



national
electrical and
communications
association

PROFILE NECA WA

WESTERN AUSTRALIA CHAPTER

Unit 18 – 20,
199 Balcatta Road,
Balcatta WA 6021
PO Box 782,
Balcatta WA 6914

T 1300 NECA WA
F +61 8 9240 4866
E necawa@necawa.asn.au
W www.neca.asn.au
ABN 19 295 806 789



THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL AND COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION, WESTERN AUSTRALIA GROUP

The Electrical and Communications Association of Western Australia (Union of Employers) (“NECA WA”), supports the business interests of electrical and communications contractors in the State of Western Australia.

NECA WA consists of five separate legal entities, each with a role to play in the development of employers and employees:

- **NECA WA** – the peak industry association in WA representing electrical and communications contractors, which currently has over 1,200 members.
- **National Electrical Contractors Association Western Australian Chapter** – provides the link to the National Association, advocacy on federal government issues and representation in Fair Work Commission.
- **Electrical Group Training Ltd (‘EGT’)** – a registered Group Training Organisation (GTO), which currently employs around 500 apprentice electricians and hires them to over 200 contracting businesses throughout the state.
- **College of Electrical Training Inc (‘CET’)** – a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) currently providing vocational training to over 2,000 apprentices and post-trade training to licensed electricians and contractors.
- **NECA Legal (WA) Pty Ltd** – An incorporated legal practice offering legal and industrial relations services to NECA WA members and to employers who are non-members.

NECA WA’s mission is to improve its members’ businesses through the provision of excellent advice and services and to maintain and improve its position as the premier provider of quality employment and training services throughout metropolitan and regional Western Australia.

NECA WA

NECA WA represents the interests of electrical, communications and refrigeration & air conditioning contractors. It is committed to raising the profile, business environment and competitive edge of all electrotechnology professionals in Western Australia.

NECA WA’s services are tailored to the unique needs of contractors working in the electrotechnology industry. It employs specialists in industrial relations, occupational health and safety, management, education and training, human resources and technology. Members have access to professional advice, training and up to date industry relevant information on a range of important business issues and receive representation and support in industrial relations matters.

The Association actively represents the needs and entitlements of contractors at all levels of government and industry, ensuring members’ needs are heard.

NECA WA operates the WA branch of NECA National - an industry association representing contractors who are responsible for the delivery of electrical, refrigeration & air conditioning, voice and data communications systems in Australia. NECA National’s membership comprises approximately 5,000 businesses across Australia, who employs more than 50,000 tradespeople. By also operating as the WA State branch of the national association, NECA WA has taken member representation to a more influential level and enjoyed the benefits of a national brand and lobbying position.

Electrical Group Training Ltd ('EGT')

EGT currently employs around 500 apprentices, making it the largest employer of electrical apprentices in Australia. These apprentices are, in turn, hosted by more than 200 contracting businesses throughout the state who work on a wide range of projects, from domestic through to the major commercial and industrial installations.

Group Training Organisations like EGT work to benefit both apprentices and host employers. EGT works to ensure there are apprentices available who are placed with host employers, in accordance with workloads and training needs, gaining a breadth of experience across projects and sectors and developing a broad skill base and extensive knowledge. This creates strong career pathways for new entrants to the industry while assisting host employers through the consistent supply of quality apprentices. Using EGT's services enables businesses to avoid having to commit to a full four year apprenticeship while better managing their human resource requirements to cope with the peaks and troughs of work. The apprentice is assured of continuous employment and, at the successful conclusion of their apprenticeship; a trade is awarded that is a nationally recognised qualification and an internationally renowned electrical workers licence.

EGT has experienced exceptional growth and success since its inception in 1980s. The organisation is focused on recruitment to help meet the electrical training needs of Western Australia's current and future market, which like other states is experiencing a shortage of skilled tradespeople. Due to its extensive industry networks and a proactive approach to training and development, EGT has a very high success rate boasting completion rates over 80%.

