

A word from the CEO

Since my last message, the 2016 National Excellence Awards Finals have taken place, in Canberra this year, which concludes the annual series. It was a great event attended by almost 300 guests and as we were in the Capital, we had the pleasure of hearing from both a senator and a minister.

The Minister for Small Business, Michael McCormack, joined us for a lunch with our councillors and sponsors. He shared with us some of his ideas and aspirations for improving the lot of our smaller contractors – and we look forward to seeing the changes as they happen.

Senator Brigit McKenzie – from Victoria, was our guest speaker at our awards night, representing Assistant Minister Karen Andrews. The ABCC, VET reform and the Registered Organisations (RO) Act were the key strands from Senator McKenzie's address. Again with lots of change on the agenda.

The highlight of the evening was of course seeing the calibre of our winning projects – which are presented on the next page. Our awards are always a very special occasion as, apart from seeing the best projects of the year acknowledged, we also announce our three national apprentice winners and the trade teacher award.

VET reform squarely on the menu

Reforms to the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector are also progressing in a healthy direction. The government's announcement to strengthen the performance of the sector and replace the largely discredited FEE-HELP program is encouraging. NECA praises Minister Birmingham's announcement, and has called on the Senate to support these reforms – given the reputational damage suffered by the behaviour of some rogue operators, and the poorly thought-through design of the loan fee program of former years.

The Apprentice Pathways Project – now commonly referred to as 'APP', which follows on from the highly successful MAPS project,



is well underway. By the time you receive this magazine we should be in the implementation phase of the pilot. And this is when the real work begins. So watch this space.

Tasmania scores a first for Australia!

Over the past 12 months or so, NECA has been working with the Tasmanian Department of Justice to support its launch of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for the building and construction industry – including licensed electricians. This program was launched on 1 July this year. It means that from here on Tasmanian-licensed electricians will need to secure 12 points per annum to maintain their licence. The program will run for two years before becoming mandatory. But the government hopes this program will be embraced by the industry as a means of maintaining the safety and general awareness needed for our industry to grow and develop. NECA is one of the major providers of the courses and events that attract points, and we wholeheartedly support this initiative.

Time to have your say

As you may recall, we completed our most recent Market Monitor industry research in 2015. So by the time you receive this magazine the 2017 survey will be in full swing. Once again all of the major wholesalers, and the majority of the large manufacturers, are working with us on the 2017 questionnaire.

This year we will be particularly interested in developments in the online space, and the relationship that exists in today's market between 'price and quality'.

To make completing the questionnaire even easier for you this time around, we have split it into four sections. That way you can give us your views in manageable 10 to 15-minute blasts. But don't worry, the system will come back to remind you to keep going until you have completed your feedback. The questionnaire will be up on our websites – and those of the participating wholesalers, from mid-December through to mid-February 2017. The results will be presented in April 2017. Don't miss the chance to have your say.

Infinity Cables

While I hate to end my message on a negative note, the news regarding the Infinity Cables is not good. We are now well into the period where the cable may well start to deteriorate if it is in any way exposed. However, although the recall has gone well in a number of states, the recall in NSW is turning out to be painfully slow.

Unfortunately, NSW is also the state where the largest proportion of the cable was sold.

The Industry Reference Group we sit on – chaired by the ACCC, is currently reassessing the situation for NSW as we believe the only way to get the cable in NSW inspected, and replaced where needed, is via a consumer campaign. We will keep you updated. But for those of you in NSW, please do keep your eyes open for this cable and notify the owner immediately if you come across it. The ACCC website will help them then work out their options for any necessary remediation.

Finally, as we all head back to work after our various summer breaks, let's all hope that 2017 is a great year! ■

Best regards,
Suresh Manickam

The 2016 NECA National Excellence & Future Stars Awards

The nation's best electrical and communications projects, and our three apprentice-of-the-year winners, were recognised at the annual electrical and communications industry's Excellence Awards in Canberra in November.

