

## A word from the CEO

2018 was another very strong year for NECA. Our stakeholder engagement has continued to grow year on year whether with Cabinet and other ministers, Opposition, government departments, regulatory organisations or other industry and training bodies.

Back in 2017, NECA submitted a very detailed paper to the Murray Review of Australia's security of payments. A paper that I am proud to say was mentioned by the final report's author, John Murray, over 80 times and who accepted the majority of recommendations that NECA had called for – put another way, our recommendations are well received.

We have therefore established a strong springboard in which to advocate state and territory governments to further the cause of harmonisation of security of payments laws and the implementation of statutory trusts that will protect subcontractors. Given this, we urge state and territory governments to commit to the harmonisation of security of payments laws for the benefit of the sector as well as broader economy. It is no exaggeration to say that the current fragmented approach to security of payments is a hurdle to the way in which we do business.

NECA was placed front and centre in meeting the Australian economy's training needs when it was chosen as one of the few organisations to deliver the Commonwealth Government's new Industry Specialist Mentoring for Australian Apprentices (ISMAA) program. This scheme has been designed to provide electrical apprentices with regular one-to-one contact with highly skilled mentors and will give our industry the ability to increase apprenticeship retention rates and improve completion rates while boosting the supply of future electricians across the country.

NECA was one of ISMAA's largest

grant recipients, which is testament to both our advocacy efforts and the strong training capabilities that we provide.

Not only at a federal level were our advocacy efforts successful, 2018 saw NECA's pre-budget submissions to the NSW Government result in improvements to apprentices. This was mirrored by our similar submission to the Tasmanian Government who agreed to a redevelopment of the TasTafe Clarence Campus for a Trades and Water Centre of Excellence. The Tasmanian budget also saw the extension of 2017's payroll tax concessions for enhanced apprentice take-up which we had also actively campaigned for.

Members will recall that NECA was instrumental in advocating and lobbying for the reinstatement of the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), which occurred in 2016. It is important that any winds of change from this year's federal election do not see a reverse in this achievement and NECA will continue to advocate in parliament for the retention of this independent umpire for the construction industry. The ABCC's existence is vital as it maintains the rule of law within the building and construction sector.

We're proud to say that our membership and our offerings continue to grow and we now stand at an all-time record of over 5,300 members Australia-wide. Last year our national conference was held in Fiji and saw just under 400 attending this very successful event. This year, we're back home at Hamilton Island where we will again be providing a number of thought-provoking sessions as well as a networking forum for our sector and sponsors.

**Suresh Manickam**  
CEO

### VALE ALAN BROWN

It is with regret and a heavy heart that I advise you of the passing of our president, Alan Brown, on Monday, 4 February 2019.

In addition to being the national president of NECA, Alan was the deputy chairman of Fredon Industries, which has been a member of NECA for 49 years.

Alan first joined NECA on 9 February 1970.

He also volunteered his time to other community activities, including the McDonald College and the Penrith Aquatic and Leisure Centre.

Alan was passionate about our industry and equally passionate about NECA. Members of NECA will know that they could guarantee bumping into 'Brownie' at an industry gathering. Indeed, Brownie was a huge contributor to the camaraderie and enjoyment of NECA conferences.

As president, Alan embraced NECA and drove positive change for our sector and our organisation. Many will remember Alan for his strong personality, his passion for business and his determination to stand his ground, but we will always remember Alan for his empathy, kindness and sense of equity and fairness.

Our thoughts are with his wife Donna, and his family.

Rest in peace, Alan.



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