

**NECA**

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The Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee of Migration  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Email: jscm@aph.gov.au

RECEIVED  
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BY: MIG

Dear Sir,

**RE: Enquiry into Skills Recognition, Upgrading and Licensing.**

NECA is the organisation representing the interest of contractors employing electrical and communications tradespersons. Its membership of 6,000 businesses is responsible for employing 3 out of every 4 electrical tradesmen and for the employment and training of 4 of every 5 electrical mechanic apprentices.

NECA, on behalf of the industry is integrally involved with the development, maintenance and monitoring of the relevant skills programs as well as the occupational licensing and related manpower issues.

NECA has a long standing involvement with Trades Recognition Australia and the implementation of the Act through the Central Trades and Local Trades Committees.

These comments are submitted as a statement of endorsement for the Skilled Migration Program.

- From the perspective of the electrical contracting sector, the Skilled Migration Program has provided a valuable supplement to the supply of skilled workers through the Australia apprenticeship system.
- The industry future skill requirements will need to be supplemented from outside Australia.
- Workers in the electrical and communications contracting industries must meet the requirements of the licensing authorities. For electrical licenses, the licensing requirements are defined through state based legislation and regulations. For the communication sector, the regulator is the Australian Communications Authority formed under the Federal Telecommunications Act. The skill requirements of migrants must always be measured against the requirements of the licensing regulators, and migrants must be required to meet the same licence requirements as for domestic trained workers.

- The TRA process has managed the volume of applicants within acceptable timeframes. The procedures for assessing claims, committee attention and response are appropriate. There have been no circumstances of exceptional backlogs or delays in providing a response to applicants.
- The TRA operates on a cost recovery basis. The charges to applicants are expensive but not an impediment to the supply.
- Recent proposals for approval based assessment by registered training organisations based on recognition prior to learning, was resisted by industry. The submissions by industry advising caution against this move were accepted by the government and the proposed introduction was deferred. The industry's warning was subsequently vindicated as the flaws in the proposed model have manifested in the training system.
- The government should always explore opportunities for introduction of efficiencies into any process. However, suitable controls such as exist through the Central and Local Trades Committee structure should be kept in place while any proposal for change is trailed.
- The Central and Local Trades Committees have proved to be efficient and cost effective. They are supported by industry and industry makes available a considerable intellectual capability to support the process, compliment the system at no cost to the government, other than the direct meeting expenses.

We trust this information is of assistance to the committee.

Regards,

**PETER GLYNN**  
**CEO NECA National**