



national
electrical and
communications
association



2013 annual review

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President's Report



Once again it is an honour to present the NECA President's Report for 2013.

I have been working in this industry for 25 years now and when I look back over the years I realise that every year brings new challenges. And 2013 was no exception.

Many people expected this year to be an improvement on 2012. But in many ways it was an even tougher year. The global economy is still hard to read and the first six months of this year were dominated by the federal election, so our own domestic economy was also fairly static.

However, as we closed the year things were starting to look a little better. Helping small businesses is back on the government's agenda and there do seem to be some signs that construction is picking up in some of the bigger cities. Plus China seems more likely to continue on its growth trajectory – despite press coverage to the opposite effect earlier in the year, which is good news for our minerals and mining industry.

Despite our optimism last year we are still no closer to a national licence for our industry. The process stalled following the inadequate proposal made by Treasury before the election. However we plan to pick that up now with the new government. The rising costs of employing apprentices is also causing us great concern for the future. Both these issues remain important to us at NECA and we will continue to work with the regulators and government at all levels to get this right.

We are the national association representing the electrical and data contracting industry run by contractors, so we shouldn't underestimate the collective power that gives us in our lobbying of our regulators and government. There are some major changes that need to take place over the next five years – and we will not let up until we see those changes in place.

On a more positive note I'm pleased to report that the standard of our Excellence Awards just keeps getting higher and higher each year – which is testament to the commitment of our industry to quality, safety and innovation. I'm sure that those of you that attended the National Excellence Awards in Sydney were as impressed as we were with the quality of the winning projects.

Being an election year, it will come as no surprise that we spent a lot of time and effort during the year cementing relationships with both parties. We wanted to be sure that our issues were heard by both sides of the house and we were one of the founding sponsors of the 2BIG2IGNORE campaign co-ordinated by the ACCI. This campaign made it very clear to all politicians that small businesses in particular, were very unhappy with how hard it was becoming to do business.

President's Report (continued)

2BIG2IGNORE

The campaign focused on 4 big issues

1. Cut down the red tape.
2. Simplify the tax system.
3. Make it easier to employ people.
4. Build better infrastructure.

All big concerns for our members and we hope that in 2014 we will start seeing some results. [Click here to see the campaign.](#)

Another major initiative we are very proud of is the Does it Comply? campaign. I was the first electrical contractor to 'sign the pledge' and I hope those of you who have not yet signed up will do so over the next year. [Click here for more information.](#) We are also running a very short survey on how members think perceptions have changed regarding non-compliant products. [View survey here.](#)

Our MAPS program goes from strength to strength. It is a great example of how well things can go when we work together nationally. The aim is to facilitate cultural change to the provision of training across our industry and the value of this program is over \$7m – NECA's biggest ever project.

The 2013 Market Monitor also provided us with an update of trends across our industry. A lot has changed since 2011. Contractors have always lived by their phones but this last study showed that 96% of us now have smart phones and that is the single most likely way for business emails to be read now.

As a bit 'old school' I was somewhat sceptical about our foray into social media but we are now seeing many more 'likes' than most companies – and we're even developing apps for our apprentices to use for their time reporting.

So there's no denying that technology is changing our world and as a result this year's Annual Review will be a little different in format from past years and will tie back to our new website – which was launched late-December.

We have also seen some changes in our own organisation. Peter Tuck – the WA Executive Director, has retired and Garry Itzstein has joined us from Downer EDI. We wish Peter well and welcome Garry who has a long-standing relationship with NECA.

We are also very sorry to see our CEO of seven years, James Tinslay, stepping down. James had been with NECA for over 25 years and has seen the organisation grow from a federation of associations to the well-respected peak body that we are today.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to continue as your president. I look forward to working with our new CEO - Suresh Manickam – and the national team, and our National Executive in the year to come, to create an even better environment in which our members can grow their businesses.

Wes McKnight
NECA President

A snapshot of

Two Thousand & Thirteen

Government Departments Key to NECA

Department of Climate Change, Environment and Energy – Energy efficiency programs, promotion of EcoSmart Electricians, CEC reforms, and access to state government forums

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – Career advice and services, input and discussions on employment and skill shortage data, building regulations, Fair Work Australia matters, School student awards, and industrial relations issues.

Department of Innovation and Industry – Apprenticeships, training funding, training programs, Industry Skills Council reform, commonwealth incentives, training reform, MAPS issues, Trade Teacher awards, skills centre funding,

Treasury – Economic issues, state of the economy and impacts on the electrical industry.

