

A WORD FROM THE CEO

As we meet the new decade head on, with new and emerging challenges in our industry, we do this in light of what has been an unprecedented start to the year.

While much of the nation is still coming to terms with the catastrophic bushfires that have swept across the country, we are now assessing the impact of the global coronavirus [COVID-19] outbreak. Aside from the health implications, as an industry, we are anticipating inevitable supply chain issues and a shift in overall market confidence.

However, what is encouraging to see is our suppliers and manufacturers working behind the scenes to keep the wheels of the electrotechnology industry turning.

We are in daily contact with our members, wholesalers and manufacturers to ensure the industry remains up to date with the changing market. We urge contractors to only purchase products they need, to avoid inconveniencing other contractors and having unnecessary stock on hand.

In response to the coronavirus outbreak NECA has also made the difficult decision to cancel the upcoming conference scheduled to be held from 10-13 July in Darwin.

The health and wellbeing of our members, sponsors, business partners and employees is our highest priority and we thank you for your understanding during this time.

The NECA Conference is a key event on the industry calendar, made possible through the ongoing support and commitment of our valued sponsors and business partners. We thank our members, sponsors and business partners who make these conferences a success year after year.

Members should follow the coronavirus disease advice of relevant authorities and stay informed by monitoring www.health.gov.au. NECA has also developed a checklist available on the NECA website to help ensure your workplace is prepared for COVID-19.

REBUILDING AUSTRALIA

Like many of us, it is unsurprising that all levels of government are overwhelmed by both the scale and complexity of these unprecedented bushfire and weather events, and critically, the coordination required to facilitate requests for assistance, with generous offers of assistance.

Recognising that there is no turnkey solution, NECA continues to engage with government, not for profit organisations and industry groups such as the Insurance Council of Australia, to assist our members to make a meaningful contribution to recovery and rebuild efforts. Keeping top of mind, these efforts will be needed not only now, but over the next 18 to 24 months and beyond.

We are also mindful that catastrophic events tend to bring out both the best, and worst in people. Often in the wake of such events we see emergency people and tradespeople going above and beyond. Sadly though, we also receive reports of unscrupulous and unlicensed tradespersons attempting to take advantage of those most in need.

NECA is actively working alongside key stakeholders involved in the recovery and rebuild, urging residents to be vigilant and the importance of asking any tradesperson for their licence details. Doing this will not only safeguard consumers, but also ensure the safety of professionals in our industry. We should all adopt a zero-tolerance to this unacceptable behaviour and I'd encourage anyone who is aware of unlicensed activities to report it to the relevant State regulator or NECA.

GETTING SMART ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY

NECA has long advocated for more to be done to promote energy efficiency in Australia's housing stock. Similar, to the successful energy efficiency scheme introduced to help improve standards across the commercial buildings sector.

Recent research by Sustainable Buildings Research Centre, University of Wollongong has highlighted Australian home owners could see significant increases to the value of their homes with the introduction of an energy efficiency rating scheme, in addition to the immediate benefits of cutting energy bills. It is reassuring to see that this research supports NECA's energy efficiency policy.

But what the research doesn't show is the massive safety benefits that would come with upgrading Australia's existing housing stock to be more energy efficient. A lot of energy is currently lost through old and degrading wiring and equipment – not only is this inefficient, it can also be very dangerous. In fact, electrical defects are one of the most common causes of residential fires in Australia.

As an industry, we are well placed to be advising home owners on proactive steps that can be taken to ensure their homes are energy efficient, reduce energy demand and bills, as well as contribute to cutting emissions.

For savvy contractors who recognise energy efficiency as a win-win for homeowners, keeping up to date on the latest technologies and solutions from reputable manufactures and retailers is highly advantageous.

NECA – A YEAR IN REVIEW

For those of you interested in what 2019 looked like for NECA and our members, check out the latest Annual Review available for download on the NECA website. We look back with pride at the achievements of our members and our advocacy work on behalf of the electrotechnology industry,

which is laying the groundwork for strong and vibrant future.

Until next time.



Suresh Manickam
CEO, National Electrical and
Communications Association

ENGAGING ON MEMBER ISSUES

NECA has been actively engaging with Government, including Parliamentarians, opposition and Government Departments on behalf of, and to advocate for, our members.

There are currently a significant number of highly critical National and State Government policy reforms underway that NECA is contributing to via submissions including:

- Australian Government's Skills Reform Package Delivering Skills for Today and Tomorrow.
- Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into work, further education and training
- Review of the Australian Apprenticeships National Skills Needs List
- National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development

NECA has also made several 2020-21 pre-budget submissions in support of the electrotechnology industry focusing on key issues faced by the industry, individual businesses and community at large.

NECA FOUNDATION

Established in 2006, the NECA Foundation is a registered charity that supports education and career development initiatives in the electrotechnology industry.

