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Albanese Government invests in skills today, for jobs of tomorrow

The National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) welcomes the Federal Government's budget announcements, and commitment to building a more resilient economy, and skilled workforce.

Access to skilled labour and training are critical for the development of the electrical trades, and the continued growth of the Australian economy.

NECA CEO, Oliver Judd said "It is pleasing to see budgetary investments aimed at unlocking greater access and opportunities for training and skills development. This is a crucial step in addressing the current skills shortages which are impacting so many industries".

Key budget announcements related to skills and training include:

- **480,000 fee-free places** over four years for TAFE and vocational education places, targeting priority groups including women in non-traditional fields;
- **Australian Skills Guarantee** to ensure that one in ten workers on Commonwealth-funded project is an apprentice, trainee or paid cadet;
- **New Energy Apprenticeships** enabling support payments of up to \$10,000 over the duration of the apprenticeship for 10,000 new apprentices;
- **New Energy Skills Program** to enable pathways for clean energy industry jobs.

"Investments in training today will deliver the skilled workforces of the future," Mr Judd said.

"NECA is extremely pleased with the focus on mentoring energy apprentices to ensure completion rates are increased across our sector. This has been a key area of focus for NECA, and one which has continually contributed to NECA's high apprenticeship completion rates."

The budget also sees the commencement of delivery on the outcomes of the Jobs and Skills Summit, including allocations of **\$12.9 million to establish Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA)**.

The establishment of JSA further cements Albanese Government's commitment to transparent and tripartite collaboration with all sectors of the industry, including employers and training providers.

“NECA is a strong advocate for diversity in the workplace and welcomes Labor’s budget investments aimed at improving women’s economic equality and becoming a world leader on gender equality.

“The announced support for **cheaper childcare, boost to parental leave** and improvement to **safety initiatives** will see greater female participation in many sectors, particularly in trades,” Said Mr Judd.

The Governments **\$7 billion investment to advance gender equality for women** will be a significant contributor to women’s economic equality, helping to eliminate violence against women and supporting women’s health and wellbeing.

“Having more diverse and inclusive industries is also important to meeting resourcing challenges and skills shortages the sector faces, both now and for the foreseeable future.

“NECA makes a considerable contribution to the assessment and upskilling of **migrant electrical workers**, and also welcomes the government’s announcement to develop the Migration Strategy and ensure the migration system serves national interests while attracting high-skilled migrants”.

“Small business and family-owned enterprises are the lifeblood of Australia’s economy, and while the October 2022-23 budget provides measures for sustainable investments ease the cost of living, a lot more needs to be done to truly build a stronger, more resilient, and more modern economy.

“NECA has advocated strongly for the outlawing of unfair contract terms and making it easier for small and medium size businesses to access Government procurement contracts, we look forward to the enabling legislation that will finally make this a reality.

“NECA looks forward to working with the federal government in ensuring there are adequate opportunities, initiatives and funding to support and incentivise the small business sector, as the major employer of the next generation of tradespeople.” Mr Judd concluded.

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Representing over 6,000 contractor businesses and upskilling more than 10,000 people annually, the National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) is the peak industry body representing Australia’s electrical and communications contracting industry.

Further Information

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