Department of Broadband and Communications – NBN implementation including green and brown field sites and approaches, training requirements and other issues.

Politicians

Labor

Brendan O'Connor (Skills and Training)

Chris Evans (Skills and Training)

Penny Wong (Finance and Deregulation)

Craig Emerson (Small Business, Independent Contractors and Skills)

Stephen Conroy (Broadband)

Greg Combet (Climate Change and Industry)

Kate Ellis (Employment Participation)

Liberal

Tony Abbott

Joe Hockey (Treasurer)

Christopher Pyne (Apprenticeships and Training)

Malcolm Turnbull (Shadow Comms and Broadband)

Greg Hunt (Climate Change and Environment)

Sussan Ley (Employment Participation)

Simon Birmingham (Parliament Secretary for Environment)

Brett Mason (Higher Education)

Boardroom Activity

Australian Construction Industry Forum (ACIF) – ACIF represents and supports dialogue between all associations and other players in the residential and non-residential construction industry.

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) – NECA's efforts provides important reference and policy development working groups, useful member updates. (We sit on education and training, WHS, small business and IR committees)

Standards Australia – Provides a different access to different areas of government and industry. We sit on many technical committees, subcommittees and working groups.

National Occupational Licensing Authority (NOLA) – NECA has played a key role in the evolution of the national licensing scheme.

Issues

1. National Occupational Licensing (NOLS) – A major focus for NECA for the past three years.

2. Clean Energy Council accreditation – A Howard government initiative that is not well understood by either side, but still on the agenda. NECA is preparing a draft amendment to the Regulations.

3. IR and HR – There are various changes needed by a new government with the Fair Work Act, including:

- re-instatement of the ABCC and its powers
- employer compulsory superannuation increases to be stopped
- to restrict unlawful activities of unions in the building industry
- revisit and implementation of the Cole Royal Commission findings

4. NBN – The subcontracting has become the issue as the prices paid to contractor are below basic charge-out rates for NECA members

- Our challenges bringing the message of the NBN to consumers and how NECA can help structured cabling system.

5. Training – Keeping the training on the agenda.

- the government has repeatedly reduced employer subsidies for employers
- apprenticeships
- performance and excellence criteria should be introduced for RTOs
- a range of other issues around VETS.

Market Monitor



Barry Jackson, National Marketing and Communications

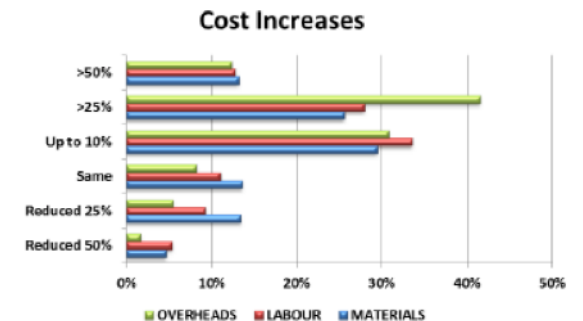
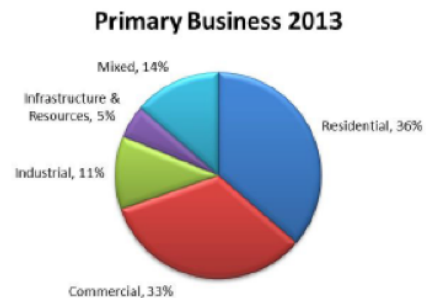
The 2013 Market Monitor released in September indicates that although charge-out rates have gone up by 7% since the 2011 survey – the cost of doing business has risen by around 25% over the past year alone. So the average electrical contractor is considerably worse off today than they were two years ago.

Our industry – which employs more than 50,000 people across Australia, is in many ways a barometer of the Australian economy. 36% of the average contractor's revenue comes from residential projects. This has dropped by 10 percentage points over the past two years – indicating that there is less outsourced renovation work going on now. And just as we are seeing in much of the economic commentary in the media, whilst business confidence is on the rise, the economic indicators are not positive.

In this year's survey the overwhelming message is that it is getting harder and harder for the smaller businesses to survive with rising costs of materials and labour, higher taxes and never-ending red and green tape. Over 80% of our industry employ less than 10 people – so we are the classic small business. And it is not surprising that as many as 5% of contractors doing business in 2011 have since closed their businesses – some voluntarily others not.

