

# What is the ECA and what does the Association do for its members?

By Andre Wagener, Chairman, Highveld Regional Executive Committee

During a recent National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting, the topic of ECA membership was brought up, and a question was asked: What is the Association and what does it actually do for its members?

It turns out that we all joined the ECA(SA) for different reasons, however the main reason is that membership of the ECA gives electrical contractors a certain amount of standing. When the larger contracts come up, big companies prefer to appoint electrical contractors who are ECA members.

It gives them peace of mind to know they're dealing with contractors who have a better work ethic and offer superior quality work. Another benefit of ECA membership is that some tenderers will only look at companies that are members of the ECA.

Personally, I joined the ECA(SA) because I wanted to be one of those companies, whose ECA membership makes them stand out above the rest – and I'm proud of the ECA logo on my company's stationery.

The ECA(SA) is so much more than just getting work, there are other benefits of membership, including:

## Technical support

Technical support for ECA members is just a phone call or email away. When we get into a bind and need to ascertain whether we're transgressing any codes, we know that we have the ECA to back us up to assist us in a meaningful way. Unfortunately, often the technical support is only used when the contractor is already in trouble with a client.

The Technical Committee constantly looks at and fights for the codes, which are Gazetted, to keep them as accurate as possible and tries to remove or reword any ambiguity and grey areas. This is an ongoing process and the ECA endeavours to put pressure on the SABS. In a dispute, if you are

on the right side of the law, the ECA is the 'big brother' you want in your corner to defend you.

## Contractual support

There is a Contractual Committee that constantly reviews the JBCC contracts and the committee is there to assist members with their queries and to offer guidance on contracts and tender documents.

## Labour support

One of the myths in the industry is that it is compulsory for electrical contractors to register with Department of Labour (DoL) and the ECA(SA). The truth is that it is compulsory to register with the DoL and National Bargaining Council for the Electrical Industry of South Africa (NBCEI) and it's voluntary to join the ECA(SA). The ECA(SA) assists members with labour disputes and any NBCEI queries, which saves members the cost of employing an independent labour consultant.

## Training Support

The ECA(SA) offers a wide range of industry-specific accredited training courses for members and non-members – members get a discounted rate – and is constantly refining its existing training and developing new training as the need arises within the industry.

## Subscriptions

Membership is more than having the ECA logo on your stationery and vehicles – for about R150 a month, ordinary members receive all the above benefits and more from an Association that has backed and supported its members for more than 70 years.

Although the Association belongs to its members, it needs more than membership fees – it also needs members to get involved by attending meetings and assisting on the various committees. The members are the driving force behind the Association, and it is through their input that the Association remains relevant. I believe that being a member of the ECA(SA) is



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a privilege. It is through our actions that we can build (or tarnish) the name of the Association and the industry we serve.

The ECA(SA) is the voice of electrical contractors within the industry and it is heard by Government, the Bargaining Council, SABS, NRCS and other stakeholders. The more members the ECA has, the more clout it has and the louder its voice will be.

To find out more about joining the ECA(SA) call your closest regional office – the contact details are on the inside back cover.