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APRIL 2024
VOLUME 20 NUMBER 3
Print Post Approved 10002454

Hunter Business Review

19TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION



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ISSN 2202 - 8838 (Print)
ISSN 2202 - 8846 (Online)



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PUBLISHED BY:
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Published monthly (except January)
Hard copy circulation: 5,000
Also available online

www.HBRmag.com.au



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From the Editor



The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal's (IPART) determination for the one-off compensation payment by the Port of Newcastle under the Port of Newcastle Extinguishment of Liability Act 2022 (NSW) is a major step towards the Port being a major container terminal with the Port of Newcastle no longer being penalised for competing with Port Botany.

It is a win for the Hunter, NSW business, consumers and commonsense.

Eyes will now turn to the NSW Freight Reform Review which is currently underway. The existing

Freight and Ports Policy designates Port Kembla as the designated second port for a container terminal in NSW.

The successful removal of this last hurdle will pave the way for a true level playing field for container trade in NSW. Businesses will have the choice of choosing the Port that offers them the lowest costs and highest efficiencies, boosting their competitiveness in the global marketplace.

It also provides a clearer path for the Port of Newcastle in its aims to diversify its trade portfolio and provide a firmer platform for future operations.

The Port of Newcastle has already invested some \$35 million in its existing Multipurpose terminal and already has planning approval for 350,000 containers a year.

It is hoped that the NSW Freight Reform Review will deliver a prompt and sensible decision so the Port of Newcastle can truly operate without being hampered by artificial measures.

Its future success can then be determined by market forces and the whole state will be a winner.

Garry Hardie
Editor and Publisher

COMING FEATURES

May

Sales & Marketing • Business Technology

June

Training & Education • Mining & Energy Update

July

Insurance and Risk Management • Newcastle Renewal
• Defence

August

Hunter Business Function Guide • Environmental Sustainability

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Hunter Airports Strategy

The ten councils of the region, through the Hunter Joint Organisation, and the Newcastle Airport have released the Hunter Airports Strategy, a visionary project aimed at improving regional connectivity and economic prosperity. The Strategy serves as an important evidence-base to advocate for further investment into the region. The key outcome of the Strategy identified the need for a cargo terminal to unlock international air freight opportunities at Newcastle Airport.



Funded by the NSW Government, this strategic initiative aligns with the region's Hunter Global vision to be a globally connected and economically thriving city-region, serving as an international gateway while providing its communities with a vibrant and unique lifestyle.

While focusing on the crucial role played by the five regional airports in the Hunter in facilitating general aviation and essential services, the Strategy also highlights the significance of international connectivity with the redevelopment of Newcastle Airport. A prioritised action plan has been crafted, aiming to unlock opportunities for new investments, business diversification, and local job creation.

The Strategy places the construction of a cargo terminal at Newcastle Airport as the highest priority investment to harness the value and opportunities in international air freight for the region. Following the Strategy, a Business Case has been developed for the cargo terminal outlining the investment of \$27 million required and subsequent economic stimulus that could be realised for the region with its development. The Business Case provides the foundation for the Newcastle Airport with the support of Hunter JO to seek funding to realise this opportunity.

Recognising the challenges faced by the regional airports in terms of commercial sustainability and encroachment, the Strategy outlines supportive activities, including measures to protect and support this essential infrastructure for the benefit of the region's future.

To strengthen economic development activities and enhance regional influencing power, the Strategy proposes further activities focused on addressing these challenges and the role that the region can play in leveraging the proposed opportunities at Newcastle Airport.

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Local ecotourism business CoastXP has introduced their new vessel, Hydro. Based in Lake Macquarie full-time and accommodates 12 guests, it complements the flagship boat, Atmos.

In launching Hydro, CoastXP has created entirely new ecotourism opportunities for Lake Macquarie while Atmos remains primarily operating out of Newcastle. New experiences for Lake Macquarie include ocean adventures, whale watching and guided nature walks. They have also reinforced their dedication to supporting regional businesses by collaborating with local suppliers in their new exclusive lunch packages.

CoastXP's primary departure location for offshore experiences will be Chalmers Street Jetty (Near Swansea RSL), and for inshore experiences will be the Belmont Baths Jetty (along the Belmont foreshore).

As CoastXP expands, they remain extremely dedicated to growing Lake Macquarie as a sustainable tourism destination and is proud to be a Quality and Sustainable Tourism Accredited Business and licensed National Parks Eco Pass Operator. Dominic May, (the founder of CoastXP) started the business in 2018 on his own, and with this expansion the team has now grown to a team of five.

