

**CLOSER TO MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES**

Earlier this year state and federal treasurers agreed to harmonise their laws so that occupational licenses, including electrician licences, would automatically be recognised nationwide. Now a step closer, the National Cabinet at a meeting in November agreed in principle to develop an Intergovernmental Agreement on Automatic Mutual Recognition of Occupational Licences, with the intention for mutual recognition of licensing to commence 1 July 2021. NECA has long called for harmonisation of licensing to support labour mobility.

**EXCELLENCE AWARDS DOUBLE-HEADER IN 2021**

We are excited to see our NECA Excellence Awards program back on track for 2021.

NECA's National Excellence Awards, which recognise outstanding professionalism, commitment and innovation within the electrical and communications industry, will combine project submissions from 2020 and 2021, and culminate in a combined 2020/21 National Awards event. Nominations open December 2020. Reach out to your local NECA Branch for more details.

**KEY DATES FOR THE DIARY:**

**Western Australia:**

Friday, 25 June 2021

**Australian Capital Territory:**

Friday, 6 August 2021

**Tasmania:**

Saturday, 14 August 2021

**Queensland:**

Friday, 20 August 2021

**Victoria:**

Friday, 27 August 2021

**New South Wales:**

Friday, 10 September 2021

**South Australia/Northern Territory:**

Friday, 10 September 2021

**National (Canberra):**

Thursday, 18 November 2021

**APPRENTICE WAGE SUBSIDIES – A BOOST TO ELECTRICAL APPRENTICE NUMBERS**

If you're considering taking on an apprentice, here's what you need to know about the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy and how to access one of the 100,000 places.

**Is my business eligible?**

The Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy supports businesses to take on new apprentices and trainees. It is available to employers of any size, industry or location.

Your business may be eligible if:

- you engage an Australian apprentice or trainee between 5 October 2020 and 30 September 2021; and
- your Australian apprentice or trainee is undertaking a Certificate II or higher qualification and has a training contract that is formally approved by the relevant state training authority.

Note, the subsidy is not available for apprentices receiving other forms of Australian Government wage subsidy e.g. Supporting Apprentices and Trainees, JobKeeper or the JobMaker Hiring Credit.

**How much is the subsidy?**

- Eligible employers will receive a wage subsidy of up to 50% of the

Australian apprentice's or trainee's gross wage paid.

- The wage subsidy is available for a maximum of \$7,000 per quarter per eligible Australian apprentice or trainee.
- The subsidy is available for wages paid from 5 October 2020 to 30 September 2021. Payments will be made quarterly in arrears, with first claims for the subsidy available from 1 January 2021.
- The final claims for payment must be lodged by 31 December 2021.

**How can I apply or find out more?**

For further information on how to apply for the subsidy, including information on eligibility, contact an Australian Apprenticeship Support Network provider. Visit [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au)

**Changes introduced to support the subsidy's integrity**

After speaking with the Office of Federal Minister for Employment and Skills Michaelia Cash, NECA understands ongoing compliance activity will work to ensure the funding is going to genuinely new apprentices.

NECA is actively working to avoid a repeat of the VET FEE-HELP scenario, where unscrupulous businesses and training organisations cost the government billions of dollars, with limited upside in terms of new electrical apprentice numbers.

**ELECTROTECHNOLOGY TRAINING PACKAGE ENDORSEMENT**

The Electrotechnology Training Package – which covers some 87 qualifications, 75 skill sets and 614 units of competence – has finally been endorsed by the Australian Industry Skills Committee (AISC) and signed off by state and territory Skills Ministers across the country.

This training package covers the qualifications for the electrical, electronics, hazardous areas, instrumentation, rail signalling,

refrigeration and air conditioning, renewable and sustainable energy sectors. The AISC has also recommended a 2-year train-out of the existing UEE11 training package, in recognition of the impact from the COVID-19 pandemic.

NECA representatives have been instrumental in the development of the training package, and would like to acknowledge Larry Moore [Chairman – Electrotechnology IRC], Carl Copeland and Peter Beveridge for their hard work and dedication to this process.

**WOMEN IN THE ELECTRICAL AND COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY ADVISORY GROUP**

NECA is proud to be a leading electrical and communications industry advocate for gender equity and diversity. We actively support breaking down divisions, broadening economic opportunities and a diverse workforce that achieves a greater participation and employment of women in trades.

In the largest single trade occupation in Australia – that of the electrician – women make up just 1.3 percent of the total.

In September 2020, NECA formed the Women in Electrical and Communications Industry Advisory Group [WECAG] to address the challenges of successfully attracting, recruiting and retaining women into electrical careers.