EGT prides itself on providing apprentices with quality safety training before they are placed with a host employer. In financial year 2014 thanks to federal government funding, over 250 EGT Apprentices commenced and/or complete a Certificate 3 in Occupational Health and Safety either post or prior to induction. New apprentices are also fully equipped and understand how to use their tools and safety gear. Safety continues to be a major part of ongoing training, with all apprentices required to undertake ongoing safety training and assessment as they progress through their apprenticeship.

In 2009 EGT received recognition for its effort and focus on improving Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) outcomes for all staff by receiving both the WorkSafe Plan Silver Certificate and the IFAP/CGU Gold Safeway Achiever Award in 2009. Since then EGT has achieved Gold Safeway Achiever Awards in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 followed by Platinum in 2014 along with WorkSafe Plan Gold in 2010 and Platinum in 2011, 2013 and 2015, testament to the Board and staff members' dedication to the safety cause for all employees.

College of Electrical Training Inc ('CET' or the 'College')

The CET currently operates from two Campuses. The Southern Campus at Jandakot has been operating since 2008, delivering renewable energy, air conditioning and solar energy training in addition to traditional apprenticeships. The new Joondalup Campus opened its doors in July 2013 with 300 students in training across a variety of courses; a remarkable achievement for a new education facility. Student numbers at Joondalup have already built to over 900 with many more expected to join in the near future.

The CET trains approximately 50% of all electrical mechanic apprentices in Western Australia and as a result of this success the CET built the Campus in Joondalup to be a "state-of-the-art" facility providing electrical training using traditional face to face and blended learning techniques. In addition to apprentice training, this new Campus delivers the Certificate III Data and Communications, Certificate IV Instrumentation, hazardous area and it is planned to include sustainable energy training within the near future. Industry is delighted with the opportunities the Joondalup Campus provides, attracting young trainees and apprentices from a wider geographic region in Perth and regional WA. It will ensure even more electrical workers for industry with a view to shoring up the pool of available trained and qualified talent for the benefit of the industry.

In March 2014 the Joondalup and 25 year old Balcatta campus merged providing all north of the river apprentices and tradespersons with up to date facilities, such as; purpose-built workshops, classrooms, laboratories, a 60-seat auditorium and free student Wi-Fi. The campus has considerable capacity for future expansion.

The campus also has better access to public transport and has parking capacity for over 140 vehicles.

In 2012, in addition to its traditionally delivered pre-apprentice courses the CET introduced "school-based" pre-apprenticeships, which allow young people in Years 11 and 12 to begin training in a trade while still at secondary school.

CET has been the proud recipient of a number of awards. In October 2007, CET participated in a review by an independent industry panel. The review of 12 training providers, of which CET was one, was carried out under the Star Rating Scheme, an initiative of the Institute of Trade Skills Excellence (ITSE) and implemented by NECA National. CET was one of two private training providers to receive Three Gold Stars, the highest ranking in the scheme, which aims to distinguish excellence in trade training by evaluating providers that are involved in delivering training in electrical and communications technical skills.

In 2010, CET won the WA Small Training Provider of the Year award, presented by the Department of Training and Workforce Development. They were also a nominated finalist for the national awards.

In 2013, the CET was judged as a finalist in the WA Large Training Provider of the Year award, a significant achievement as this was the College's first qualifying year. Most recently the CET was awarded the Worksafe Platinum award for Safety and won the 2014 WA Large Training Provider of the Year award. In 2015 Mr Brett Jotta was awarded a Certificate of Commendation for his contribution to training in the NECA National Awards and CET was judged as a finalist in the WA Large Training Provider of the Year award



Additionally, instructors with the College, Mr Rodney Grondein, won the E-Oz Trainer of the Year for 2011, Cameron Cherry won the NECA National Trainer of the Year for 2012, Jim Brown the NECA National Trainer of the Year for 2014 and Brett Jotta the NECA National Trainer of the Year for 2016.

These awards are testament to CET's commitment to training and the development of highly skilled and work-ready young employees. They reflect the way CET relates to its clients, and gives clients a clear indication of the quality of training they can expect and a comparison of CET with other organisations delivering similar training. CET's close relationship with industry in Western Australia ensures the training remains relevant to industry's changing needs and sets the College apart from its competitors.

