undertaken to improve consumer electrical equipment safety throughout Australia and New Zealand in that period.

The 2019-2020 financial year did not come without its challenges, both in the regulatory environment and globally with the world grappling with the COVID-19. This has impacted on electrical equipment supply chains and supplier's ability to get new products to the market. However, throughout the year, regulators and industry have worked together to ensure electrical safety has not been compromised, and I will briefly touch on some of the highlights of the year as well as some of the challenges that we have seen.

Highlights include:

- the establishment of the SCO Equipment Working Group (EWG), to monitor the operational and technical functions of electrical equipment safety, working at that technical level with industry bodies and organisations.
- the establishment of an Online Sales Working Group to identify strategies to address the serious issue of non-compliant equipment being sold online.
- Check testing of electrical equipment. Noting 97 models of eight different types of electrical equipment were tested to check if the equipment complies to their relevant safety standard.
- The starting of a national project to review the current EESS registration and certification databases and identify options for data storage and information sharing of electrical equipment incidents and issues. This has included consulting with stakeholders on issues and concerns with the current database systems as well as identifying opportunities to provide

regulators and industry with more information relevant to their needs.

- Audits and examinations have been undertaken, including 321 audits of responsible supplier information, 189 point of sale audits, 134 audits on certifiers and certificates issued, and 163 examinations of equipment.

Challenges have included:

- The global pandemic of COVID-19 impacting on the electrical supply chains and industry's ability to source electrical equipment to sell. This caused great concern to industry as upcoming incremental changes to safety standards would impact on compliant product they could source. SCO members approved an approach adopted in all jurisdictions (noting New South Wales adopted their own process with similar outcome) to enable a delay in applying the changes to the standards and thus alleviating a pressure point on industry, while not impacting on existing safety levels.
- 26 equipment recalls were undertaken.

Even with challenges to industry due to COVID-19, for 2019- 2020, there were 3,499 Responsible Supplier registrations and renewals via the national registration database and 30,863 equipment registrations (including individual models and families of many models of types of equipment) as at 30 June 2020.

Whilst 2019-2020 had its challenges, 2020-2021 will no doubt bring new experiences. In closing, I acknowledge that the EESS is not adopted by all regulators but there is goodwill across Australia and New Zealand to work together. I am confident the future will bring opportunities for regulators to reduce jurisdictional differences, assist industry, and ensure only safe electrical equipment is sold to the public.

Contents

Introduction	1
<i>Regulators working with industry amongst a global pandemic.</i>	<i>2</i>
Compliance and engagement activities	3
Check testing	3
Audits	5
Recognised External Certification Schemes	7
Engagement activities	7
SCO groups and committees.....	9
Standing Committee of Officials	9
SCO Equipment Working Group	9
SCO Online Sales Working Group	11
EESS related activities – operational functions	12
General	12
EESS registration and certification database updates	12
EESS website	12
Common Certification Scheme	12
Projects	13
Maintenance or modification to the EESS national database	13
<i>EESS IT platform development.....</i>	<i>13</i>

Introduction

This report is prepared by the Standing Committee of Officials (SCO) of the Electrical Equipment Safety System (EESS), to provide a report as required under the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between signatory Ministers of the EESS. The report is for the Ministerial Oversight Committee (MOC) as constituted under the IGA. This Annual Activities Report 2019-2020 highlights the EESS related activities that occurred between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020.

Ministers responsible for electrical safety, who have signed the IGA have appointed senior departmental officers to the SCO to progress the EESS. This includes agreement to:

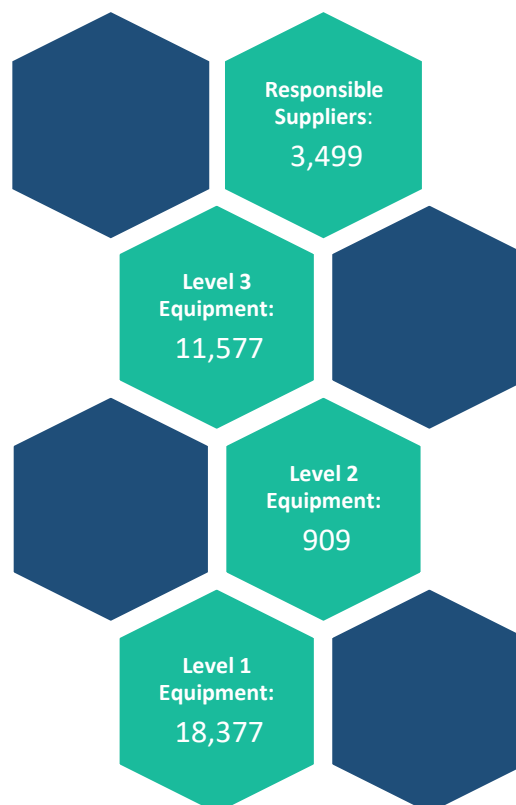
- progress the co-ordination, and co-operation of electrical equipment activities for the uniform interpretation and application of electrical safety requirements in participating jurisdictions;
- co-ordinate approaches to investigations and compliance activities (such as recalls, check testing, audits, prohibitions, and cancellations of registrations); and
- information sharing between jurisdictions.

The SCO oversee the day-to-day operation and administration of the EESS on behalf of the MOC. However, to support the aim that all regulators ensure the supply of safe electrical equipment, the SCO

participants include representatives of all electrical safety regulators in Australia and New Zealand. This representation has all jurisdictions working towards a uniform and consistent approach to electrical equipment safety requirements.

In addition to reporting on details required by the IGA, this report also aims to highlight the various activities and achievements accomplished through 2019-2020.

Number of Registrations as of 30 June 2020



Case Study:

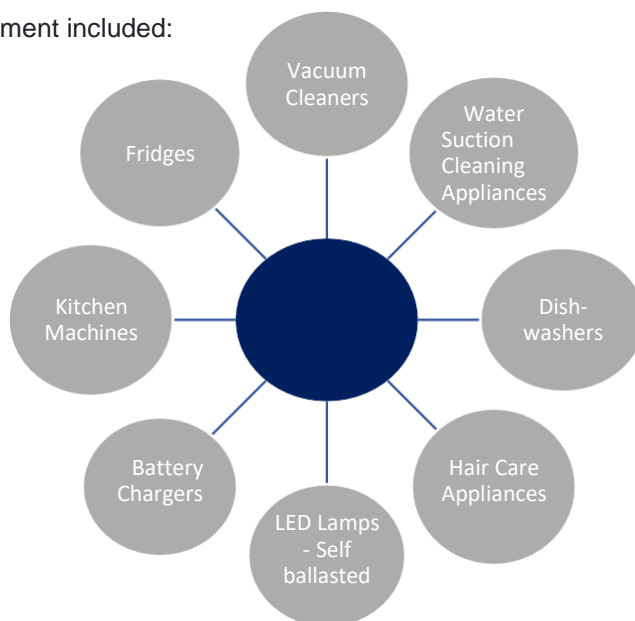
Regulators working with industry amongst a global pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, electrical regulators and industry members worked collaboratively to delay the implementation of incremental safety updates to several standards for electrical equipment, by introducing a longer transition period, while not reducing existing safety requirements. With the majority of industry in lockdown, or unable to work, the changes to design and then manufacturing, sourcing and testing of electrical equipment to show they met the updated requirements could not be achieved. In addition, industry noted that the disruptions to the supply chain resulted in challenges obtaining new stock and proving that stock was compliant to the updated requirements.

To assist the electrical equipment industry, an addendum to the Equipment Safety Rules was issued that stated that the 'relevant standard' for the equipment types included the existing safety standard up until 31 January 2021.

Certifiers were then able to issue an extension of certificate to the certificate holders, providing Responsible Suppliers the ability to continue their registration and continue to supply their existing equipment.

The equipment included:



The electrical industry was supportive of this collaborative approach between the electrical industry and electrical regulators. This action allowed responsible suppliers to be able to source and supply equipment and consumers to purchase safe equipment.

One of the EESS aims is to reduce red tape and burden on the electrical industry. The example outlined above identifies how the EESS can practically operate and achieve this by providing uniform and consistent requirements in all participating jurisdictions. Industry only needed to liaise with one entity (the SCO, who having representation from all jurisdictions was able to agree to, and approve, a common response suitable in all jurisdictions), noting New South Wales adopted their own process with similar outcome.