State winners from across Australia attended the event at the Hyatt Hotel, Canberra and heard from guest speaker, Senator Bridget McKenzie, the Chair of Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee about skills development, reforms to the Vocational Education and Training sector and the need for the return of the Australian Building and Construction Commission.

Six Victorian projects, one New South Wales project, one Australian Capital Territory project and three Western Australia projects received the top national awards in front of 300 industry representatives including contractors, educators and government representatives. New South



2016 Excellence Awards winners.

Wales and Australian Capital Territory also received commendations on projects that were narrowly beaten by the overall category winners.

On the same night some of Australia's brightest electrical apprentices were also announced. This year's guest speaker at the "Future Stars" event was Alan Tongue, the

former captain of the Canberra Raiders NRL Club. Alan, a former apprentice himself, is an Australian Apprenticeship Ambassador and was recently named as the ACT's 2017 Australian of the Year.

And our two trade teachers sharing this year's award were Glenn McMurtrie and Brett Jotta.

Winners

CATEGORY	COMPANY	STATE	PROJECT NAME
1 Domestic Residence	Argus Technologies Solutions	VIC	Private Residence - Sandringham
2 Contracting Business	Recips	VIC	Box Hill Institute of TAFE Lilydale Campus
3 Energy Efficiency and Environment	Martin Donnelly	ACT	1 Canberra Ave
4 Lighting Project	Gordon McKay	VIC	Pakenham Racecourse Night Racing Lighting
5 Industrial - Small Project	Nilson	WA	Perth Airport T1 Ring Main Unit Replacement
6 Industrial - Medium Project	Gordon McKay	VIC	Primary Electrical Distribution Replacement and Central Distribution Unit 3 High Voltage Upgrade
7 Industrial - Large Project	Downer EC&M	WA	Yandi Sustaining Project – Electrical Works
8 Voice/Data	Programmed Electrical Technologies	VIC	Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre
9 Commercial - Small Project	Kerfoot	NSW	Australian National Maritime Museum Warships Pavilion
10 Commercial - Medium Project	Fredon Electrical	WA	ALDI Distribution Centre Jandakot
11 Commercial - Large Project	Downer EDI Engineering Electrical	VIC	The Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre

Commendations

CATEGORY	COMPANY	STATE	PROJECT NAME
5 Industrial - Small Project	Kerfoot	NSW	The Plasser Rail Redevelopment
6 Industrial - Medium Project	RBD Electrical & Instrumentation	TAS	Hydro Tasmania Fisher Power Station Upgrade
11 Commercial - Large Project	Shepherd Electrical	ACT	AFP Forensics Facility Majura

Apprentice - Industrial

PLACING	NAME	STATE	EMPLOYER/HOST
WINNER	Thomas Townsend	NSW	NECA Group Training/Hosted by J V Holt & Company
2nd	Winston Waters	VIC	Floyd Industries
3rd	Harrison Gray	WA	Electrical Group Training/Hosted by Downer EDI Wheatstone

Apprentice - Commercial/Domestic

PLACING	NAME	STATE	EMPLOYER/HOST
WINNER	Ashley Hammond	VIC	Appselec Pty Ltd
2nd	Emma McDonald	WA	Electrical Group Training/Hosted by Team Electrical
3rd	Erik Roggensack	ACT	NECA Group Training

Apprentice - Communications

PLACING	NAME	STATE	EMPLOYER/HOST
WINNER	Jakeb Solley	SA	PEER VEET Hosted by Adelaide Health Tech

Trade Teachers

PLACING	NAME	STATE	EMPLOYER/HOST
WINNER	Brett Jotta	WA	College of Electrical Training
WINNER	Glenn McMurtrie	QLD	Skills Tech Australia



Apprentice finalists, hosts and Trade Teacher joint winners.

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FOR THE



2017
ELECTRO-TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE
14 - 17 JULY PORT DOUGLAS
neca national electrical and communications association 100 1916-2016

Our great program includes terrific speakers, unique tropical excursions and fantastic optional activities which feature the wonders of Far North Queensland.

REGISTRATION ENQUIRIES:

Found out more online at the event website:
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