The 2013 survey key findings were:

- The average contracting business employs 13 people (up from 9 in 2011).
- Less than 8% of the industry employ more than 25 people.
- On-going maintenance work (in both residential and commercial work) is a considerably smaller percentage of work done now than it was two years ago.
- Contractors are specialising far more now (up 40% on two years ago).
- Overheads have risen by up to 40%.
- Home automation – possibly due to the NBN, is emerging as a key skills requirement.
- The number of apprentices being taken on is falling.
- The most significant 'new technology' skills relate to renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- 96% of contractors now carry smart phones – though the apps most commonly used are banking, maps and the weather.
- The mainstream suppliers have grown their share of the top-end of the industry.
- The percentage of direct imports is small – but it is growing.



Our Future



Vicky Greenfield, National Operations

In the 2007 Market Monitor a quarter of the respondents felt there was a large skills shortage in several key areas of our industry, and a further third thought was a 'minor shortage' – so almost 60% seeing an overall shortage. By 2013 these same measures had dropped by more than half, to less than 30% overall. And this 30% included new specialist technology skills – which many people saw as a growth area. So it's anyone's guess where we will be in two years when we do the next survey.



But for our industry to succeed, not only do we need the appropriately skilled contractors in place across all states and territories to meet demand, but we also need to be sure we have the right number of apprentices coming through the system.

A big part of our role at NECA - as the peak body, is to make sure we keep the right balance between skilled contractors and apprentices.

We invest heavily in promoting an electrical apprenticeship as a rewarding career path to students at high schools throughout Australia, working closely with careers advisors and technical teachers to ensure the merits and benefits of a career in our industry are widely understood. We advertise and promote career profiles in publications such as the government "Job Guide" publication or the "Guide to your Career" wall-chart in order to put a career in our industry at the forefront of potential students' minds.

Additionally, with the support of NHP, we have for the past decade run an Electrotechnology School Student Awards program, which recognises both those who demonstrate engineering and technical brilliance in their projects, and also those who have demonstrated a commitment to following a career in the industry, through work placements or similar.

When you consider that NECA directly employs 2000 electrical apprentices and trains thousands more across Australia, it is clear that the continued promotional work at a school level in conjunction with offering industry leading training facilities and award winning trainers, structured apprenticeship programs and access to work with the very best contractors the industry has to offer has set the industry up well for a prosperous, and well-staffed, future.

More information can be found via the following links:

- > [School Student Awards](#)
- > [Promotion to Schools](#)
- > [Post-Apprenticeship Scholarships](#)
- > [Trade Teacher Awards](#)
- > [Skills Centre](#)

Industry Intelligence



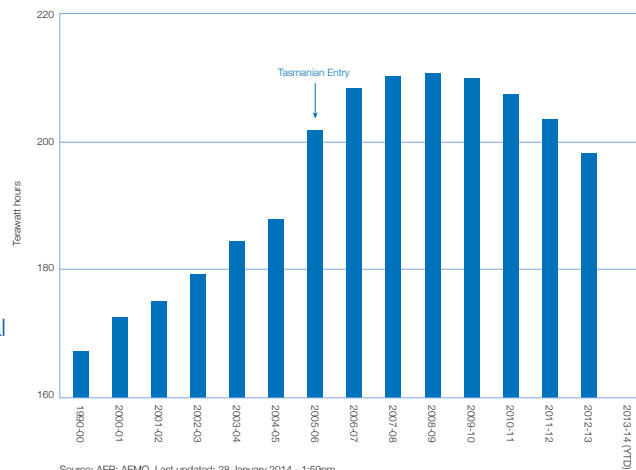
ENERGY SKILLS
AUSTRALIA

Where is the electrical industry heading? It can be difficult to keep your finger on the pulse in the volatile environment. As always, there is a multitude of changes ranging from technology, work practices and regulation.

The new E-Oz Energy Skills Australia environmental scan (e-scan) provides some key insights to help you understand and iterate your plans for the future. Here are some examples of what you will find in the document.

Industry Outlook Snapshot

Due to historically low interest rates and demand from income and population growth, there will be stimulation in residential construction, increasing employment in this sector. We will see engineering construction work decrease, primarily in the mining sector, affecting mostly Queensland and Western Australia. Victoria, Tasmania and Australian Capital Territory are expected to experience flat demand in residential construction in 2014 before growth kicks off for 2015. All other States can expect strong growth in residential construction, especially Sydney. Existing engineering construction projects in Tasmania and Northern Territory will come to life in 2014 while in Victoria and New South Wales large infrastructure upgrades will be in the spotlight. The overall outlook for the Australian Capital Territory is weak across all sectors and will remain so over an extended period of time.



