

## Media Release

### **NSW government support for apprentices in bushfire affected areas a great start**

The National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) has welcomed an announcement from the NSW Government as it launches a new initiative aimed at helping apprentices in bushfire and drought-affected areas continue their training despite disruptive economic circumstance.

The initiative will see affected trainees offered access to the training component of their apprenticeships for up to 12 months for free, a prospect that NECA has expressed strong support for as it understands it will apply to Registered Training Organisations (RTO).

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

**Suresh Manickam, CEO of NECA, 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.*

*“It is crucial that RTOs are included in this conversation as they will play a key role in improving rural and regional employment as well as training those that will rebuild our state.”*

The severity of recent bushfire and drought events have highlighted the need for government to support trades and apprentices, **Geoff Lee, Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education stating,**

*“An apprentice who started training last year will be a fully qualified tradesperson within four years, so this is planning ahead. We will need future tradespeople in our regions.”*

**Mr Manickam added:**

*“This initiative is a great start, and we strongly encourage the NSW government to consider extending it beyond the current 12-month limit, as rebuilding regional and rural Australia will take months not years after the tragic devastation we have seen this summer.”*

**ENDS**

**NECA media contact:**

Katherine Cammuso 0410 609 443, [katherine.cammuso@neca.asn.au](mailto:katherine.cammuso@neca.asn.au)

#### **Notes for editors**

1. NECA is the peak industry body representing the interests of electrical and communications contractors Australia-wide.
2. Membership comprises over 5,300 contracting companies with over 150,000 employees.
3. NECA provides employment and ongoing skills development for over 4,000 apprentices nationally.