NECA Legal (WA) Pty Ltd

Background

NECA WA members continually indicated that professional legal service is one of the most important and valuable services to their businesses. The *Legal Profession Act 2008* provides for incorporated legal practices and in November 2010 NECA Legal (WA) Pty Ltd was formed.

NECA Legal WA currently employs three qualified and experienced legal practitioners as well as support staff to provide legal advice and assistance including representation to NECA WA members in a wide range of areas.

Employment & Industrial Relations

NECA Legal WA can review and draft employment contracts as well as provide advice and assistance in enterprise bargaining and the drafting and approval of Enterprise Agreements by the Fair Work Commission in a constantly changing Industrial Relations system.

It provides advice and representation in relation to termination of employment for performance issues, misconduct or redundancy. It can assist employers with performance management and disciplinary processes and keep employers abreast of the vital developments in Workplace Relations law and employers' obligations in general.

NECA Legal WA represents electrical contractors in various jurisdictions, including the Fair Work Commission, the WA Industrial Relations Commission, the Industrial Magistrates Court, the Federal Circuit and the Federal Court in relation to employment related matters such as unfair or unlawful dismissal applications, under payment of wages claims, Union 'right of entry' and accusations of adverse action and discrimination.

Equal Opportunity & General Legislative Advice

NECA Legal WA provides legal advice and representation in relation to equal opportunity matters including representation in the relevant Tribunals such as the Equal Opportunity Commission of WA. It includes legal advice on general legislative changes affecting employers in the electrical contracting and communication industries.

Prosecutions

The lawyers at NECA Legal WA provide advice and assistance with regulator interviews and representation in prosecutions by *Energy Safety* for breaches of Electricity Licensing Regulations.

Commercial Contracts, Payment Disputes & Debt Collection

The NECA Legal WA scope of service includes reviewing and drafting contracts for services and terms and conditions relevant to the electrical contracting industry.

NECA WA members have exclusive access to free generalist legal advice (limited to telephone advice or a free half an hour consultation) as well as free assistance with debt collection up to the value of \$10,000. It includes the issuing of Letters of Demand to debtors at no cost. The fee for service rates are substantially reduced for members of NECA WA compared to private practice charge-out rates.

NECA Legal WA also provide advice in relation to payment disputes and assistance with the preparation of applications for adjudication under the Construction Contracts Act 2004.

For NECA WA members seeking assistance with commercial litigation and specialist areas of law falling outside the NECA Legal WA scope of service, it has a panel of external service providers (including national law firms) who can provide such services to NECA WA members at reduced rates.

NECA WA: A Brief History

The Electrical Contractors Association (ECA) was the first of the five entities to exist. It was a not-for-profit organisation set up to promote and protect the interests of its electrical contractor members.

In the 1920s, a group of individual electrical contractors recognised the difficulties in running their own businesses in isolation and with little support. As a result, in 1927 they founded the ECA to more effectively deal with issues such as government legislation, trade unions (which were emerging as a force in the industry), builders and complex conditions of contract, training, licensing, safety systems etc.. and to more effectively speak with one voice.

In 1975 the Electrical Contractors Association of Western Australia (Union of Employers)('ECA WA') was registered with the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission pursuant to the Industrial Arbitration Act 1912-1973 (currently the Industrial Relations Act 1979 WA).

During the 1990s ECA WA agreed with NECA National to also operate as the WA State branch of NECA National (the 'NECA WA Chapter') but with ECA WA remaining a separate legal entity.

In January 2005, the ECA WA changed its name to the Electrical and Communications Association of Western Australia (Union of Employers) in recognition of the way in which the industry was evolving to take advantage of new opportunities associated with new technologies and the increasing scope of work in which its members were involved. In 2014, ECA WA registered the business and trading name 'NECA WA', with a view to cementing its role and voice within the national association.

Since its inception, the Association has grown steadily and now serves over 700 members in Western Australia; however, its purpose has remained the same over the years – to enhance members' businesses and to advance the electrical industry.