Compliance and engagement activities

Check testing

Check testing is a regulatory activity, where electrical equipment is purchased at a retail level and subjected to tests to the relevant safety standard to assess compliance. These are the same electrical items, from the same retailers, that the general consumer could purchase. Equipment is selected using a combination of regulator developed information tools and intelligence from the electrical industry. Tests are selected by the SCO Equipment Working Group based on the severity of consequences if non-compliant results are returned. Tests typically include checking for exposure to live parts, risk of fire, and other electrical or mechanical hazards. The equipment types chosen for testing are approved by the SCO.

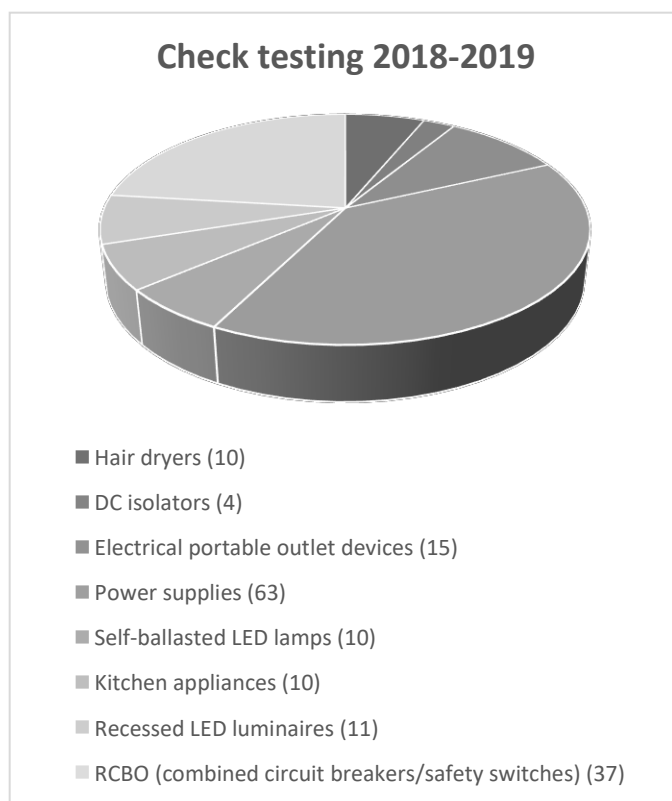
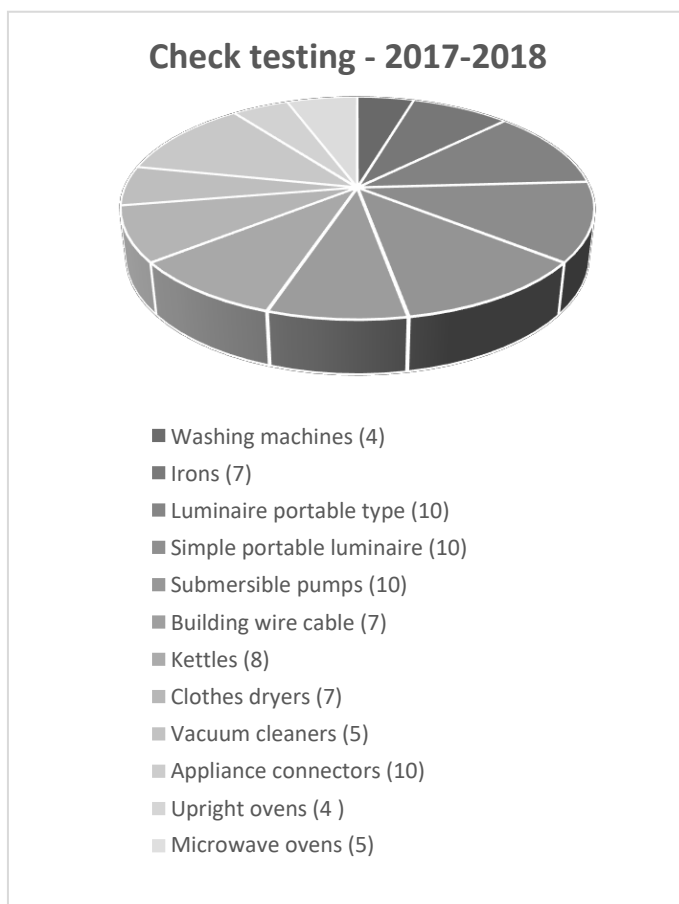
The supplier registration fees for EESS are used in part to provide funding to purchase and test equipment from the marketplace. Regulators use accredited test laboratories to assess if the equipment tested complies with the relevant safety standards.