**PROGRESS ON UNFAIR CONTRACT LEGISLATION AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD**

NECA praised state and federal governments for agreeing to strengthen protections for small businesses from unfair contract terms.

NECA has long advocated for stronger unfair contract legislation, which ensures smaller businesses are able to compete on a level playing field.

NECA outlined its position to Treasury in a letter earlier this year and it is positive to see government responding to concerns of NECA members.

Speaking on the issue, NECA Executive Director Oliver Judd says: "Unscrupulous principal contractors are known to use their power and

size to enforce detrimental and unfair contracts on smaller parties on a 'take-it or leave-it' basis. Subcontractors, who tend to be smaller businesses, often do not have the capacity to fairly and equitably negotiate contracts".

This decision at the Consumer Affairs Forum is a step in the right direction, which will help electrical contracting firms.

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The expansion of the definition of small business is a key move that NECA has called for in its submissions as even larger electrical contracting businesses can suffer at the hands of principal contractors.

**NECA**  
EXCELLENCE AWARDS  
2020/21

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

Contact your state office or visit [www.neca.asn.au](http://www.neca.asn.au) for more details



**CONSIDERING TAKING ON AN APPRENTICE? GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR LOCAL NECA GROUP TRAINING ORGANISATION**

- Australian Capital Territory**  
**NECA Training and Apprenticeships**  
www.necatrainng.com.au  
(02) 6280 5580
- New South Wales**  
**NECA Training and Apprenticeships**  
www.necatrainng.com.au  
(02) 9744 2754
- Queensland**  
**NECA Training and Apprenticeships**  
www.necatrainng.com.au  
(07) 3276 7950
- South Australia**  
**NECA Careers and Apprenticeships**  
www.necaapprentices.com.au  
(08) 8272 0799
- Tasmania**  
**NECA Education & Careers**  
www.necaeducation.com.au  
(03) 6424 5626 NORTH  
(03) 6245 0770 SOUTH
- Victoria**  
**NECA Education & Careers**  
www.necaeducation.com.au  
(03) 9381 1922
- Western Australia**  
**Electrical Group Training**  
www.egt.net.au  
(08) 6241 6100
- College of Electrical Training**  
www.cet.asn.au  
(08) 9233 5000 JOONDALUP  
(08) 6595 6600 JANDAKOT

**FINALLY, THERE IS A BETTER OPTION FOR TRAINING ELECTRICAL APPRENTICES IN NSW AND ACT**

Due to overwhelming demand, NECA Training has opened the doors to its electrical training colleges in NSW and ACT to external apprentices. An apprentice no longer needs to be employed with NECA Electrical Apprenticeships to attend.

NECA Training has demonstrated that its colleges provide superior learning outcomes and a better student experience. This translates to more efficient and safer apprentices on worksites. Employers that directly employ their apprentices have been demanding these better learning outcomes for their apprentices and NECA Training has listened.

NECA Training is now accepting enrolments for 2021.

**Why choose a NECA training college?**

No stress - We take care of all your enrolment documentation at no charge so you can focus on running your business.

Industry specialists - Electrical training is all we do. Why enrol your apprentice at any generic college when you can train with the electrical industry specialists?

Flexibility - We accept students mid-way through an apprenticeship or even mid-way through a semester. If you're not satisfied with the college your apprentice is currently attending and want to transition, get in touch.

Government funded - The college is government funded. For NSW businesses there is no charge for the employer or the apprentice. For ACT-based business, the cost is the same as CIT.

Advanced learning - Every apprentice attending the college is allocated their own computer and G-Suite account. Experienced trainers lead students through the content, supported by our digital platform. This digital content can be accessed from home at any time, so apprentices can reattempt quizzes or watch

presentations again to reinforce their learning; a far cry from the dusty textbook with illustrations from decades ago.

One-on-one support - We have one-on-one, after-hours tuition for your apprentice when they need extra help, at no extra cost.

Nationally recognised - We only delivers nationally recognised training that can be used anywhere in Australia. All training is accredited and complies with ASQA standards.

eProfiling - We set up your apprentice on the eProfiling system at no extra cost. This system helps you, your apprentice and us to keep a digital record of your apprentice's on-job experience because learning happens both on-site and in the classroom.

We can also employ - We also employ apprentices through our group training scheme, NECA Electrical Apprenticeships, so if you're no longer able to support your apprentice or if they need broader experience to complete their training, we can help.

**Where to from here?**

**Entry requirement**

There is a minimum requirement for language, literacy and numeracy [LLN] standard. Applicants will be required to conduct an assessment to determine their LLN level. A sample quiz demonstrating the required LLN can be accessed by contacting NECA Training.

