

BCR Implementation Team  
Australian Building Codes Board

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## Australian Building Codes Board – Consultation on Building Design Acceptance and Independent Third Party Reviews

The National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Australian Building Codes Board discussion papers on Building Design Acceptance and Independent Third Party Reviews.

NECA supports in-principle the general policy drivers of having national consistency in both the building design and approval application processes. NECA believes that adequate regulations are required to ensure the very high-profile incidents of substandard design and construction work that has been highlighted through the media does not occur again. We have been heavily involved in the process in NSW to improve design practitioner regulations, and would suggest this is a sound basis to learn from.

While NECA notes that the discussion papers do not make any specific references to electrical work and electrical design, NECA would like to point out that our electrotechnology industry and our large electrical contracting businesses are already well equipped with the experience and qualified personnel for major design and construction work.

In fact, NECA would like to go so far as to say that we are not aware of any safety issues or structural defects that have caused significant damage to buildings arising as a result of inadequate electrical design where the design has been carried out by a licensed electrician.

NECA would therefore like to caution the ABCB in any consideration of design qualifications that they might consider implementing, in that they need to be reasonable. While electrical design is not covered by the National Construction Code, but rather by AS3000, *the Wiring Rules*, technical electrical design is already an integral part of the Certificate III electrician training package and is a regulated component of our electrotechnology industry through state and territory electrical safety regulators. This is in contrast to some sectors who push for unnecessary higher level qualifications such as associate degrees and diplomas.

In summary, while NECA supports harmonization and consistency across jurisdictions in design requirements. We would caution against any proposal that would propose onerous design qualifications such as Associate Degrees and Diplomas, which would require at least two years of additional full time study for licenced electricians.

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Should you have any questions, or wish to discuss this submission further, please contact Peter McCabe, Director of Policy and Government Relations, at [peter.mccabe@neca.asn.au](mailto:peter.mccabe@neca.asn.au) or on 0439 707 101.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'O Judd', written in a cursive style.

**Oliver Judd**  
Chief Executive Officer



## About NECA

The National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) is the peak body for Australia's electrical and communications sector, which employs 170,000 workers<sup>1</sup> and turns over more than \$23bn annually.<sup>2</sup> We represent almost 5,500 businesses performing works including the design, installation and maintenance of electrical and electronic equipment in the building, construction, mining, air conditioning, refrigeration, manufacturing, communications and renewables sectors.

NECA has advocated on behalf of the electrotechnology industry for over 100 years. We help members and our industry operate their businesses more effectively, and represent their interests to all levels of government, regulators and other bodies such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and Standards Australia.

NECA members make an essential economic contribution – connecting businesses, homes and infrastructure – encouraging investment, improving reliability and energy security, and delivering affordable, environmentally sustainable outcomes. The safety and reputation of our industry is critical to all tradespeople, consumers, and the community.

NECA is integral to the next generation of electrical contractors. Through our Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and Group Training Organisations (GTOs), we offer employment and skills development to some 4,800 apprentices nationally. Our success is clear: we proudly boast 90% completion rates across our courses, with roughly one in three licensed electrical workers starting their career as a NECA apprentice.

NECA helps attract entrants to our industry through holistic, high-quality, industry-relevant programs including our scholarship program, the NECA Foundation, and the Women in Electrical Trades Roadmap. We proactively seek diverse workforces, supporting female, indigenous and mature aged apprentices, and promoting career paths for school students and school leavers. We also operate the industry-wide NECA Annual Excellence Awards, which acknowledge and celebrate achievements and distinguished electrotechnology projects, and NECA's Apprentice Awards, recognising future leaders in our industry.

NECA continues to monitor and respond to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis on behalf of our members and the electrotechnology sector, and is working with industry, government and the community to achieve a COVID-19 safe economy and swift national recovery.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government 'Job Outlook'. (July 2020) (Telecommunications Trades Workers) <https://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation?search=alpha&code=3424> and (Electricians) <https://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation?search=alpha&code=3411>

<sup>2</sup> Ibis World 'Electrical services in Australia Industry Statistics (May 2020) <https://www.ibisworld.com/au/industry/electrical-services/325/>