Changes in Consumption

Interestingly, for the fourth year in a row, energy consumption dropped. This is a trend not predicted by the Australian Energy Market Operator. Actual data shows a drop of 1.5% average per annum, whereas the prediction was for annual increases of 2.1% from 2010. This decrease in energy consumption may stump some people due to the increase in economic growth and number of dwellings. Recent intelligence tells us the reasons are (1) Energy efficiency measures, in particular regulated standards for buildings and appliances (2) Consumer behaviour due to rising electricity costs (3) Energy generation changes, with the major influencer, photovoltaic installations reducing overall consumption (1 million installations) (4) Shift in manufacturing, away from energy intensive industries.

An Internet of Things

There has been a major shift in attitude to energy efficiency and a low carbon economy. This is leading us to a revolution in connecting with the energy grid, in ways we haven't seen before, further improving Australia's low carbon, efficient future. The 'internet of things' can communicate in real time energy sources, actual and predicted availability and price, historical, actual and predicted appliance usage and aggregate consumer usage. This new way of viewing the energy network has only been partially understood and operationalised.

In addition to these current examples of changes in the energy sector, the environmental scan also outlines the flow on effect on skills for the industry. New practices, changing job roles all require new training to be developed whether for your new apprentice or your existing workers. As your industry evolves, so does the training required. Remember, E-Oz continues to make available the employer driven Workforce Development fund program targeted to existing workers to upskill to meet market demand. [Click here for more information.](#)

E-Oz Energy Skills Australia provide an annual environmental scan for the energy industry elaborating on latest intelligence, identified workforce development needs and its relevance to the national training packages it develops.

To get access to the full e-scan, [click here and fill out the form.](#)



Queensland



Mick Logan, Executive Director

During 2013 the Queensland Chapter increased its membership by 22% making it the fastest growing Chapter of NECA nationally at present. Our members include the big end of town which means that collectively they employ thousands of electrical workers and are engaged on the big jobs around the state.

The number of smaller members has increased also with our suite of NECA Safe products and group buying discounts attracting many members to us during 2013.

Our training calendar was expanded during the year and included delivery of training in Papua New Guinea and our Healthy Worker Project has been a success in the development of workplace tools for managing stress, obesity, alcohol, drug use, depression and fatigue in the workplace.

The NECA Redbook which is the electrical workers site safety bible in the industry was also a huge seller in 2013 as it was updated to the new OHS laws.

NECA Guard insurance designed specifically for our industry and provided at a great price by our partners Inter Risk was also a great seller during the year.

A membership drive is currently underway. This is being done through a lead generation firm (telemarketer) who contacted contractors to make appointments to discuss membership benefits, 40 face to face meetings were arranged this way in 2013.

Zone meetings were held in Townsville, Mackay, Cairns and Goondiwindi to promote memberships in those towns.

NECA Queensland also commenced its Google Advertisements and Brochure postal campaign which has proven effective as well as sponsor site BBQs.

NECA Queensland is seeking to create a niche market for its services by offering a more personalised and multi skilled staff/member relationship model and by offering better value for money to members. Membership fees were also frozen in 2013 for 12 months to reduce membership non-renewal in difficult economic times.

In 2013 members' views were put to government in relation to licensing and apprentice pay issues as well as escalating industrial action, electrical safety and OHS issues. NECA Queensland have also been successful in retaining its position on the Electrical Safety Board (with the change of ED) and won a \$50K grant to undertake a healthy worker program as part of the NECASafe product.

The Queensland branch of NECA Group Training also employed its 50th apprentice during 2013 with a large proportion of these apprentices engaged on major government projects via members well into the foreseeable future.

All in all a most productive year for NECA Queensland in 2013 with a promising 2014 ahead.

www.neca.asn.au/qld

State Report

New South Wales



Oliver Judd, Executive Director

The NSW Chapter has grown its membership by 3.5% over the past year – which has resulted in the NSW Chapter having the largest actual growth in number of members in the 2013 calendar year. Our members include the full range of contractors from the very largest to the very smallest. We are also seeing more new members from the boutique areas.

