

## A word from the CEO

As we went to print on this issue we were still waiting to hear when the election was taking place – and it was still anyone's guess as to the outcome. But one thing we can be sure of is that any government is going to have work better with small business in the coming years. The cost of running a small business has sky-rocketed and many feel it is now out of control.

We are also more and more aware how important it is that the government, and the regulators, listen to industry before rolling out new initiatives. The pink batts/insulation tragedies are shocking evidence of the consequences of a government that doesn't listen, as is sending workers into building sites without the necessary asbestos training. And passing the buck between state and federal bodies - or project manager to sub-contractor - only adds to our frustration.

We have long sought a national licensing system for both electricians and electrical contractors, to replace the current long-standing state-based systems. We can drive anywhere in Australia with a state-based driver's licence and there is a single national cabling licensing system. So we have long been questioning why there isn't a national electrical licensing system.

The latest attempt through COAG to move to a national system has been dragging along for years now. The recent recommendations from NOLA suggest we are close to a recommendation, but I don't like what I see. It is an attempt to harmonise licences – but at the lowest common denominator, rather than building on 'best practice'. And the biggest risk factor is a lowering of safety standards – which has some very real potential outcomes, and a general lowering of the quality of work done across our industry.

So once again it seems as though the submissions from NECA, the ETU and the industry have been totally ignored. But as



neither NECA nor the ETU are prepared to lower the standards of electrical licensing, we intend to jointly fight this threat.

So putting these themes together, we would like to see our industry fully embrace the need for higher standards across the board – but in particular in relation to safety. And for the smaller contractors to commit to acquiring greater business skills to help them run even more successful businesses. And we will be working with our members, our training teams, government and the regulators to help turn these two objectives into a reality.

We hope you enjoy this issue and in our next supplement we will bring you the highlights of our 2013 Market Monitor Research.

Best wishes,  
James Tinsley  
NECA CEO

## Legal services with a difference

We set up our legal arm in 2009 – initially in NSW, to better serve our members. Nearly five years on we have two busy offices, in Sydney and Perth, we serve Queensland and the ACT from Sydney, and only last month expanded our reach into Victoria – again working with our Sydney team. We now have a national legal team of ten people and we take on clients across the construction industry – not just NECA members.

"We are keen to grow our business as a niche construction practice," says Stafford Poyser – the head of the Sydney practice.

"We offer a mid-tier capability at a suburban-firm price – which is a great deal for our members. And by taking on non-member clients we can expand our capability. So everyone benefits."

Stafford has extensive experience in the area of Building and Construction Law and is an active participant in the Law Society of NSW and was President of the Eastern Suburbs Law Society from 2009 until March 2013.

In July of this year Johnny Brits joined the Perth office as the new head of legal. Johnny has a background in Employment and Workplace Relations Law and he hopes that his experience as a partner in a private legal practice and as former In-House Counsel for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA will assist him to make a contribution to the WA legal team. He is excited by the new challenge.

"There are some great opportunities for us in WA and being able to provide legal services on a wide range of industrial matters at a reduced rate is of significant benefit to members. Having a bigger team nationally to bounce ideas around with, just makes it all the more interesting," said Johnny in week one of the role.

We do both contentious and non-contentious work and a big focus of our work today is around security of payment, risk minimisation in contracts and debt recovery. Advice and representation for safety issues and work cover prosecutions is also a fast growing area of practice.

For more information contact Stafford Poyser on 02 9021 9635 or Johnny Brits on 08 9321 8637. ■

## Member profile

**Eddie Graham, former Managing Director of EJ & AL Graham**

"Whatever you do, you must stay on top of the paperwork," is Eddie Graham's advice to anyone running a small business today.

"Far too many people leave all their admin – even their invoicing, until months after they've done the work. I've never done that," he added. "I've always had my bills out promptly – and as quoted, and I'm always on top of all the other administration too. Even the tax."

And Eddie has run a very success business for over 30 years.

Eddie started his apprenticeship on 14 February 1966 – the day Australia went decimal, and in the early years of his career he worked on major constructions in Victoria. BHP House, in Melbourne, was one of his first assignments. But these days he is spending his time on a very different type of project. He has just finished building two houses in Cook Town for local people. All the workers on the project were volunteers. They paid their own flights and kept themselves throughout the project. And later this year Eddie is off to Papua New Guinea to work on the refurbishment of a local school.

"We have to be very cost-conscious on these projects," says Eddie. "A lot of what I've worked on has been sponsored by The Rotary Club. I enjoy giving something back. But the challenges are still there. In Cook Town we had huge problems with the generator –



**The boys working on mud crab for lunch in Cooktown.**

which was key to the project. But we got there in the end."