Regulators take immediate action on identified and verified non-compliances as required, actions can include stop sales, infringement notices and recalls as appropriate the identified risks. Check test results will be subject to separate reports for each year funded, so details of outcomes are not repeated in this report.

Although this is the Annual Activities Report for 2019-2020, check testing for the periods of 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 have been included in this report to provide a complete summary of previous check testing results. These tests were conducted under the intent of the EESS but prior to the signing of the Intergovernmental Agreement.

The following details the equipment check tested in past years.

Note: The numbers identified in brackets are the number of models tested for each equipment type.



For the 2019-2020 financial year check testing of the following equipment was conducted:

10	<p>Ceiling fans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments conducted to AS/NZS 60335.2.80:2016 & AS/NZS 60335.1:2011 + A1-A5 Clauses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 - Protection against electric shock 11 - Heating 19.7 - Abnormal operation - Locked motor test 22.11 - Mechanical stress test on non-detachable parts 22.102 - Suspension system test 27 - Protective earthing 30.2.3 - Flammability
9	<p>Wall switches (electronic)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments conducted to AS/NZS 60669.2.1:2013 Clauses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20.1 - Mechanical strength 24.1.1 - Flammability 16.2 - High voltage test 19.1 - Endurance test 17 - Temperature rise 19.2 - Fluorescent load test
10	<p>Cord-line switches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments conducted to AS/NZS 3217 Clauses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12.1 - Endurance test (CI 13.5 - AS/NZS 3133) 12.2 - Cord anchorage 12.3 - Flammability 12.5 - Impact hammer test 12.6 - Weight impact test
15	<p>Building wire cable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments conducted to AS/NZS 5000.2 Table 2 - Insulation & sheath thickness, conductor resistance, ageing, loss of mass
3	<p>DC isolators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments conducted to AS/NZS 60947.3 Clause 7.1.2.2 – Glow wire testing Appendix ZZ – Marking and instructions, weatherproof tests
16	<p>Flexible heating pads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments conducted to AS/NZS 60335.2.17 Clauses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11.102 - Heating 15 - Moisture resistance 16 - High voltage test 21 - Mechanical strength 25 - Supply connection 30 - Resistance to heat and fire
23	<p>Self-ballasted LED lamps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments conducted to AS/NZS 62560 Clauses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 - High voltage test 9 - Mechanical strength 10 - Temperature rise 12 - Resistance to flame & ignition 14 - Creepage distances & clearances 15 - Abnormal operation
11	<p>Wall switches (electro-mechanical)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments conducted to AS/NZS 3133:2013 +A1 +A2 Clauses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 (CI 8.8.1 - AS/NZS 3100) - Impact test 12.10 - Flammability 12.3 - High voltage before 12.4 - Endurance test 12.5 - Temperature rise 12.6 - High voltage after 2.13 - Florescent load - 10A models AX ratings

Note: The numbers identified in the circles are the number of models tested for each equipment type.

Audits

An audit is an activity where a regulator carries out a series of inspections of a supplier of equipment against selected compliance criteria. Audits are conducted on responsible supplier registration details, and on equipment for sale (in both online retailers and traditional bricks and mortar shops).

The national registration database assists auditors as a compliance tool. It helps inspectors quickly confirm if the equipment they are inspecting has been supplied by a registered responsible supplier and registered to meet legislative requirements.

Equipment examinations have been classified as an audit for this report as while they may have been initiated by a complaint, or an incident, the same process of verifying compliance to EESS requirements as audits mentioned above occurs, along with any regulatory actions from examination outcomes.

Recalls have been classified as audits for this report due to the same process of verifying compliance to EESS requirements as audits. It is also noted recalls may have been initiated from an audit, a check test, an equipment examination or from the responsible supplier identifying an issue and acting proactively.

Responsible supplier audits:

321 audits conducted

18 issues identified which included incorrect registering of electrical equipment i.e. wrong level selected and other minor non-conformances.

Outcomes:

Suppliers were contacted to rectify the non-conformances. Continuation of feedback for database improvement to minimise invalid entries and development of educational materials.

