

A word from the CEO



Our members – who collectively employ more than 50,000 people across Australia, are in many ways a barometer of the Australian economy. And in this year's Market Monitor survey the overwhelming message is that it is getting harder and harder for smaller businesses to survive with the 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. It's therefore not surprising that as many as 5% of contractors doing business in 2011 have since closed their businesses – some voluntarily, others not.

The pressure on the new Federal Government to revisit the challenges of running a small business is enormous. And we will be reminding all the new Ministers we meet of exactly what our industry needs to see change – which includes the rethinking of the National Licensing issue and further support of the ACCI's 2BIG2IGNORE campaign which we sponsor.

In 2005 NECA launched an initiative to

raise the awareness of the safety issues around non-compliant products. More recently we joined forces with Voltimum to launch the Does it Comply? campaign. This campaign is a comprehensive industry-driven initiative that reinforces the dangers of non-compliant products in order to keep this issue at the forefront of people's minds.

The recent withdrawal of non-compliant cabling in NSW and Queensland is a stark reminder of what happens when people get it wrong. We therefore strongly urge all Electrical Contractors to visit www.doesitcomply.com.au and sign the pledge to stamp out non-compliant goods across Australia.

Another initiative we are proud to be supporting is the drive by KNX – a global standards not-for-profit organisation, to encourage manufacturers to produce products to an international building control standard in order to allow the end-user to select the systems and range of products that best suits their particular needs. The days of being locked into one range of products – which generally also meant being locked into using one manufacturer, are clearly a thing of the past. And this is great news for the industry and the consumer. So a true win/win. For more information check out www.knx.org.au.

And finally, after 25 years with NECA – and eight years as the National CEO, I am handing over the NECA baton. It has been a great experience for me and I have particularly enjoyed working with Electrical Connection. Our industry has changed enormously over the past quarter of a century but I suspect that there is even more exciting change to come.

I wish you all well.

Kind regards,
James Tinsley
NECA CEO

New training facilities for Victoria



Following a lengthy and significant refurbishment NECA reopened its Lygon Street campus in early October. The new "state of the art" training facility caters for pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship and post-trade training and offers some of the latest training aids available.

In a project that took nearly 16 months to complete the building was essentially gutted and now incorporates industry best practice in both the formal teaching classrooms and practical areas.

Located in North Carlton and with public transport to the door the NECA Skills Centre has been positioned to meet the industry's needs.

"Our reputation as a premier learning institution is now even greater with this new facility," said NECA Executive Director Philip Green. "Our position has been to provide optimum outcomes for those people who want to learn and enhance their industry skills and having the physical surroundings to maximize the learning experience is in this technological age critical".

The Skills Centre is available to all contractors, their staff and apprentices, whether a NECA member or not. "The strength of what we do is in the broad range of training that is offered. Not only is there the traditional technical training, but also a range of business and management courses that are available.

**New NECA website
Just in time for Christmas
NECA will be launching its
new website. So watch this
space www.neca.asn.au**

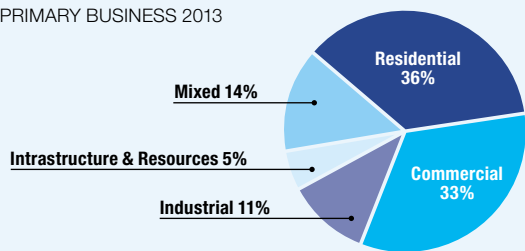
Market survey

The 2013 Market Monitor released in September clearly shows that although industry charge-out rates have gone up by 7% since the 2011 survey – the burden of business overheads 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.

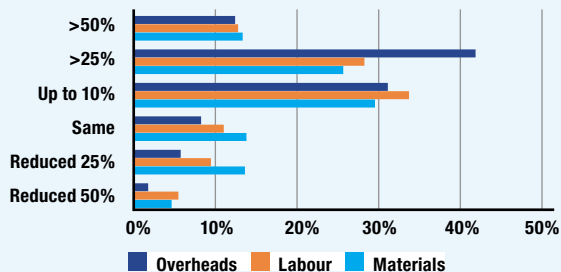
Some of the interesting trends from this survey are:

- 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, was confirmed 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.

