

Free TAFE Bill 2024

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Master Electricians Australia (MEA) is a peak industry association representing electrical contractors recognised by industry, government and the community as a leading business partner, knowledge source and advocate. You can visit our website at www.masterelectricians.com.au

MEA supports the *Free TAFE Bill 2024* ('the Bill') and its commitment to providing equitable access to Vocational Education and Training (VET) opportunities. However, 3(e) notably states the following objective of the Bill -

(e) support education and training in areas of high workforce demand, with emerging skills needs or that are otherwise a national or State priority.

Currently, not all jurisdictions offer fee-free TAFE courses for the Cert II and Cert III in Electrotechnology.

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) has identified 'electricians' as an occupation experiencing a shortage below economy-wide average.¹ Furthermore, the Federal Government has included Electricians in the Core Skills Occupation List.² As the skilled trade responsible for installing and maintaining electrification assets, the current skills shortage will be exacerbated if we do not immediately address the issue. JSA's "preliminary modelling shows we will need approximately 26,000 to 42,000 more electricians in the next seven years, and the clean energy supply workforce will likely need to grow from approximately 53,000 workers today to 84,000 by 2050."³

MEA is concerned about the limited access to Fee-Free TAFE training for the Cert III in Electrotechnology, particularly in light of the objectives outlined in s 3(e). While MEA supports the Bill, we recommend that the matters addressed in free TAFE agreements under s 8(b) refer to regulations specifying a prioritised list of core VET courses for all States and Territories, with the inclusion of Cert III in Electrotechnology as a key field.

It is crucial for the VET sector to attract a larger cohort of apprentices into the electrotechnology industry. Providing free training opportunities for aspiring electricians, regardless of their location within Australia, will improve this important incentive.

Georgia Holmes
14 January 2024

¹ Jobs and Skills Australia "Skills Priority List" Australian Government < [Skills Priority List](#) | Jobs and Skills Australia >

² Department of Home Affairs "The Core Skills Occupation List" Australian Government < [The Core Skills Occupation List](#) >

³ Jobs and Skills Australia "The Clean Energy Generation Workforce needs for a net zero economy" [3 October 2023] Australian Government <[the_clean_energy_generation.pdf](#)>