2019 saw the return of the popular Site-Office-to-Head-Office course, which equips electricians with the management skills required to thrive in business leadership roles.

Many future industry leaders participated in the four-day course this year, which will help them transition from site management roles to senior management at some of Australia's leading electrical contracting firms.

During NECA's National Conference on Hamilton Island the Foundation held a fundraising dinner, with money raised going to support the Foundation's important work in 2020.

In 2020 the Foundation will expand its course offering to include a Business Succession program that will see NECA engage with electrical contractors across the entire business and contracting career lifecycle.

The Foundation will also launch a new website, which will include an industry charge out calculator; a tool developed for the industry, by the industry and available to all.



NSG Boffa won the coveted Commercial Medium category at the NECA 2019 National Excellence Awards this year for their outstanding work on the Adelaide Botanic High School, SA.

WHY INDUSTRY AWARDS MATTER

With entries now open for the 2020 NECA Excellence Awards, you may be wondering what the fuss is all about and why the Awards matter.

For many reasons the Awards, and the advantages that come with them, are all about the industry and the participants. As a participant of Industry Awards, you are reviewed and judged by your peers. It's true that as an entrant, you place your work, organisation and credibility under scrutiny – and the submission process does take time.

However, the flip side to all of this is that there are some very tangible benefits for Awards participants: benchmarking yourself to the standards of the industry or in fact setting the benchmark; organisational morale; being able to market your achievements; and enhance your credibility as both a business partner and importantly, an employer of choice.

Recognising the business advantage of winning an award for businesses of all sizes, NECA has introduced the Emerging New Small Business award. This award is open to a small business employing up to nine technical employees demonstrating a wide range of skills and excellence in electrical installation and or service; a recognition award for first time entrants during their first five years of NECA membership.

To find out more on how to enter the 2020 Awards, visit neca.asn.au

ISMAA - MENTORING KEY TO DELIVERY AND APPEAL OF APPRENTICESHIPS

To improve the delivery and appeal of apprenticeships, NECA has continued to work with the Federal and State and Territory Governments to deliver a number of industry-led pilots and programs to identify alternate training approaches to improve the skills, industry-readiness and diversity of apprentices and to better promote the benefits of a career in the sector.

Mentoring is recognised as critical to the successful completion of a trade qualification.

NECA has been actively involved with the Industry Specialist Mentoring for Australian Apprentices (ISMAA) program to increase the retention rates of apprentices in the first two years of training, and as a result, improve completion rates and increase the supply of skilled workers in the electrotechnology industry sector.

Through NECA's ISMAA program we have provided support for more than 3,500 first and second year apprentices across Australia over the past two years achieving success rates of around 90% through:

- developing relationships with apprentices
- personalised meetings
- keeping apprentices informed about opportunities relating to their apprenticeship
- liaison with registered training organisations (RTOs) regarding training
- providing support and advice
- being available to talk to apprentices and trainees about any issues they are having.

The ISMAA program demonstrates the great value of mentoring in keeping apprentices engaged.



GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES IN BUSHFIRE AND DROUGHT-AFFECTED AREAS

NECA has welcomed the NSW Government initiative aimed at helping apprentices in bushfire and drought-affected areas to continue the training component of their apprenticeships for up to 12 months for free.

NECA worked to ensure the Government initiative applies to apprentices undertaking training through all Registered Training Organisations (RTO).

NECA chief executive Suresh Manickam has praised the initiative as a great first step for the state as it begins a lengthy and complex rebuild.

"This is a much-needed initiative for rural and regional Australia - particularly those impacted by recent national disasters. The NSW Government's support will help much-needed apprentices stay in their local communities and rebuild them," he said.

"NECA operates a leading RTO for electrotechnology apprentices, who will have a critical role to play in rebuilding damaged electrical infrastructure".

The severity of recent events has highlighted the need for Government to support trades and apprentices. NECA believes the initiative is a great start, and strongly encourages the NSW government to consider extending it beyond the current 12-month limit, as rebuilding regional and rural Australia will take years, not months.

COMMITTING TO SKILLS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

The Australian Government has signaled its commitment to strengthening the vocational education and training (VET) sector through its \$585.3 million Skills Package Delivering Skills for Today and Tomorrow.

NECA's submission to the Australian Government's Skills Reform Package highlights our key recommendations which seek to ensure an efficient, competitive and sustainable VET system in Australia, underpinned by industry. NECA recognises that the future of Australia's VET is a shared responsibility. Success in being able to deliver skills for today, and tomorrow, is reliant on the electrical and communications industry being wholly integrated to all aspects of the co-design process and all relevant governance arrangements.



neca

**EXCELLENCE
AWARDS
2020**

**NECA'S PRESTIGIOUS EXCELLENCE
AND APPRENTICE AWARDS
ARE NOW OPEN
FOR NOMINATIONS**

Contact your state office or visit
www.neca.asn.au for more details