PRIMARY BUSINESS 2013



COST INCREASES



Apprentice Awards



Commercial/Domestic

NAME	HOST COMPANY	STATE
David McLeary*	Various Host Employers	ACT
Tyson O'Leary	David Jones Electricians	NSW
Nicholas Anderson	Luke's Electrical Solutions	SA
Kurt Mackey	BJ Banks Electrical	TAS
Ryan Hutley	Q Electrical	QLD
Steven Granger	PA & WM Reilly Electrical Contractors	VIC
Dominic Bailey	Bon Electrics	WA

* NECA–employed apprentice

Industrial

NAME	HOST COMPANY	STATE
Shannon Connelly*	EcoWise Services	ACT
Blake Godwin*	Bass Electrical Engineering	NSW
Kenneth Gosnold	VIP Electrical	SA
Joel Sorrentino	Nyrstar	TAS
Callan McNab	Stowe Australia	QLD
Pat Mammone	Nilsen	VIC
Daniel Lorca Vilches	Southern Cross Electrical Engineering	WA

* NECA–employed apprentice

Communication

NAME	HOST COMPANY	STATE
Trystan Moffitt	Stowe Australia	ACT
Spiro Wassef*	Stowe Australia	NSW
Kane Sturzebecher	APEX Communications	SA
Ilias Shaw*	Fredon Industries	WA

* NECA–employed apprentice

Excellence Awards



WA

COMPANY	PROJECT	CATEGORY
Edmunds Electrical	Jamie's Italian Restaurant	Commercial Small Project
Datatel Electrical and Communications	Uni of WA QEII Medical Centre M-Block Refurbishment	Commercial Medium Project
Team Electrical Services	NIB Stadium	Commercial Large Projects
Bon Electrics	Controlled Lighting Greenhouse	Industrial Small Project
ECM	T155 Anderson Point Port Expansion Project	Industrial Large Project
Trifield Electrical Engineering	Bag Filter and Heat Exchange Projects	Small Contracting Business
Datatel Electrical & Communications	Mt Lawley Primary School Transportable Fire Restoration	Voice/Data
ECM	Workplace Health and Safety Project (The Journey to Zero Harm)	Work Health and Safety

VIC

COMPANY	PROJECT	CATEGORY
Pacific Service Group (PSG)	Melbourne GPO	Commercial Small Project
Electrico Group (Aust)	Coles Southland	Commercial Medium Project
Nilsen (Vic)	NEXTDC Data Centre	Commercial Large Project
PBE Insurelec	Three-Story Domestic Dwelling	Domestic Residence
E-Tec	Steavenson Falls	Energy Efficiency & Environment
National Automation Controls	Dandenong Energy Precinct Co-Generation	Industrial Small Project
Downer Infrastructure	TDJV Aquasure Victorian Desalination Plant	Industrial Large Project
Deacam	Oakridge Wines, Trade Waste	Small Contracting Business
DESA Australia	Digital Realty MEL-10	Voice/Data

TAS

COMPANY	PROJECT	CATEGORY
PSG	Devonport Homemakers Complex	Commercial Medium Project
Contact Electrical	Simmons Court Residence	Domestic Residence
Contact Electrical	Glenorchy City Council Water Treatment Plant	Industrial Small Project
PSG	Tasmanian Dairy Products, Dry Powder Milk Plant Smithton	Industrial Large Project
Mekina Technologies	Dunalley Primary School	Small Contracting Business
Contact Electrical	Hydro Tasmania King Island Smart Grid	Voice/Data

ACT

COMPANY	PROJECT	CATEGORY
Stowe Australia	Australia Post Canberra City	Commercial Small Project
O'Donnell Griffin	ANZSOG Building ANU	Commercial Medium Project
O'Donnell Griffin	Canberra Airport Multi User Terminal	Commercial Large Project
Ross Communication & Construction Service	Glencoe Residence	Domestic Residence
O'Donnell Griffin	Nishi Commercial 400kw Solar PV	Energy Efficiency and Environment
Shepherd Electrical	Defence Communications Facility Building 195 – HV Installation Works	Industrial Large Project
Enecorp	St Clare's Trade Training Centre	Small Contracting Business
O'Donnell Griffin	DHS Primary Production Connectivity Project	Voice/Data