\$95 million motor park and tourist resort

Rhonda Colliery mine at Wakefield will be transformed into world-class motorsport park and resort, setting benchmarks for the reuse of a former mine site.

The \$95 million Black Rock Motor Resort at Wakefield will include a 5.25 km driving circuit, luxury accommodation, driver training, a function centre, cafe and go-kart track.

Once completed this will be Australia's first dedicated recreation resort park for motoring enthusiasts, creating more than 450 jobs during construction and 229 permanent roles.

It will create a wide range of opportunities for private users, OEMs and the corporate market. The general public will also have access on special days.

Lake Macquarie Mayor Kay Fraser, Natural Resources Minister Courtney Houssos, Minister for the Hunter Yasmin Catley and Black Rock CEO Tony Palmer turned the sod on the 252 ha site on 26 March, marking the start of a three-year construction project.

Mr Palmer said the finished resort would be a world away from the underground and open cut coal mining that operated on the site from the late 1800s until 1971.

"Unlike a normal racetrack where the focus is large-scale racing events, Black Rock is more like a golf resort, but rather than 18 holes we have a 5.25 km circuit as our centrepiece," Mr Palmer said.

"The design of Black Rock focused on evolving the site from a former coal mine into a beautifully landscaped destination, integrating the circuit and all the facilities within the existing mine footprint and utilising previously cleared land and existing fire trails."

"This project will be a place where like-minded enthusiasts can come and share their passion in a safe and purpose-built environment," Mr Palmer continued.

"It's going to attract a significant number of new interstate and international visitors and businesses to the area. There are more than 100,000 active members of car clubs in NSW alone."

The undulating track has been designed by German-based Tilke Group – the company responsible for landmark racetracks across the globe, including the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi, Circuit of the Americas in Texas and the Red Bull Ring in Austria.

It will host corporate driving events, performance car driving experiences, public track days and driver training courses.

"Everything we do will be underpinned by education, whether it's teaching learner and P-plate drivers to drive safely or helping young enthusiasts take their first laps on a high-speed track," Mr Palmer said.

Cr Fraser said the Black Rock project was one of the city's most significant developments in her 20-plus years of local government, and the first of its type in NSW.

"This will be a very tangible demonstration of a mine site's adaptive reuse, and it's something we're likely to see a lot more of as the world shifts away from fossil fuels," she said.

"That transformation, from coal mine to adventure tourism destination reflects our city's seismic shift over the past couple of decades, away from primary production towards hospitality, tourism and other innovative industries."

"I'm excited about what Black Rock will deliver for Lake Mac and the wider Hunter Region, not just in terms of jobs, but the tens of millions of dollars it will inject into the local economy for many years to come."

Black Rock is expected to be operational within two years, with construction finalised about 12 months later.

The project's first stage will include track construction and establishment of a café in the former mine's horse stable building.



HunterNet celebrates inclusion

The third International Women's day event was held by HunterNet Co-Operative, and a part of this event included a panel of some past and present apprentices and trainees from HunterNet Career Connections.

The theme of their event for 2024 was "Inspire Inclusion" and they heard some terrific stories from the panelists. Listening to their stories of how they originally decided on their chosen qualification was jaw dropping. Anything from being inspired from their fathers, their partners and through grit and determination to chase their dreams was unbelievable. All of the panelists had setbacks and challenges however they never lost sight of their goals to be successful.

Inspire inclusion was a perfect topic this year as there was some panelists from previous years who have become mentors to new females within their industries. They had taken on this role as trailblazers, all wanting the workplace to be the best it could be across the HunterNet Career Connections GTO network.

These amazing leaders in the network of host employers are inspiring the next generation of an increasing number of female apprentices and trainees. Host employers are driving inclusion into the workforce and currently females represent 29% of HunterNet apprentices and trainees and 65% of these are employed in trades. It is these partnerships between the host employers, employees and HunterNet as the GTO that are inspiring inclusion and participation and we can't wait to see where our exceptional apprentices and trainees will take their careers and the change their stories can achieve in inspiring the next generation of skilled workers in our region.

Major hurdle removed for Port container terminal

Port of Newcastle has welcomed the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal's (IPART) determination for the one-off compensation payment of \$10,120,000 (approx. \$13,100,000 when adjusted for CPI) the Port must make to the State under the Port of Newcastle Extinguishment of Liability Act 2022 (NSW).

While the details of the determination are yet to be fully examined, once complete, this payment of the compensation sum will bring an end to the legislative process, meaning Port of Newcastle will no longer be penalised for competing against Port Botany.

Port of Newcastle CEO, Craig Carmody, said with the determination figure handed down, the Port has one final regulatory roadblock to remove before meaningful progression can occur on a container terminal.