Over the year we have launched a number of new and/or enhanced member services, including:

1. Launching the tri-state NECA news publication.
2. Introducing our Webinar Series.
3. Rolling out our Industry Briefing Nights.
4. The members' conference in Langkawi (also supported by the SA, ACT, VIC and TAS Chapters of NECA).
5. A new range of NECA work wear.
6. Our Business Structure Advice Service.
7. A new range of Work Health Safety products.
8. A Human Resources manual.
9. The NECA Red Book.

We have also introduced specialised training for Accredited Service Providers as well as training services in regional areas – and in some cases quite remote parts of the state. These services are delivered face-to-face and can be run for groups of 10 or more.



State Report

New South Wales (continued)

Our webinar and online series covers:

- Asbestos Awareness
- Safe Work Method Statements
- Working at Heights
- NECA Red Book Quiz
- Risk Management
- Manual Handlin
- Circuit Testing

It is pleasing to say that each of the above initiatives have been incredibly well received by not only the NECA Membership, but also other Industry participants. The stand-out of these initiatives has been the Industry Briefing Nights which to date has enabled the NECA team to meet and get to know over 750 members and non-members.

It is even more pleasing to add that these nights have had a great impact on member satisfaction, growth of membership and greater participation by members in NECA activities.

The NSW offer

On the back of the success of the Industry Briefing Nights this year we are ramping up our activities and will be hosting 22 nights in 2014. Our aim is to get to each major regional hub next year in the state to provide information and updates to as many members as we can. We know our members want to be the most successful Electrical Contracting businesses in the State and we are here to help in any way we can.

In addition, we have been in discussion with our Platinum Business Partners who have pledged their support for the local branch meetings in 2014. At these events we are looking at providing more technical support and insight into the latest products and techniques available to our Industry to ensure our members remain at the forefront of the trade.

Advocacy & community work

We continue to be active in our lobbying activities. The major issues of concern that NECA has been working on relate to the Inquiry into Construction Industry Insolvency, seeking industry changes for Accredited Service Providers, the National Licensing Program which currently poses significant threat to our Industry and encouraging everyone in our industry to use only compliant products.

Restructuring our team

NECA NSW went through a significant restructure with appointments to the following roles:

1. Stafford Poyser – Solicitor Director, NECA Legal Pty Limited.
2. Gordon Jervis – Employee Relations Manager.
3. Brian Davies – Marketing and Membership Services Manager.

None of the above would have been possible without the hard work and commitment from the staff at NECA, the Support of the NSW Executive Committee and our Branch Chairmen and Secretaries.

Finally we would like to thank the loyal members of NECA who have been so encouraging and supportive over the past 12 months. We hope that we have lived up to your expectations and look forward to contributing to NECA to make it the best Association we can in 2013/14.

www.neca.asn.au/nsw



Australian Capital Territory



Oliver Judd, Executive Director

2013 was a successful year for the ACT kicking-off with the new EMAP program in January. This is a joint-venture between NECA and E-OZ, with a new mentor for ACT joining the program in mid-January, CIT was a major focus for our training.

In April we held the first of our Industry Briefing nights in conjunction with the Planning and Land Authority (formerly ACTPLA) and WorkSafe ACT. 80 contractors attended the night and it was a great success. The topics discussed included: Amendment 2 for AS/NZS3000, AS/NZS5033 project bookings, electric shock reporting and the ACT WorkSafe Commissioner presented on apprentice supervision.

E-profiling also became very topical for members and led to the running of an information seminar in April, attended by around 30 people. In May WorkSafe ACT held a 'Who's Watching' seminar for construction workers attended by the majority of NECA members. This provided information on obligations when supervising apprentices and the intention to increase the number of inspectors.

July saw the second ACT Industry Briefing night with 60 people attending, at the Hellenic Club. Topics for the evening included WHS, superannuation, apprentice supervision, retention money/security of payments and basic tendering. This event was sponsored by NHP and TLE.

Asbestos Awareness Training also became an issue for NECA ACT in 2013.



The Electrical Industry Trivia Night was held in July and attended by over 400 people. It was a very successful night with all proceeds going to charity. The night raised approximately \$25,000 with this being distributed to charities including Oz Help and Diabetes Australia.

The 2013 NECA ACT Excellence awards were held in August with the event growing each year. The 2013 awards had 24 submissions and a record number of sponsors. Over 270 people attended the awards night.

Executive committee elections were held in mid-August and saw Rob Donnelly stand down from the President's role and Steve Patrick resign from the Committee.

