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Media Release

NECA welcomes cancellation of VET FEE-HELP debts

Young Australians who were ripped off by unscrupulous training providers under the failed VET FEE-HELP scheme received some welcome news today.

The Federal Government's announced its plan to introduce legislation that seeks to cancel inappropriately incurred debts. Under the scheme, a number of unethical training providers and their agents targeted vulnerable or unsuitable people and lured them into signing onto a course.

These young people ended up with insurmountable debts and often a worthless qualification.

NECA believes the waiving of debts, in particular for those students who were saddled with course expenses for a worthless qualification, is encouraging. This decision clearly draws a line in the sand and helps to rebuild confidence in the future of VET.NECA

"The failed VET FEE-HELP program enabled a situation where a small number of unethical training providers targeted vulnerable and often unsuitable students, which led to a drop in standards and a loss of confidence in the VET sector," said Suresh Manickam CEO NECA.

"The appalling behaviour of these unethical providers created an inequitable situation for the countless students caught up in the scheme, as well as tarnishing the reputation of quality Registered Training Organisations," he said.

NECA has strongly argued that VET education is just as important as a university degree and the parents of young Australians should know that learning and training standards are rigorous and of high quality.

This is especially important as we seek to address future skills shortages in the electrical trades.

-ENDS-

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Notes for editors

1. *NECA is the peak industry body representing the interests of electrical and communications contractors Australia-wide.*
2. *Membership comprises over 5,000 contracting companies with over 50,000 employees.*

3. *NECA wholly-owns Registered Training Organisations and Group Training Organisations in NSW, VIC & WA, the EcoSmart Electricians initiative, ACRS (a national cabling registrar) and has a joint venture with NESS Super in NSW.*
4. *NECA employs around 2,000 apprentice electricians, training a further 2,000.*