"Today is a significant and historic milestone for Port of Newcastle and regional NSW, a path forward that means we will no longer be penalised for wanting to offer choice and competition in NSW container trade," Mr Carmody said.

The Port of Newcastle extends its appreciation to all sides of parliament for their pragmatic approach to the legislative process.

"Support across the political divide for this Act has been wonderful to see, but I must extend particular thanks to the Member for Lake Macquarie, Greg Piper MP, who courageously fought for regional NSW and ensured all political parties aligned for the benefit of the state," Mr Carmody said.

With the legislative process nearing completion, attention for the Port turns to the NSW Freight Reform Review, which is a determinant of state planning decisions.

"While we are delighted that the determination has been made, we now need to ensure the NSW Freight Reform Review, which the NSW Government has commenced, also reflects the decision by Parliament to promote competition through the Port of Newcastle Extinguishment of Liability Act," Mr Carmody said.

"The current Freight and Ports Policy states that Port Kembla is the designated second port for a container terminal in NSW, which impacts Port of Newcastle's ability to get planning approvals for its own container terminal.

"We hope the NSW Freight Reform Review will agree that there should be a level playing field for competition rather than the state trying to pick winners," he said.

With the legislative process nearing completion and the NSW Freight Reform Review underway, Port of Newcastle will continue to focus on growing exiting container trade through its new Multipurpose Terminal.

"Our immediate focus will be the continued growth of container trade through our existing Multipurpose Terminal, which we have invested over \$35 million in and currently has planning approval for 350,000 containers a year," Mr Carmody said.



Milestone in \$10 million upgrade to Toronto Wastewater Treatment Works

Hunter Water is investing over \$10 million to upgrade the Toronto Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW) to safely and reliably meet local population growth, reduce odour and protect the environment. Following a successful overhaul of the WWTW's high-voltage electrical equipment, the project has reached a key milestone with a new, state-of-the-art odour control unit (OCU) at the facility now up and running.

Hunter Water Executive Manager Customer Delivery, Glen Robinson, is confident the upgrades will provide lasting benefits to the community.

"These upgrades to Toronto WWTW, in particular, the new state-of-the-art odour control unit, will significantly improve the capture and treatment of wastewater-related odours.

"As a business, we're doing everything we can to minimise community impact from our assets – particularly odours," Mr Robinson said.

The upgrade to Toronto WWTW has involved three stages over three years, starting in August 2021 and is slated to be complete by the middle of 2024.



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2024 NSW Women in Mining Awards

Keryn Zambrowski, Senior Manager Investor Relations at Whitehaven Coal, has been named the Exceptional Woman in NSW Mining for 2024.

With a wealth of domestic and international experience, Keryn has held multiple roles at Whitehaven Coal, including leading export contract negotiations and becoming the first female marketer at Whitehaven. In 2022, she transitioned into a senior role in investor relations. Keryn is committed to industry advocacy and education, and actively mentors women in finance and commercial logistics at Whitehaven.

NSW Minerals Council CEO, Stephen Galilee congratulated Keryn on being named Exceptional Woman in Mining 2024 and highlighted her achievements as another example of the world-class women in mining across the State.

“Keryn’s drive to apply her financial and investor relations experience and expertise to the mining sector is an inspiration to young women exploring their career options. Keryn’s example highlights the breadth of opportunities that exist for women in our industry.”

Other award winners include business owner/operator Hannah Berthold, from HER Engineering Machining & Maintenance, who has been named 2024 NSW Exceptional Young Woman in Mining. In 2021 Hannah started her own business, founding HER Engineering, Machining and Maintenance and has been highly active in encouraging young women to seek a career in mining by starting an apprenticeship.

Karin Soldenhoff from the Australian Nuclear Science & Technology Organisation (ANSTO) received the 2024 Technological Innovation Award for her work as technical lead on a project for Australia Strategic Metals (ASM), to develop novel solvent extraction technology to separate rare earth elements found at its Dubbo Project.

Damien Butler from The Bloomfield Group was awarded the 2024 Inclusion & Diversity Champion Award for his work in fostering diversity and inclusion within the mining industry.

The 2024 Exceptional Tradeswoman/Operator/Technician Award was awarded to Nadine Heal from Evolution Mining. Nadine is the Open Pit Supervisor at Evolution Mining’s Cowal Gold Operations (CGO) and has played a crucial role in mentoring women at CGO, significantly enhancing female participation in operational roles.

Theiss won the Excellence in Diversity Programs and Performance category for their MASITE Program.

The winners in the six award categories will be entered into the Women in Resources National Awards.