A meeting with Brendan Smyth – MLA, was held in November to discuss retention money, payroll tax and red tape in the ACT.

NECA ACT regularly liaises with local authorities to represent our members with bodies such as ACTPLA, WorkSafe ACT and the Industry Training Associations Bodies (ITABs) and we sit on the following boards/committees: Capstone Committee, Capstone Validation Panel, ITAB, CIT Electro Technology Industry Reference Group, CIT Fyshwick Campus Advisory Board and ACT Business.

www.neca.asn.au/act

State Report Victoria



Philip Green, Executive Director

Business conditions continued to be difficult for most of the Victorian electrical contracting industry during 2013. The construction sector remained flat with the only bright spot being the apartment market and some early signs that the housing sector is starting to lift. The industrial sector also struggled and as the year progressed we saw a growing number of manufacturers, hit by the high Australian dollar, announcing closures, downsizing and/or withdrawal from local manufacturing.

The result for contractors was intense competition, minimal margins and the ongoing need to cut costs and carefully manage cash-flow.

Policy and Advocacy

The biggest policy issue for the electrical contracting industry during 2013 was the proposal to introduce national occupational licensing for the electrical trades. NECA has long been a supporter of national licensing and worked very hard with the National Occupational Licensing Authority to develop a workable national licensing system which maintained standards. Unfortunately, this proposal was thwarted by the bureaucracy which came up with a proposal which would have totally gutted the electrical trade. As a consequence, NECA successfully lobbied against that proposal which was then rejected by the federal and all state and territory governments. Unfortunately, the entire process was a major opportunity lost and it appears likely that it will be some time before governments will again have the appetite to consider national licensing.

Other lobbying efforts where we were involved were around the need for more infrastructure spending by the Victorian government, the re-establishment of the Australian Building and Construction Commission and greater transparency and equity regarding electricity distributors' charges and processes for the grid connection of PV systems.

Member Services

NECA Victoria continues to expand its member services. 2013 saw the introduction of NECA Legal enabling members to receive free expert legal advice and a wide range of legal services at a significant discount to market rate.

Increasing numbers of members made good use of NECA's Technical Services as well as the expansion of this service to include expert lighting advice to members.

State Report

Victoria (continued)

We also revised our very popular OHS Management System to ensure that it remains contemporary and simpler to implement. The system has now been re-branded as NECA Safe and we have introduced a web based version called NECA Safe online. More and more members are also making use of our ongoing OHS support – be it policy and procedure development, tool-box talks or staff inductions to name a few.

Demand for NECA services continues to grow such that we have recruited a new Industrial Officer, Alexandra Van Den Brink and a new Membership Officer, Spiro Kalafatis to ensure we are able to meet that growing demand.

Member Engagement

While telephone and electronic communications account for the majority of interactions between NECA staff and NECA members, our staff are very active in terms of visiting as many members in the field as possible. Members should never hesitate to request a visit from NECA personnel. The 2013 Information Night program was also a success with 1,000 contractors and their employees attending, enabling us to provide them with important information and updates.

NECA Council and Staff

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the NECA Victoria Council, all of whom do this on a voluntary basis alongside their busy jobs running full-time contracting businesses.

Thank you also to the highly-skilled and professional NECA Victoria staff for your continued commitment to servicing members.

Most importantly we are sincerely grateful for the ongoing support of our loyal members and look forward to continuing to work with you and to meet your expectations in terms of service delivery and industry advocacy.

www.neca.asn.au/vic



Tasmania



Andrew Farr, Tasmania President

NECA Tasmania continued to prosper in 2013, strengthening relationships with all stakeholders and especially sponsors and government.

One of the most prominent initiatives for NECA Tasmania was the launch of the Managing Apprenticeship Progression (MAP) program, a national project seeking to improve apprentice completion rates in the industry. This project has funded one full-time and two part-time mentors across the state, who assist in the provision of assistance and advice to apprentices.



Michael Bowring (right) receiving his life membership award from James Tinsley (former NECA CEO).

Our industry liaison meetings with Aurora Energy, WorkSafe Tasmania and the Skills Institute expanded this year to include TechSafe Australia, a new electrical inspections company. These quarterly meetings give an opportunity to air concerns and raise issues.

