

Media Release

NECA Apprentices in Queensland riding the COVID wave

Young Queenslanders are being urged by the National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) not to give up on employment and to consider undertaking an apprenticeship, highlighting that NECA apprentices had not only continued to work, but more young people had taken up an apprenticeship with NECA during the downturn.

Despite Queensland's tertiary education sector seeing major losses in the wake of the pandemic, with general apprenticeship commencement down by 26.3% and university enrolment plummeting to record lows, Queensland NECA Training and Apprenticeships' Michael Horsham is urging young Queenslanders to consider their options within the trades.

"Young people considering their options should not feel debilitated by this year's events," he said. "There are still massive opportunities not only to upskill and be employed, but also to be at the forefront of Queensland's rebuild efforts".

The significant drop in commencements reported by the Queensland government's Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, stands at odds with NECA Training and Apprenticeships in Queensland reporting a 10 per cent improvement in apprenticeship activity from the start of the year, growth which Tom Emeleus, General Manager for NECA Training and Apprenticeships, says is a sign of hope in addressing youth unemployment hitting 16.3% this year.

"It is important to note that JobKeeper has undoubtedly done its job. We use the TAFE system, so our recruitment process is based on demand from business, and when considering the > 90% completion rate of our apprentices compared to the 60% country average, it means that we are well equipped to keep our young people supported, and arm Queensland with tomorrow's talent.

"We have not only survived the pandemic, but boosted numbers, due to the success of our training program, our strong relationships with our host trainers, and the focus of our talented apprentices. Our apprentices understand that to be a NECA apprentice you need to have a passion for electrical work, and an understanding that this is a career choice, not just a job choice".

Key in assisting Queensland's recovery from the pandemic will be jobs within the electrical field. This presents a major opportunity for young people seeking well paid jobs that require a high level of technical skill, allowing them to work directly on projects that will shape the future of Queensland; from new infrastructure projects to powering Australia's energy sector.

A recent standout of the NECA apprenticeship program is Rahil Prasad who has been hard at work supporting local Queensland business Green Switch Electrical.

"Given how tough people are doing it in Queensland, it's a pleasure to be back at work and helping folks recover," Rahil said. "I'm glad to have the opportunity to work, and NECA has played a huge role in assisting me to be able to learn and do my bit.

"It's important that young people like myself are aware of the opportunities around them, beyond the conventional offering of university, and that they feel comfortable rebuilding and moving forward. What better way to do that than literally helping rebuild as an electrician?".

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