Point of sale audits:

189 audits conducted – online and traditional bricks and mortar stores

100 non-compliances identified:

- Selling unregistered equipment
- Equipment not certified
- Non-compliant equipment

Outcomes:

Notices issued to relevant suppliers with equipment either subsequently being correctly certified and registered on EESS or removed from the market.

Equipment examinations:

163 electrical equipment examinations completed.

Equipment is examined by a regulator as part of an investigation process. These could be due to a complaint, fire, or shock incident.

Results of examinations:

Risk of Shock - 33

Risk of Fire - 112

Other - 18

Examination outcomes can result in stop sales, prosecution or infringement notices, other regulatory notices requiring action by supplier, removal of equipment from sale and recalls as relevant to the risks identified.

Recalls:

26 electrical equipment recalls were undertaken by responsible suppliers and overseen by electrical regulators.

Details of recalled equipment can be found at www.recalls.gov.au

Recalls conducted due to:

Risk of Shock - 14

Risk of Fire - 9

Other - 3

Responsible suppliers are required to take action to provide effective removal or rectification of the recalled equipment. Regulators monitor the recalls to ensure the supplier is taking appropriate action and to consider any further regulatory action required.

Recognised External Certification Schemes

Under the EESS, private companies can be declared as a Recognised External Certification Scheme (RECS). RECS are declared by an electrical safety regulator (in conjunction with all EESS regulators) as being able to issue certificates of conformity to relevant legislation, subject to meeting and following the regulators requirements. This includes having independence from other parts of the design, manufacture, consulting, testing or supply chain to avoid any conflicts of interest, suitable competence and on-going skills maintenance, adequate resources, and an understanding of the EESS. RECS are required to issue certificates in accordance with the published Equipment Safety Rules as information bulletins or general guidance documents issued by EESS regulators.

To ensure RECS are compliant with requirements, including issuing certificates which meet the criteria of the Equipment Safety Rules, audits are conducted by electrical safety regulators.



New applications from organisations not previously accredited: 4

3 applications are ongoing
1 application has been refused



Applications from organisations previously accredited: 2

RECS are declared for five years.
2 applications from RECS whose accreditation period was expiring were received and approved.



RECS surveillance audits: 4

A RECS surveillance audit is conducted on the certifier, reviewing various processes and procedures. These audits may look at staff training records, certification procedures, and compliance to other requirements as detailed in the Equipment Safety Rules.



RECS certification file audits: 130

RECS are required to submit a random selection of certification files they issue (chosen at random, by the regulator) for review. These audits are to check the requirements for certification have been met, and the certificates are issued in accordance with the Equipment Safety Rules.

Engagement activities

Engagement activities are undertaken by regulators to provide equipment safety advice and information to the community, electrical industry, and other stakeholders. Engagement activities occur using different media to create general and targeted messages. Activities can include presentations to stakeholder meetings including industry associations, meetings with individual responsible suppliers or others in the equipment supply chain, emails and other publications explaining aspects of the EESS, and updates on the EESS website.



EESS email enquiries:
2920 enquiries actioned



Engagement events: 15

Note: due to Covid-19, phone calls have been diverted to email requests since March 2020

Industry Event Highlights

Australian Standards Committees

SCO member jurisdictions (who are also part of Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council (ERAC)), participated in multiple standards committee meetings, subcommittee meetings and comments on Australian and International standards drafts throughout 2019-2020. Committee participation included influencing household equipment safety standards in the areas of lighting, electrical accessories, general household goods, and the renewable energy sector.

Importation of LED products

SCO member regulators, using information from Lighting Council Australia and from Federal Department of Home Affairs were able to identify companies who imported LED products. While the information could not be distilled to clearly identify who would be importing in-scope electrical equipment, the regulators nevertheless sent all companies information relating to the requirements of the EESS.

Interim check test results discussions

SCO held a seminar on 13 February 2020 in Brisbane with industry stakeholders to discuss the initial interim results of EESS equipment check testing. SCO reported to industry that 247 models of equipment have been tested in last two years (2017-2018 and 2018-2019). Discussion was held with industry as to how they can assist to drive compliance within their sectors.

Industry association meetings

SCO Secretariat and EESS participating jurisdiction regulators met with industry associations throughout the year. In March and May, the SCO Secretariat met with several industry representatives and associations. In August, the SCO Secretariat met with Ai Group to discuss issues relating to the compliance of equipment. In September, regulators held discussions with individual Responsible Suppliers to discuss their specific situations and effective ways to ensure their compliance.