\$1 billion for local solar manufacturing

SunDrive Solar has welcomed the announcement by the Federal Government of the \$1 billion Solar Sunshot to support the establishment of a domestic solar manufacturing industry.

SunDrive’s Co-founder & CEO, Vince Allen, said “Australia is the solar technology powerhouse of the world, and today’s announcement means that Australia can not only continue to drive world-leading innovation, but can retain the economic value of the IP, jobs, and talent that come with advanced manufacturing.”

They also welcomed the NSW Government’s commitment to support local manufacturing by leveraging government procurement through offtake agreements, which will help put NSW-made solar on the rooftops of NSW.

SunDrive has announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with AGL Energy Hubs to establish their first commercial-scale advanced manufacturing facility at AGL Hunter Energy Hub in Muswellbrook. This world-class facility will produce hundreds of thousands of panels, scaling to millions, and creating hundreds of highly skilled jobs.

As part of this agreement SunDrive and AGL are negotiating a material offtake agreement for the purchase of SunDrive’s high-performing solar modules. Offtake agreements play a vital role in supporting renewable energy investment and SunDrive welcome the opportunity to provide Australian made solar panels containing world-leading solar technology to one of Australia’s largest solar distributors and installers.

On the announcement, Prime Minister the Hon Anthony Albanese MP said, “These panels, this technology that SunDrive has developed, is the most efficient in the world. Why wouldn’t you take that opportunity and pair it with AGL’s vision that they have, with my government’s commitment, with the New South Wales government’s commitment to manufacture more things here, whether it’s solar panels or train carriages or ferries, or other goods that are used here in New South Wales, and have a future made right here in Australia? That’s what the billion-dollar SunShot program is about.”

As a country, Australia has one of, if not the greatest economic opportunities as the world decarbonises. Australia has the natural competitive advantages in the development and manufacture of solar, including demonstrated innovation capability, world-leading talent, abundant minerals and metals, and access to cheap renewable energy.

“Establishing a resilient solar supply chain in Australia, the first step of which has been taken today, will help strengthen our energy independence while delivering the economic diversification needed to drive Australia’s energy transformation,” said SunDrive CEO Vince Allen.

AGL Managing Director and CEO, Damien Nicks, said “Our vision for the Hunter Energy Hub is to create an integrated hub that brings together industries that can make a positive contribution to the energy transition, including renewable energy generation, grid-scale batteries, green advanced manufacturing, and associated industries,” he said.

“Our partnership with SunDrive has the potential to deliver significant benefits for Australia’s energy transition. If successful we will create new jobs and careers in the renewables industry as together, we build a new solar manufacturing industry right here in the NSW Upper Hunter region.”

SunDrive’s final investment decision will be subject to validating financial and technical feasibility of the AGL Hunter Energy Hub site and securing sufficient Australian Government support to establish a large-scale facility.

HR consulting business expands to new office

Heart HR - a boutique HR consulting business - has expanded its operations with a new office space in Carrington.

This strategic move aims to better serve clients in the Newcastle area, offering expert human resources solutions. With a focus on fostering workplace success, compliance and efficiency, Heart HR looks forward to continuing to provide support to small and medium sized businesses across the region.



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HunterNet Industry Excellence Awards celebrates outstanding achievements in Hunter industries

The HunterNet Industry Excellence Awards, formerly known as the Chairman's Awards, marked its 32nd annual celebration on March 22, 2024, at the prestigious Newcastle City Hall. With over 240 attendees, this year's event was the largest yet, highlighting the exceptional accomplishments and contributions within the Hunter Region's industries.

Since its inception in 1992, the HunterNet Industry Excellence Awards have served as a platform to recognise the outstanding achievements of the region's industry individuals, its members and apprentices and trainees. This year's ceremony showcased a diverse range of winners across various categories, from innovation and export to networking and safety.

"We are thrilled to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our industry members, apprentices, and trainees at this year's HunterNet Industry Excellence Awards," said Ivan Waterfield, CEO HunterNet Cooperative.

"The level of talent, dedication, and innovation demonstrated by our winners truly reflects the strength and vitality of our region's industries."

The HunterNet Future Leaders Program awarded the 2024 Kristen Keegan Scholarship winner Liam Power from DSI Underground and in addition, Liz Brown was acknowledged for her contributions as she transitioned the role of Chairperson to Brigette Landy.

OMNI Wheel was awarded the 2023 Export Award for its exceptional growth in export revenue, showcasing its leadership in high-performance omni wheels and their applications.

Sponsored by Hedweld Group of Companies, this award recognised OMNIA Wheel's commitment to excellence in exporting.