Tasmania enjoyed very strong supplier participation throughout 2013, and we are fortunate to have developed strong working relationships with our committed business partners. The highlights of the 2013 activities which were supported by the sponsors were the Excellence and Apprentice Awards and the Industry Business Luncheon. The Excellence Awards again highlighted the considerable wealth of talent we have in this small state, evidenced by the winning of a National Excellence Award by PSG in the Commercial Medium Project Category.

The second annual Industry Business Luncheon was held in April, and was a great success. The luncheon was addressed by Adam Brooks MP and included a presentation by Aurora Energy about the recovery operation following the devastating bush fires in late 2012. The social calendar outside of these two high-profile events was also very busy, with a range of well attended events including golf days and our annual Fellowship Meeting.

It was a pleasure this year to award a Life Membership to Michael Bowring. Michael worked tirelessly for sixteen years as State President, and set the chapter up well for our continued growth. Michael also represented Tasmania on the National Council. We must also acknowledge the contribution made by Jim Tinsley as Tasmania's Chapter Secretary. He has served the chapter, and the industry, extremely well.

We also gratefully acknowledge the contribution made to the chapter by all the committed Councillors who give up their time to strategically direct the chapter and deliver value for members.

www.neca.asn.au/tas

State Report

South Australia



Larry Moore, Executive Director

The past year has been another challenging one for the NECA SA members who have continued to strive for excellence in an extremely difficult business environment of continuing low level activity in the South Australian economy.

In spite of these economic adversities the retention and growth of membership continues to be a focus for NECA SA which requires constant improvement of existing products and services and the development and implementation of new benefits to members.

The NECA SA office was involved in several major issues over the past year and in particular the introduction and implementation of the Managing Apprenticeship Progression (MAP) program and the completion of the NECASA - HSEQ Management System.

The recruitment of two highly regarded and well respected Mentor/Advisors for the MAP program has brought an enormous wealth of talent to the NECA SA team who are able to provide a range of expertise and advice to NECA SA members. As a direct consequence we have seen a very positive outcome in SA in regard to industry acceptance and implementation of this contemporary and innovative apprentice program.

We saw the passing of the National WHS legislation by the SA parliament in January 2013 and it is very pleasing to report that our new HSEQ web based management system has been well received and warmly embraced by the membership.

At the industry level we have continued to work with other industry stakeholders such as government regulators both national and state, supply authorities, manufacturers and wholesalers where we have continued to maintain a strong and dynamic presence to represent the interests of contractors.

Our representation over the past year has included Chair of the SafeWork SA - Construction Industry OHS Committee and Energy Skills SA, Director of Energy Skills Australia and the Australian Refrigeration Council, membership of the Consumer and Business Services (CBS) Electrical Industry Liaison Group, Refrigeration & Air Conditioning - Occupational Licensing Advisory Committee (OLAC), Office of Technical Regulator - Technical Advisory Committee, Consumer and Business Services - Electrical Industry Group and Trades Recognition Australia - Local Trades Committee.

State Report

South Australia (continued)

In addition to the abovementioned representative forums we again delivered another very successful Industry Roadshow consisting of 15 seminars across the state where we informed some 1500 electricians on the new MAP apprentice program, amendments to the SA Power Networks Service and Installation Rules and updates to the Solar Installation standard AS/NZS 5033 and AS/NZS 3000. We also provided important information on the new national Workplace Health and Safety legislation which came into effect on the 1st of January 2013. The seminars which included presentations by the Office of the Technical Regulator and SA Power Networks continues to provide professional development for contractors and tradespeople alike, a role that no other organisation including government, provide to our sector.

A very successful initiative in 2013 was the introduction of member training/information sessions which has received very favourable feedback and the establishment of a member advisory group that will assist NECA SA deal with matters affecting the operation of our SME members.

We also once again ran a very successful Excellence Awards programme where many small and large electrical and communications contractor members nominated a variety of technically diverse and challenging projects and Apprentice Awards which saw some of our brightest and talented apprentices rewarded for their skills, knowledge and commitment to the trade.

We believe we have continued this year to excel in providing relevant information and services to members in a number of important areas including Human Resource Management, Industrial Relations, Technical and Contractual matters, as well as actively participating and organising promotional and industry events.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our sponsors of the many events that we held throughout the year and also personally thank the Committee of Management and the NECA SA team for their untiring dedication, commitment and support of the Association.

www.neca.asn.au/sa

State Report

Western Australia



Garry Itzstein, Executive Director

Despite the economy remaining in a relatively flat state, NECA membership set a new record in 2012/2013 and NECA WA had 810 members at the 30 June, 2013.