**Delivery Format**

At NECA Training we follow a standard apprentice delivery format.

For the first three stages of the apprenticeship, apprentices will be required to attend college one day a week and spend the rest of the week on the job working with your business.

In the fourth stage of the Apprenticeship, apprentices will be required to complete their final capstone assessment which is the gateway to obtaining an electrical licence.

**NECA SA INTRODUCES DUAL TRADE APPRENTICESHIP**

NECA is pleased to announce the new dual electrician and refrigeration/ air conditioning apprenticeship.

Recently developed in South Australia in conjunction with the state training authority and the Training and Skills Commission [TASC], this new apprenticeship will train for electrical and refrigeration and air conditioning [RAC] work concurrently, resulting in a multi-skilled technician, able to perform the full scope of work of both disciplines. Electrical Refrigeration Air Conditioning Technician Apprentices will complete both the Electrical trade Certificate III [UEE30811] and the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration trade Certificate III [UEE32211], so they will graduate fully licensed in both trades.

The Minister for Innovation and Skills in South Australia, the Honourable David Pisoni MP, was excited to announce this new apprenticeship at the NECA SA/NT 2020 Apprentice Awards Dinner in October.

"The qualification sets a new benchmark in Australia for the delivery of trade qualifications in two disciplines and establishes a pilot model for additional dual trade pathways in the future," Minister Pisoni said.

"For some time the refrigeration and air conditioning sector has reported a shortage of electrical refrigeration technicians who are fully skilled and licensed in both the electrical and refrigeration trades.

"Despite both qualifications being in demand, until now the only way to resolve this issue was by people completing two apprenticeships - that can take up to eight years.

"Through concurrent delivery of the training, it is intended that the dual trade qualification can be achieved in just five years, making the new apprenticeship attractive to both employees and employers."

NECA SA/NT Executive Director Larry Moore said: "We've worked

closely with the state government to develop this dual trade apprenticeship, and we're excited to see this implemented, so that our members can benefit from having multiskilled workers."

To develop the program, RAC and Electrical subject matter experts from both private and government South Australian RTOs mapped out the units from both qualifications, identified those that overlapped, then constructed a single program, which runs for a nominal 1,540 hours, compared to the usual 1,060 hours for a single-trade qualification.

Mr Moore says that the qualification makes sense for HVAC&R technicians, when so much of their work requires a full electrical licence.

NECA SA/NT member Damien Staltari, Managing Director of D-STAL Electrical, welcomed the dual trade pathway.

"This reform and the new wage subsidy from the federal government for new apprentices will encourage employers to take on new or additional apprentices, which will create more jobs."

"Having people employed with this dual trade will deliver efficiencies on certain jobs for a business like ours, which will allow us to grow our business and deliver more cost-effective services."

A pilot project will be rolled out in 2021 with the recruitment and employment of these new dual trade apprentices managed by our Group Training Organisation, NECA Careers and Apprenticeships [NCA].

NCA will be searching for candidates to be the first dual trade apprentices to start in January 2021. NCA are currently searching for host employers who can take these apprentices for their on-the-job training, competencies of their training.

If you are interested in being involved in this innovative project, please contact the NECA Careers & Apprenticeships office on (08) 8272 0799/info@necaapprentices.com.au.

**NECA VIC BRINGS TOGETHER INDUSTRY UNDER ONE VIRTUAL ROOF**

In response to the continued COVID-19 lockdowns NECA brought the local electrical industry in Victoria together under one virtual roof in November 2020 for its Virtual Conference and Tradeshow - 25 presentations, 25 exhibitors and thousands of contractors and industry stakeholders.

If you missed it, you can access all presentations and resources on demand at [www.neca.asn.au/vic](http://www.neca.asn.au/vic)

Watch Jeff Davis, NHP talk about RCB's and RCBO's and what you need to consider when selecting and designing an electrical installation.

Michael Weekes, NECA discusses Wiring Systems for safety services to comply with AS/NZS3000:2018 and AS/NZS3013.

Gary Busbridge reviews Amendment 2 changes to the Wiring Rules that are expected to be published in early 2021.

Those active in the Solar space should catch Solar Victoria's update about the Solar Homes Program and NECA's Louis Knoops on Solar earthing requirements and installation safety.

If you're thinking about broadening your horizons next year? Tap into Jet Charge CEO, Tim Washington's presentation on EV Charging, or the Home Automation presentation from Middy's Tech expert Nick Baker.

Tune into the CEO of NECA Education & Careers, Phil Green as he explains why electricians must embrace new technology - Internet of Things [IoT] and Guillaume Gimaret from Legrand talks about how to make your residential IoT project a success.