Liaison with JAS-ANZ.

In October EESS regulators participated in training with JAS-ANZ staff on EESS requirements when auditing RECS certifiers.

SCO groups and committees

Standing Committee of Officials

The Standing Committee of Officials is a collaborative governance forum responsible for the coordination of the day-to-day administration and operation of the EESS and reporting back to the Ministerial Oversight Committee as required. Through the 2019-2020 financial year SCO activities included:

2019-2020 SCO highlights

- Setting up initial governance processes and priorities for the EESS for 2019-2020;
- Approval of Annual Distribution Proposal to spend funds on EESS related activities, including check testing and IT platform review;
- Development of Equipment Working Group to liaise with industry on technical matters;
- Working with all jurisdictions to develop and implement the EESS legislation and supporting framework; and
- First stage of EESS IT Platform redevelopment began (updating responsible supplier registration and certification databases), with the Victorian regulator initiating stakeholder consultation.
- On-line sales issues investigated including how to develop strategies including data collection, coordinated auditing by regulators and consumer education of issues.

SCO Equipment Working Group

After the formation of the SCO, it was identified that to further bolster the capability of the EESS, additional working groups should be established.

The SCO Equipment Working Group (SCO EWG) was constituted (to take the responsibilities of the ERAC Equipment Working group for matters related to the EESS) as a way of ensuring uniformity and consistency in relation to the technical aspects of the application of the EESS. The SCO EWG operates under an agreed terms of reference and reports to the SCO. The following are highlights of work undertaken by the Equipment Working Group:



Meetings: 4

The SCO EWG meetings are conducted in conjunction with the Electrical Regulatory Authorities

Council Equipment Working Group. Both regulatory groups work collaboratively on safety issues, industry engagement, and equipment safety.

The SCO EWG discusses various interpretations of requirements and agree on common approaches to apply. The EWG also participate in the process for classification of risk level for electrical equipment.



Info and guidance material published: 5

Electrical Safety Regulators provide guidance and clarifications from time to time for designers, responsible suppliers, certificate holders and certifiers, in respect to requirements of the EESS. This information is published on the EESS website as information bulletins and guidance documents.

6

SCO Meetings

5

SCO Meeting
Communique's
uploaded to EESS
website

(no communique was developed for meeting 1)

2019-2020 SCO Equipment Working Group highlights

- Selected equipment for the 2019-2020 check testing of electrical equipment;
- Reviewed and made recommendations on the applications of recognised external certification scheme (RECS) applications made to the Queensland regulator;
- Discussed various matters of interpretation and inquiries from industry to ensure consistent approach by EESS regulators;
- Developed and published information documents and guidance material to assist the electrical industry;
- Worked with the electrical industry to identify a process to introduce a longer transition period for introduction of incremental improvements to safety standards as a result of the disruption caused by COVID-19;
- Co-ordinated and participated in activity to review definitions and risk levels of equipment.

Risk level process

In the EESS, all in-scope electrical equipment is classified as a certain risk level: level 1 (low risk), level 2 (medium risk) or level 3 (high risk). This process is dynamic and evolving and allows for changes in equipment definitions or risk levels when lack of clarity of a definition, or safety issues of a type of equipment are identified. The process is overseen and approved by SCO in accordance with the IGA, but operationally undertaken by the SCO EWG.

The process includes review of definitions, review of data relating to the risk of the equipment under review, input and collaboration with stakeholders and industry experts, determining a proposed appropriate risk level for the equipment. This ultimately results in the publication of a definition and a risk level in AS/NZS 4417.2 to ensure information is available to all EESS jurisdictions at the same time.

In 2019-2020 the following activities occurred.