NSW

COMPANY	PROJECT	CATEGORY
J&S Brown Electrical	Holcim Concrete T area South	Commercial Small Project
Great Southern Electrical	Walnut Australia	Commercial Medium Project
Star Group	Royal North Shore Hospital Redevelopment	Commercial Large Project
Automated Innovation	Merewether Residence	Domestic Residence
Macchia Group	Multi National Food Manufacturing Plant	Energy Efficiency and Environment
Barnwell Cambridge	Southern Sydney Freight Line	Industrial Small Project
Downer Infrastructure	M2 Tunnel Project	Industrial Large Project
Fibre Optic Design & Construction	Sydney Harbour Bridge Communication Network Upgrade	Small Contracting Business
KLM Group	Financial Institution Headquarters	Voice/Data

SA

COMPANY	PROJECT	CATEGORY
SunTriX Commercial	Salisbury North Football Club Grid Connect PV Solar Project	Commercial Small Project
Tyrone Electrical Services	Biological Sciences Building	Commercial Medium Project
O'Donnell Griffin	Art Gallery of South Australia Cultural Precinct Security Upgrade	Commercial Large Project
PSG Electrical Solutions	Illumin 8 Project	Commercial Extra Large Project
MIMP Connecting Solutions	Life Care Microwave Network	Voice/Data Small Project
MIMP Connecting Solutions	MCJV APLNG Pipeline Project (Winner/Perpetual)	Voice/Data Large Project

QLD

COMPANY	PROJECT	CATEGORY
Blue Star Atlantic	UQ Lakes Blue Station	Commercial Small Project
Rutledge AV	Brisbane City Hall Refurbishment	Commercial Medium Project
Blue Star Pacific	Carseldine Government Office Precinct	Commercial Large Project
Stowe Australia	Sir Samuel Griffith Centre	Energy Efficiency & Environment
Stowe Australia	Abbott Point Water Augmentation Project	Industrial Small Project
Perigon	QGC Chinchilla	Industrial Large Project
Mobile Test 'n' Cal	Onsite HV Testing Collaboration Service	Small Contracting Business
Fredon (QLD)	Gold Coast University Hospital ICT Project	Voice/Data
Blue Star	Range of various projects	Work Health & Safety

Steve Griffiths – long-standing NECA NSW board member Q&A with Steve Griffiths from Phasor Electrical

Q1. What made you become an electrician?

I grew up in a family that had a long tradition of mechanical engineering tradesmen on both my father and mothers side. Some of them had been successful in owning and operating small engineering workshops. I naturally picked up a lot of mechanical knowledge when I was growing up often helping my father in his workshop, and I always had it in my mind from an early age that I would like to have my own business to operate.

When it came time to choose a career I looked at the electrical trade and it stood out as the ideal choice, an exciting trade with plenty of opportunities for an aspiring young tradesman, who had his site set on running his own business.

Q2. What was your first big/significant job?

During the boom of the 1980's I completed several shop front fit outs and office refurbishment jobs for Qantas. The project management contractors were pleased with my performance and invited me to tender on a project for Qantas upgrading their check-in facilities at the International Airport in Sydney. The project was completed during an 18 month period and involved off site construction and testing of all the conveyor and check-in systems as well as site installation of all power, communication and data cabling and equipment. This was the first significant make or break Project for me and I enjoyed the challenge and the Project was completed on time and on budget.

Q3. What was you're most rewarding project?

The most rewarding Project I have completed was a recent Electrical Safety Audit and Upgrade of the South Pacific Sites operated by British American Tobacco Australia. The company operate seven manufacturing and growing sites sites in the region covering New Guinea, The Solomon Islands, Fiji and Samoa.



