

MEDIA RELEASE

NECA calls for Federal and State Treasurers to consider unprecedented measures for unprecedented times

National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) CEO Suresh Manickam is urging Federal and State Government to consider a number of measures in an open letter to the Federal Treasurer, the Honourable Josh Frydenberg MP.

To help to protect businesses and jobs, and support the Australian economy as it rebuilds following the COVID-19 crisis, NECA is urging the Government to:

- adopt and employ a holistic approach to supporting apprentices. To this end the recently announced wage subsidy of 50% for apprentice's and trainee's wages that will be made available to small employers should be extended immediately to medium and large employers large employers including group training organisations;
- swiftly act to confirm that the construction and maintenance of electrical and communications installations is an 'essential service' at all levels of Government;
- expedite repair and maintenance, or energy efficiency upgrades, especially in Government buildings that may be unoccupied, such as universities or schools that are subject to closures. All Governments should immediately initiate energy efficient and solar upgrades to Government buildings in time for their reoccupation;
- task all States and Territories to immediately abolish all payroll tax provisions. If the intent of Government is to build and boost the economy, any form of payroll tax is both counter-intuitive and counter-productive and will only serve to impede growth;
- task all States and Territories to immediately adopt one effective single uniformed approach to security of payments. Moreover, that the legislation must clearly ensure that sub-contractors are to be paid in a timely manner and are to be no longer treated as de facto financiers;
- immediately address the detrimental effects of unscrupulous principal contractors who seek to enforce unfair contracts on a 'take-it or leave-it' basis by shifting risk. Unfair contract provisions need to urgently address the transfer of risk from a principal contractor to a sub-contractor, particularly in light of the global health crisis and the viability of businesses;
- treat Saturdays and Sundays as normal working days, such that shifts can be staggered to allowed for a reduction in the number of people on site at any one time. Further, that normal hours in a working day be expanded between 5am and 9pm to allow for two shifts of ordinary hours in a normal working day;
- postpone the next scheduled rise to the Superannuation Guarantee levy for at least 2 years in order to assist recovering businesses; and
- invest in infrastructure and construction projects that will keep industry productive and protect jobs.

A full copy of the letter can be downloaded [here](#).

ENDS

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