Almost 30 years ago (in 1988), members faced a skills shortage, much as they do today. The ECA created a group training scheme to address the issue and to assist the industry to train its own future workforce, while enabling those smaller contractors who were unable to employ an apprentice of their own to engage staff. The Electrical & Electronic Group Apprentice Scheme (EEGAS) began with 12 apprentices. In the mid-1990s, EEGAS changed its name to Electrical Group Training and in May

2000 a new company Electrical Group Training Ltd ('EGT') was registered with ASIC and today it has become one of the most successful Group Training Organisations in Australia.

Also during the mid-1990s, ECA members identified a need to enhance the trade training which was then available – to improve the industry relevance of training being provided to apprentices and advance the quality and skills of emerging graduates. As a result, the Electrical Electrotechnology Training Centre (EETC) was created. The Training Centre quickly outgrew its accommodation in Malaga and relocated to Balcatta in 1998. On 1 November 1999 the College of Electrical Training Inc ('CET') was registered pursuant to the Association Incorporation Act 1987.

CET has since gone on to be another success story with more than 2000 pre apprentices and apprentices being trained today and many post-trade training programs being delivered for thousands of experienced workers in the electrical industry.

In 2007 the Boards of the three organisations elected to create a Group Chief Executive Officer position. This role (now called 'NECA WA Executive Director') oversees the activities of the five entities, optimises strategic opportunities, fulfils obligations to members and ensures excellence in corporate governance. This strategic appointment has already seen some important decisions make a positive impact.

The first significant opportunity was for the three organisations to operate as the NECA WA Group. This was seen as a positive and necessary step to provide members in Western Australia with access to national representation and to have a voice of influence on national policy issues such as industry regulations, licensing and training.

In mid-2009, after purchasing and fit out of unit 18, NECA WA moved into the same complex as EGT in Balcatta, to serve as the head office. The new, centralised operation allows a greater level of coordination and strategic decision-making across the three organisations and combined resources for better services to clients and members.

Awards

State and National Excellence Awards

The NECA Excellence Awards have evolved over 20 years and are now the most sought-after and prestigious awards in the industry, providing a rare opportunity for contractors to showcase their impressive projects to their industry colleagues and the wider community.

The Excellence Awards create the vehicle for NECA WA members to promote their successes and their innovative solutions to complex challenges, and for them to enjoy the media opportunities and benefits associated with winning these awards.

Each year NECA WA runs the State Excellence Awards program, the winners of which are automatically eligible for the National Awards, announced annually in November. NECA WA members have regularly excelled in these awards over the years, taking out the annual honours for the best domestic, commercial, industrial and environmental projects in the country.

Apprentice Awards

Apprentices, the 'life blood' of our industry, are arguably the most crucial aspect for the future development of the industry. Attracting and retaining suitable apprentices has become a significant challenge for employers. NECA WA believes that recognition and career development opportunities deliver positive reinforcement of the message that becoming an electrical tradesperson is about a long term career choice, a message our industry needs to convey.

In 2012 NECA WA combined the EGT apprentice awards with their own industry Apprentice Awards to cover categories – 1st, 2nd and 3rd year along with the Commercial/Domestic, Communications and Industrial. The Awards are open to apprentices across the length and breadth of the industry in WA. The awards acknowledge achievement in many aspects of both educational and practical development. The winning apprentices are offered a prize package which includes career development and enhancement opportunities. In recent years, apprentices employed by the EGT have been successful, winning industry awards such as the NECA WA Apprentice Awards and Group Training Australia WA Apprentice of the Year Award.

Along with winning all categories of the NECA Apprentice Awards in 2011, and appearing in the top three in almost every category since, in 2009 an EGT apprentice won WA's Department of Training and Workforce Development Apprentice of the Year Award. He then went on to win the National Apprentice of the Year Award across all states and all trades, the highest honour available to an apprentice in Australia. This was a fantastic outcome for the apprentice (Blake McCarthy) and testament to the quality of training provided by EGT and industry.



Other Initiatives

NECA WA is involved in numerous industry-led initiatives with a view to developing the long term safety, viability and health of the industry.

For further information contact:

Garry Itzstein
Executive Director
NECA WA
Telephone: 08 6241 6100
Email: gitzstein@necawa.asn.au

June 2017