When asked about the benefits of running your own business, Eddie concluded that you need to do four things:

- go on a business course,
- be sure you have secured a good supply of guaranteed work,
- be prepared to take on work with pre-set costs (even if your margin is small), and
- get known in the local community (sport seemed to be Eddie's ticket but these days he admits he is more of a 'watcher than player').

Eddie has been a member of NECA since 1999 and his message to any contractor thinking about joining is that "NECA can help you run your business effectively. But it's up to you to work out how they can help you and then take full advantage of the services they provide." ■

## Post-apprenticeship Scholarship

The ElectroComms Contracting Foundation's Scholarship Program was founded to assist graduating apprentices to continue studying to develop managerial or technical skills. The scholarships contribute towards the cost of study (to a maximum of \$2,000 per year for a maximum duration of four years), and supports approximately 20 recipients each year.

The 2013 scholarship program will accept applications from September 2013. ■

## Sign up to the 'Does it Comply?' Pledge

NECA – in partnership with Voltimum, launched the Does it comply? initiative in June at the offices of Standards Australia, in Sydney's CBD. The event was attended by 40 senior executives from the electrical and communications industry, and the first person to sign the pledge to stamp out non-compliant products was Wes McKnight – NECA's National President.

"There is no place for non-compliant products in any area of our industry today," said Wes. "Electrical contractors that knowingly purchase and install non-compliant goods are putting their customers, and their own business, at risk. As the new regulations come into effect contractors need to understand the consequences as this behaviour will no longer be tolerated," he added.

Colin Blair - Standards Australia CEO, opened the proceedings, James Tinsley – NECA CEO welcomed the guests, Kim Craig – Voltimum Australia Chairman previewed the website and underlined the importance of getting the industry on side, Neil Fraser – Energy Safe Victoria Executive Manager updated guests on the progress being made by the Electrical Equipment Safety System (EESS).

The next step in this process is to get as many contractors as possible in the electrical and communications industry to 'sign the pledge'. Contractors do this by watching a webinar on the website and then testing their knowledge with 10 simple questions.

To see the questions go to [www.doesitcomply.com.au/online\\_training.php](http://www.doesitcomply.com.au/online_training.php) ■

## ...too big to ignore...

NECA is proud to be a partner of this initiative. For further information contact Barry Jackson at [barry.jackson@neca.asn.au](mailto:barry.jackson@neca.asn.au).



## Meet Dave



For a little bit of fun, check out our most recent mascot: Dave!  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbVvZd\\_0hPk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbVvZd_0hPk)

## Apprentice profiles

### David Williams

David's first big job was working at Sydney airport on a 'splicing of fibre optics' job and he loved it. Some of the runs could be 500m with cable diameters the size of a man's finger (which consisted of numerous strands of fibre [glass] which would be the size of a human hair). He also worked on the refurbishment of the SES HQ in Wollongong.

Having now completed his apprenticeship – during which he was apprentice of the year in both 2010 (local award) and 2011 (national award), David is now back studying. He's in the second year of an Electrical Engineering Degree at Wollongong University and is a



**David Williams on holiday at Mount Sauris (northern Italy).**

recipient of the ElectroComms Foundation Post-Apprenticeship Scholarship Program.

"I really enjoy the studying. While I was an apprentice it was great to be constantly learning new things. Putting theory into practice at work was also very satisfying – even though I did occasionally find my boss wanted to continue doing things 'the old way'. But that's all part of the challenge of being an apprentice," said David.

And when asked what he would like to do post-university, David added: "My dream job would be as an engineer at somewhere like Blue Scope – or some other major mine."

And when he's not studying David is a keen sportsman – playing competition squash, rugby league (reserve grade) or working out in the gym. Or on holiday, of course!

### Marcus Black

Marcus was voted the Best Flexible Electrical Apprentice 1<sup>st</sup> Year for 2012 at the Skills Tech Bracken Ridge awards evening. These awards recognise the best performing apprentices in the electrotechnology industry – and not only did Marcus excel at his studies, but he was also acknowledged for providing study support to his peer group.

Marcus decided he would like to be an electrician when he was 15 after watching an electrician at work in his home and he chose the NECA option because he believed that the quality and variety of



**Marcus Black at work.**

training received on the job would help reach his full potential as an electrician. He loves the variety from week-to-week. One week he may be installing data cabling on a commercial project and the next he may be installing switchboards for a generator in a domestic home.

