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Senator the Hon. David Bushby  
Chair of the Senate Economics Legislation Committee  
Deputy Government Whip in the Senate  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**Re: Inquiry into the Trade Support Loans Bill 2014 and the Trade Support  
Loans (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2014 [Provisions]**

Dear Senator Bushby,

Thank you for the letter dated June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014 inviting submissions into the Trade Support Loans Bill 2014 and the Trade Support Loans (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2014. We note the very short time period in which to respond and respectfully note that a longer time frame would have allowed for a more comprehensive response.

NECA has a lengthy, extensive and successful involvement in the apprenticeship and training sector. We currently employ and train more than 4,000 electrical apprentices through our various group and registered training organisations, we maintain a strong interest in legislative matters that concern apprenticeships across our sector.

NECA is generally supportive of measures that will assist the development of apprenticeship and training numbers within the electrical and communications sector. Whilst the Government's efforts to address skills shortages through loan payments to apprentices are well intended, it is our view that the programme should be redirecting funding and incentives towards employers, such that employers or employer groups are encouraged to actively support, deliver and boost apprenticeship numbers.

A key theme from employers within our industry is the lack of investment in the ongoing training, education and professional development of staff. Consequently, we believe that incentives that encourage and reward employers to hire, train and skill more apprentices will be beneficial to apprentices, the industry and the government.

In the context of this legislation, NECA encourages the Government to adopt our recommendations within, in order to deliver a better outcome for the industry, apprentices and Government expenditure. Should you or the Committee require any further information please do not hesitate contacting me

**Yours faithfully**

**Suresh Manickam**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