In order to provide a high level of service to an increased number of members and their staff, NECA WA has dedicated more resources towards its key service areas: legal, safety and technical:

- NECA Legal now has four full time staff including two qualified lawyers. Over the year NECA Legal provided advice and representation on a broad range of employment, workplace relations and contractual matters. It was also pivotal in providing members with assistance in debt recovery, successfully recovering around \$500,000 on behalf of members.

- NECASafe subscriptions increased by over 50% and fifteen contractors have signed up for the Shared Safety Service since its introduction in August 2012. This new service provides contractors with access to qualified Workplace Health and Safety consultants, who provide cost effective and timely in-house safety support and advice.
- Technical support and advice continues to be provided to NECA members.

Advocacy is consistently listed as one of the most important services to members. This year, NECA WA has continued to advocate strongly on industry's behalf by working hard to build and maintain relationships with ministers, government, members, other state chapters and stakeholders. Our success in this area is has been evident by various Ministers' attendance at the Excellence Awards and Board Meetings as well as visits to College of Electrical Training's new campus at Joondalup.

NECA's advisory committees, including regional groups, residential, solar and women in power, have all provided valuable input and information on a broad range of technical and advocacy issues. Member involvement in these initiatives has assisted NECA to effectively represent contractors' interests to Energy Safety, Western Power, the Electrical Industry Council (EIC), the Construction Training Fund and other industry bodies.



State Report

Western Australia (continued)

Some of the issues that have been covered by our state and national advocacy work this year include:

- Western Power's Service Apparatus Connection Scheme (SACS);
- the proposed introduction of a National Licensing Scheme (NOLS) - over 400 responses were sent to the Department of Commerce by NECA members as part of the consultative process;
- opposing reductions in training funding for the electrical industry, which have affected contractors accessing apprenticeship and post trade courses;
- the 2BIG2GNORE campaign, which has encouraged the federal government to increase their focus on the interests of small business;

NECA's member events and functions have continued to attract a high level of support and have been very popular with members and the broader industry.

- Over 500 people attended the annual Excellence Awards at the Perth Convention Centre and member engagement in these prestigious awards was apparent with over twenty five contractor award submissions being received. This year was the first time that the Electrical Group Training apprentice awards were included as part of the industry awards and the initiative proved very successful allowing for a wider range of award categories and a very competitive applications. The evening was a fantastic opportunity to showcase the exceptional standard of work produced by our industry.
- Members enjoyed a successful annual State Conference, which this year was held on the Gold Coast and held in partnership with the Queensland chapter of NECA. Delegates had the opportunity to attend a variety of informative and entertaining presentations as well as enjoy networking with other members and industry stakeholders. The conference continues to be a valuable and worthwhile event for attendees.
- Engagement with regional members increased markedly as member road shows took place in Broome, Northam, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and Bunbury. The South-West and Mid-West Member Advisory groups were also established and regular meetings were conducted with members in those areas.

- E-OZ continues to be an invaluable supporter of NECA and its members. Our close relationship with E-Oz allowed us to provide substantially discounted training for members and many members took advantage of the opportunity to attend the range of courses that were made available.

This year, NECA WA was also pleased to celebrate the achievements of its members. Bob Hatherley from Downers and John Sweeting from West Wide Electrical were both awarded Life Membership for the considerable time and energy they have contributed to NECA and to the wider electrical industry. Another well-respected NECA member, Frank Tomasi from Southern Cross Electrical Engineering, was nominated by NECA and was - recognised for many years of service to the electrical industry with an Order of Australian Medal as part of the Australia Day Honours Awards. Our congratulations to them all for their valuable contribution to our industry.

Looking Forward to 2013/2014

Over the next twelve months, NECA WA is looking forward to refining its services for the benefit of all members, be they large or small business, regional or metropolitan. We will be:

- further enhancing key member services - providing accurate and timely service and advice to members is a key focal point;
- continuing to increase contact and engagement opportunities with regional members;
- increasing membership – the more members we represent, the better our opportunities to effectively advocate with government and key industry bodies;
- assisting member to renegotiate their Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (EBA) - NECA estimates more than fifty EBA's will need to be renewed during the year; and
- continuing to advocate on members behalf with a range of issues currently in the spotlight.

I look forward to keeping you up to date on all the developments at NECA WA over the coming months.

www.neca.asn.au/wa