His long-term ambition is to study electrical engineering. ■

## Up coming events

DATE	Event	VENUE
<b>Monday 21 October 9am – 5pm</b>	E-Oz Annual Conference	Sofitel, Gold Coast
<b>Wednesday 27 November</b>	Apprentice Excellence Awards (Cocktail)	Sydney, venue TBC
<b>Thursday 28 November</b>	National Excellence Awards (Dinner)	Sheraton on the Park, Sydney

## To Join NECA

If you would like to find more of the benefit of being NECA member please contact:

**NSW** Brian Davies – [brian.davies@neca.asn.au](mailto:brian.davies@neca.asn.au)  
**ACT** Brett McIntyre – [actfieldofficer@necagt.com.au](mailto:actfieldofficer@necagt.com.au)  
**VIC** Rod Lovett – [rod.lovett@neca.asn.au](mailto:rod.lovett@neca.asn.au)  
**QLD** Gavan Porter – [gavan.porter@neca.asn.au](mailto:gavan.porter@neca.asn.au)  
**SA** Donna Beech – [dbeech@necasa.asn.au](mailto:dbeech@necasa.asn.au)  
**WA** Glen Rothlisberger – [grothlisberger@necawa.asn.au](mailto:grothlisberger@necawa.asn.au)  
**TAS** – Sarah Williams - [necatasa@neca.asn.au](mailto:necatasa@neca.asn.au)

## New from across the chapters

### Asbestos safety

As the asbestos issue becomes a bigger and bigger concern we encourage all electrical contractors to refresh their knowledge on how to identify asbestos. All NECA chapters have training on offer – so please contact your local office for more information.

Or alternatively check out the webinar on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5Ry9PHI0k8> where Matthew Heap takes you through the things to look for. And this webinar is just one of a series work, health and safety topics.

### Energise Oz

Energy Skills Australia is the trading name for ElectroComms and Energy Utilities Industry Training Council which is the Commonwealth Government's declared Industry Skills Council for the Electrotechnology, Communications and Energy Utilities industries.

E-Oz has the primary responsibility for assisting industry in addressing its workforce development and training needs, including the development and maintenance of training packages for the industries under its coverage. These include: the Electrotechnology; Gas; Electricity Supply

Industry – Transmission, Distribution and rail; and Electricity Supply Industry – Generation Training Packages.

To find out more please visit: <http://www.energiseoz.com.au/index.php/employer/employer-project-overview>

### Traders 500: The Electrical Trade Show

This year's show is turning out to be a huge success and NECA is proud to be a Platinum Partner. We see this event as a great opportunity for people to meet with and connect within their industry. At the time we went to print the show was heading west.

### Women in Power

In 2011 NECA WA recognised the important role that women play in our industry by launching the Women in Power group to provide training and development, and the opportunity for women in the industry to network and exchange information with each other.

From small beginnings, the group has since held both metropolitan and regional member meetings, sent a delegate to the Women in Industry conference in Canberra, created an information portal and is currently sponsoring a new Safety Tendering Workshop.

None of this would be possible without the hard work and dedication of the Women in Power Committee:

- Kimberley Robbins: Director/Secretary, K&K Electrical Services Pty Ltd
- Leanne Graesslin: Director, Elexacom
- Kathryn Born: Director/Head Installer, A Woman's Spark
- Amanda Sachse: Business Manager, Wesglo Electric
- Sarah Jayne Flatters: Electrical apprentice, Electrical Group Training
- Kimberley Marshall: General Manager, ComSpark Pty Ltd
- Julie Hughes: WHS Systems Analyst, NECA WA

We sincerely thanks these Committee members for providing their experience and supporting this initiative.

If you would like to attend future events, please contact Julie Hughes on [jhughes@necawa.asn.au](mailto:jhughes@necawa.asn.au)

### NECA WA opens third training college.

NECA WA's, College of Electrical Training (CET) opened its third campus in July.

Consisting of three classrooms, ten laboratories, four workshops to deliver practical training and a 60 seat auditorium, the campus is equipped to offer training to 1,000 electrical apprentices and over 2,500 post trade electricians.

The campus, will offer traditional and open learning, which will give students the flexibility to engage in self-paced learning and face to face training.

Blended learning will also be accessible, consisting of online delivery and the ability to book time with an instructor, suiting students who wish to reinforce or refresh their knowledge.

Located in the northern suburb of Joondalup, this campus will complement CET's centrally located office in Balcatta and its campus in the southern corridor suburb of Jandakot.

Having such a wide geographic presence will cement CET's position as the pre-eminent provider of skills training to the electrical industry ■.



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