The project involved working with the local electrical departments at each site. Training the local team during the audit and upgrade, on the correct application of the rules was included in the Project.

As testimony to the locals benefiting from the Project, 2 local electricians (one in Samoa, one in The Solomon Islands) were able to obtain their licences with their new knowledge, the Samoan Project won a NSW NECA Chapter Excellence Award and the Fijian Project won an in house award for the Fiji Island Group operations for making a difference in the work place.

Q4. How did you enjoy the studying?

I enjoyed the study at TAFE during my apprenticeship. When I started my own business in my early twenties I found it hard to juggle work with study, so I was careful to choose courses relating to new products or services, that were relevant to my everyday needs. After a break from formal study I enrolled for the Electrical Engineering Diploma when I was 34. It took some time to settle in to the study routine, however I enjoyed the content and completed the Diploma.

Q5. How did you maintain a good work/life balance?

Being an owner operator of a contracting business can be an all consuming situation.

I have been fortunate to have the support of my wife Wendy to assist with the balancing act of work and home life. In the end we managed the balance by mixing most of our pleasure activities and business in the same basket, and Wendy was always there to ensure enough time was set aside well in advance for family occasions.

Q6: What are your out-of-work interests?

Out of work interests are travel and following the South Sydney Rabbitohs in the NRL.

Q7. What made you want to get involved in NECA 'management'?

My local branch of NECA were not happy with the way the industry was heading, particularly for the smaller contractors. The Chairman asked at several meetings if someone from our branch was interested in standing for a position at the next Executive Committee elections. I saw it as a great opportunity to make a difference and be a part of the decision making processes that steered our industry. Being a small business operator myself the time involved would need to be managed carefully to avoid any adverse effects on my business, but after some deep soul searching I knew it was a position I had the passion to fulfil. Getting involved was one finding, the time was another and once more I think myself lucky to have had the support and encouragement of my wife Wendy throughout my time at NECA.

Q8. What is your advice to anyone starting up a contracting business today?

Do your homework. Take the time to get some advice from reliable sources and design a business plan for your business model and get it checked by experts. And don't take on work just for the sake of it, choose your work and your clients carefully. There have been plenty of businesses that have gone broke despite being flooded with work. Joining NECA and having the access to Industry Professionals and industry specific service.

A new Executive Director for WA – Garry Itzstein



Garry has been a NECA member for many years and has previously sat on all the NECA WA Boards.

“I’m looking forward to being actively involved in the association again and it will be interesting to see NECA from a new perspective,” says Garry.

Over the coming months Garry will be talking to members to get some first-hand ideas on what they need and how NECA can continue to improve its services. As a former contractor, Garry understands the needs around safety, legal services and technical support. Although NECA is doing some excellent work across these three areas in WA, Garry will be looking closely at all services with a view to improving the overall level of assistance for members, be they large or small, regional or metropolitan.

“I’m particularly passionate about safety and will continue to assist contractors in improving the safety culture of our industry to keep our staff and apprentices safe. One of my first projects will be to lead a national review for NECA of its WHS products and services,” Garry added.

The WA team has also played an active role at a national level recently – providing representation for contractors with the federal government, politicians and national organisations.

“The 2BIG2IGNORE campaign is a key to WA. The new federal government has pledged to focus on the interests of small business and through our ongoing participation I will ensure that the needs of smaller WA contracting businesses are better understood. Issues such as national licensing, Clean Energy Council accreditation, the NBN, national WHS legislation and apprentice wages are also very important to WA contractors,” Garry concluded.

Over the next 12 months NECA will be working to establish a consistent set of member services nationally and Garry is keen to play his part. He sees initiatives such as this as the way for NECA to implement best-practice technical, safety and legal services. And he will be looking at ways to help businesses that operate in multiple states and are members of more than one NECA chapter.

At a state level, Garry will continue to lobby against the reduction of government red tape that negatively impacts on smaller businesses. His aim is to make it much easier for contractors to grow their businesses as the building and construction industry starts to show signs of recovery.

It’s an exciting time for WA!