

Media Release

NECA calls on government to continue economic support as survey shows recovery 'hangs in the balance'

The National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) has urged the government to provide strong support for business and apprenticeships in the Budget, as its latest survey of the electrical and communications contracting industry shows the ongoing impact of the COVID pandemic.

Survey respondents' pipelines are rapidly drying up with one in five businesses expecting to run out of work in just one month. Three in four respondents have already applied for government assistance, but are urging the government to do more to ensure businesses can make it through the current crisis.

The most popular measure with respondents was further infrastructure and construction investment (58%), followed by additional support for apprenticeships, through extending subsidies to all business (36%) and supporting mature age (21 years old and over) apprentices (32%).

The backing for apprenticeships comes as leaked data from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment revealed the number of Australians starting apprenticeships and trainees plunged by a fifth over the four months to July compared to the previous year. A two-decade low.

Lise Sperling, NECA Head of Policy and Government Relations said:

"The government has done an excellent job at getting us to this point, but we are not out of the woods yet. As our survey shows, the economic recovery hangs in the balance and what we need now is further support for business so they can make it through this challenging period and rebuild a stronger Australia.

"Our Prebudget Submission outlines measures that would help the electrical and communications contracting industry, and businesses more broadly, and it is pleasing to see the government is implementing similar policies, including bringing forward infrastructure spending and backing apprenticeships.

"What's important is that these initiatives are enacted quickly, so big infrastructure projects can start immediately, creating jobs and protecting existing ones, and money for apprenticeships goes to those training models that work, such as Group Training Organisations."

NECA's Pre-Budget Submission, which outlines a series of policy measures that would stimulate the economy, support business and protect jobs, can be seen [here](#).

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