The following risk review activities occurred in 2019-2020:	
Event – equipment definitions	Equipment type
Equipment definitions reviewed (for subsequent risk level review)	Fence energiser
	Iron
	Liquid heating appliance
	Microwave oven

The following risk review activities occurred in 2019-2020:	
Equipment type	Equipment type
Equipment definitions and risk levels reviewed	<p>Condition and Control Device definition and risk level reviewed – recommended remained at level 3</p> <p>Cooing appliance – portable type definition and risk level reviewed – recommended remained at level 3</p> <p>Decorative Lighting Outfit definition and risk level reviewed – recommended remained at level 3</p> <p>Dishwashing machines definition and risk level reviewed – recommended remained at level 3</p> <p>Fans definition and risk level reviewed – recommended remain at risk level 3</p> <p>Socket outlet with supply flexible cord – new definition created, proposed as risk level 3</p> <p>Submersible pump – new definition created proposed as risk level 3</p>
Equipment definitions and risk level published	<p>Building Wire Cable definition reviewed, clarified and published</p> <p>Clothes dryer – edited definition, remained risk level 3</p> <p>Hedge clipper – edited definition, remained risk level 3</p> <p>Miniature overcurrent circuit breaker – edited definition, remained risk level 3</p> <p>Power supply relevant standards updated</p> <p>Supply flexible cord – edited definition, remained risk level 3</p> <p>Tool – portable type – edited definition and relevant standards updated, remained risk level 3</p>

SCO EWG members also participated in the review of the standard, *AS/NZS 3820 Essential Safety Requirements for Electrical Equipment* which was updated and published in accordance with procedures of Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand.

SCO Online Sales Working Group

Meetings: 2

The Online Sales Working consists of several electrical regulators meeting to work collaboratively to undertake research projects and identify strategies to address the serious issue of non-compliant equipment being sold online.

Projects commenced: 1

Initial research on online sales issues, including review of an initial Victoria pilot project to assist Regulators in confirming if electrical equipment being sold online meets the relevant standards.

2019-2020 SCO Online Sales Working Group highlights

- Establishment of the Online Sales Working Group.
- Discussion on pilot project undertaken on ways to check online listings of equipment for sale to assist regulator in auditing online equipment.
- Reviewing strategies for communicating with online marketplaces/sellers to promote EESS requirements.

EESS related activities – operational functions

General

The IGA provides the framework for governance for the EESS and operation of the SCO. This includes ensuring adequate operational actions are taken to maintain the EESS, the databases and other administrative functions.

In 2019-2020 this included issues such as the SCO Secretariat and EESS regulators co-operating to perform various activities including preparing and recording meetings of the SCO and SCO working groups, developing the next Annual Distribution Proposal, processes for dispersing funds as approved by the Annual Distribution Proposal, providing copies of AS/NZS 44217.1 (with rules for use of the regulatory compliance mark (RCM)) to registered responsible suppliers, responding to inquiries, providing hosting and IT support for the EESS registration and certification databases (including repair and upgrades for improved operability of the system).

EESS registration and certification database updates

The EESS Registration and Certification databases are an important part of the EESS system that enables responsible suppliers to register and show they are meeting the EESS legislative requirements. The databases are also the outward public facing system of the EESS where suppliers, retailers, the public and regulators can check information related to verifying electrical equipment being sold meets legislative requirements. Improvements are constantly being considered on how to improve user experiences and to better utilise the information in the system.

For the 2019-2020 financial year, the following are examples of changes implemented on EESS registration and certification platform:

- Adjusting the search facility so when a user presses 'enter', it no longer clears the form and instead initiates the search;
- Increased search functionality, to allow for partial names of models and trades to be used, rather than exact model numbers;
- Fixed an issue where selecting 'view suppliers registered equipment' brought the user to the equipment search page, rather than initiating the search and displaying the results; and
- Fixed a cosmetic issue with the registration of Level 2 equipment, all mandatory fields are now marked with a RED star.

EESS website

In the 2019-2020 financial year the renewed EESS website went live. This website was updated to improve layout, information provided and clarity for responsible suppliers to assist in their understanding of requirements.

During the year information was continually added to the website such as information bulletins and guidance documents, SCO communiques and a copy of the IGA was placed on the website to improve transparency.

Common Certification Scheme

The electrical regulators are working with the Joint Accreditation System of Australian and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) to develop a single certification scheme. Initial work to identify differences between regulators expectations and current JAS-ANZ requirements and combining of agreed requirements was started in 2019- 2020.

Projects

Maintenance or modification to the EESS national database

EESS IT platform development

As part of maintenance and modifications to the EESS National Database SCO approved the Victorian Regulator to lead a project to review and renew the existing EESS registration and certification database and develop further data capture and sharing capabilities. The initial phase commenced during financial year 2019-2020, with consultation with regulators and industry stakeholders on issues and opportunities for improvements on the registration and certification systems, and associated data sharing options, of the current EESS IT systems.