



national
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association

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11 January 2017

The Honourable Guy Barnett MP
Minister for Building and Construction
Member for Lyons
Level 10, 15 Murray Street
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Minister Barnett,

Tasmanian Electrical Industry Pre-Budget Submission 2017-18

The National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) welcomes the opportunity to have input to the forthcoming Tasmanian Budget for the 2017/18 financial year.

We are Australia's peak industry body for the electrical and communications contracting industry which employs approximately 165,000 workers with an annual turnover in excess of \$23 Billion. We represent more than 4,800 businesses across all states and territories, including Tasmania where Australian owned and operated SMEs provide safe and reliable services to Tasmanian consumers.

Home Safety Electrical Audits (HSEA)

Electrical safety and product compliance awareness is a key component of NECA's policy framework, particularly as there are potential risks associated with property damage caused by faulty or aging electrical wiring and componentry. In the context of the 2017/18 Tasmanian Budget, we wish to highlight NECA's key policy area of mandatory HSEAs as a focus for your Government over the next few years.

NECA notes that the majority of Australia's residential housing stock is ageing and Tasmania is no exception. NECA believes that the ageing stock serious challenges to incoming home owners or renters, whereby existing electrical wiring including associated equipment may be:

- Compliant with previous versions of the Australian Building Code (ABC);
- Not compliant with the current standards as set out in the ABC; and
- Degrading and/or deteriorating such that remedial action is either immediately or imminently required.

Whilst home electrical safety checks are encouraged, but not enforced in Tasmania, NECA believes that it is critical that all new home occupants are made fully aware of any wiring or electrical safety issues upon the sale and purchase of a property with the same approach applying prior to the commencement of any new rental arrangement.

We argue that such a proposition, whilst adding an additional cost for new home occupants, is a quick and inexpensive way and provide the consumer with a list of safety issues, remedies and

costs, thereby enabling occupants to budget for remedies of their residence in an appropriate manner. Further, NECA argues that the consumer benefits greatly outweigh any costs, through:

- Identifying safety deficiencies and recommending safety remedies; and
- Identifying energy efficiency deficiencies and recommending energy efficient options;

Additionally, both Tasmanians and the Tasmanian Government will benefit through:

- A gradual identification and uplift of the wiring and safety standards of the existing housing stock to the Australian Building Code standards;
- A gradual identification and uplift of the energy efficiency of Tasmania's housing stock; and
- Added stimulus to the Tasmanian economy.

By definition, the identification and remediation of the above, gradually reduces any electrical risk to property or person.

Home Safety Electrical Audits - Pilot

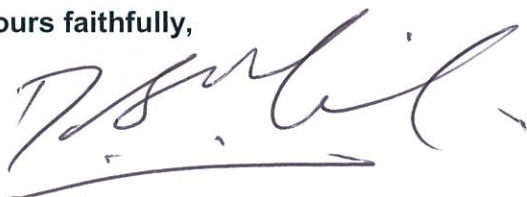
In the context of Piloting a HSEA, NECA proposes that the pilot might work in the following way:

1. That such a pilot scheme might be voluntary at first and could be trialled in a high density residential area such as Hobart. If successful, the scheme could then be mandated and adopted throughout Tasmania;
2. Consumers would be encouraged by the Tasmanian Land Titles Office to undertake an HSEA prior to the transfer of title;
3. The Tasmanian Government would fund up to 300 HSEA's (capped at \$250 inclusive of GST), thereby no consumer would be out of pocket;
4. NECA Tas would be able to provide the Tasmanian Government with a list of electrical contractors who are willing and able to undertake HESAs within Hobart;
5. At the conclusion of the 300 HSEA's, the Tasmanian Government would then collate and analyse the data, thereby assessing the success and possible mandating of such a scheme for state-wide adoption.

Minister, I thank you for your consideration of this request to support the enhancement of Home Electrical Safety in Tasmania. Whilst we are always appreciative of the challenges and difficulties with the present fiscal climate, we strongly urge you to consider our proposal within the 2017/18 Tasmanian Budget as we believe this scheme has a strongly beneficial outcome for Tasmanian consumers, contractors and the Government.

I look forward to discussing this matter with you shortly.

Yours faithfully,



Suresh Manickam
Chief Executive Officer
National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA)

