

3.13 Continuing Professional Development

Background

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the process of tracking and documenting the skills, knowledge and experience gained both formally and informally by licensed electricians, over and above any initial training. It provides an improved level of achievement and comfort for the practitioner, the wider industry, regulators and consumers. Typically, one point of CPD equates to one hour's worth of learning and development activities.

The concept of CPD is not new. It operates successfully when attached to government licensing arrangements across a wide range of professions such as property and building. It is most often seen where a state or territory government has stipulated its mandatory use through legislation with its program managed by a regulator such as Fair Trading NSW or the Department of Justice Tasmania.

CPD has recently been successfully introduced for Tasmanian electricians and it is likely other state and territory governments will elect to introduce CPD, incorporating the learnings from the Tasmanian scheme. Government, consumers and regulators hold the view that CPD can assist businesses (particularly smaller entities) to document, maintain and refresh their knowledge of skills, processes, new technologies, and relevant regulations.

NECA believes that the electrical contracting sector may benefit from CPD implementation if:

- » Sound professional development and training opportunities are delivered
- » The CPD program remains basic and low-cost in its design
- » CPD does not become a burden for the wider industry, particularly SMEs
- » It provides a cost effective way to improve technical and organisational knowledge through the provision of regulatory and legislative frameworks
- » Implementation takes state/territory and locally based considerations into account
- » The reputation of our sector within a complex and evolving regulatory environment is enhanced.

Key issues and recommendations

Implementing CPD

Where CPD has been implemented successfully, member based industry associations are involved in the program management and/or delivery of course seminars, learning and training opportunities, and CPD is mandatory and overseen by a governing regulator.

We believe that industry associations such as NECA are best placed and qualified to deliver independent, knowledge-based activities that are attuned to the needs, requirements and legislative changes of the industry.

R52: NECA supports the implementation of CPD across all states and territories in a practical and cost-effective manner. CPD should be delivered with minimal or no cost to business, be limited to some, but not all license holders and take state/territory and local issues into account.