SAPHI received the 2023 Rod Murphy Innovation Award for its unique, tech-agnostic approach to developing advanced solutions. Sponsored by R&R Murphy, this award highlighted SAPHI's groundbreaking achievements in areas such as smart city management and AI-driven irrigation.

Tom Woods of TW Woods was honoured with the 2023 Networking Award for his instrumental role in shaping the strategy and history of TW Woods over three generations. Sponsored by Chandler Macleod, this award recognised Tom's advocacy for regional businesses and his contributions to the HunterNet community.

John Coyle, former CEO of HunterNet, received the prestigious 2023 Harvey Knox Award for his significant contributions to the organisation's growth and success. Sponsored by Port Waratah Coal Services, this award recognised John's leadership and dedication during his tenure as CEO and Chair of the Co-Operative.

SWS Lawyers was named the 2023 Member of the Year for their dynamic contributions to the HunterNet community. Sponsored by HunterNet Co-Operative this award highlighted SWS Lawyers' enthusiasm and involvement in supporting HunterNet's initiatives and forums.

Hedweld Group of Companies was awarded the Large Host Company of the Year for its commitment to high-quality apprenticeships and traineeships. Sponsored by HunterNet Career Connections, this award recognised Hedweld's exemplary workforce development programs and dedication to workplace safety.

R&R Murphy received the Small Host Company of the Year award for its adaptability, innovation, and commitment to workforce

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planning. Sponsored by HunterNet Career Connections, this award showcased R&R Murphy's forward-thinking approach to apprenticeship programs and workplace safety.

R&R Murphy, winner of the Small Host Company of the Year



Awards photos are courtesy of 3L Photography + Film

Peter Phillips of LMATS was named Trainee of the Year for his dedication to safety, exceptional mechanical aptitude, and exemplary customer service. Sponsored by Thales, this award recognised Peter's contributions as an invaluable asset within his team.

Owen from BAE Systems Australia and Axell Thoren from Hedweld Group of Companies were honoured with the Outstanding Achievement Award for 1st Year Apprentices. Sponsored by VERTO, this award recognised their exceptional commitment to safety and rapid progression within their respective roles.

Dual winners of Outstanding Achievement Award for 1st Year Apprentices: Owen from BAE Systems Australia and Axell Thoren from Hedweld



Eliza McLean and Sarah Pringle from UGL were awarded Outstanding Achievement for 2nd and 3rd Year Apprentices, respectively. Sponsored by ABC Training and Newcastle Office Interiors, these awards recognised their exemplary safety attitudes and outstanding contributions to their teams.

Winners and representatives from UGL



Alex Frost from UGL received the prestigious Ivan Randon Award for his consistently high level of work output, drive, and dedication. Sponsored by DSI Underground, this award showcased Alex's commitment to excellence as an experienced technician.

Larni Burt from UGL and Taylor from BAE Systems were named the Women in Industry award winners for their exceptional contributions to their respective industries. Sponsored by WesTrac CAT, this award recognised their commitment to safety, leadership, and innovation.

Riley Ferguson from UGL was awarded the Health, Safety, Security, and Environment (HSSE) award for his commitment to safety and proactive approach in identifying and mitigating risks. Sponsored by Happy Health, this award highlighted Riley's dedication to maintaining a safe work environment.

The HunterNet Industry Excellence Awards underscore the region's commitment to innovation, collaboration, and excellence across its diverse industries. HunterNet remains dedicated to supporting the growth and success of its members, apprentices, and trainees, driving continued prosperity in the Hunter Region's economy.



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HUNTERNET CAREER CONNECTIONS

SMALL HOST COMPANY OF THE YEAR 2023

HunterNet Co-operative Winners

- Export Award:** OMNIA Wheel
- Rod Murphy Innovation Award:** SAPHI
- Sustainability Award:** Resourceful Living
- Networking Award:** Tom Woods from T.W Woods
- Harvey Knox Award:** John Coyle
- Member of the Year:** SWS Lawyers
- Kristen Keegan Scholarship 2024:** Liam Power, DSI Underground

HunterNet Career Connections Winners

- Large Host Company of the Year:** Hedweld
- Small Host Company of the Year:** R&R Murphy
- Trainee of the Year:** Peter Phillips from LMATS
- Outstanding Achievement 1st year Apprentice:** Dual winners - Owen, BAE Systems and Axell Thoren, Hedweld Group of Companies
- Outstanding Achievement 2nd Year Apprentice:** Eliza Mclean, UGL
- Outstanding Achievement 3rd Year Apprentice:** Sarah Pringle, UGL
- Ivan Randon Award for Apprentice of the Year:** Alex Frost, UGL
- Women in Industry:** Dual winners - Larni Burt, UGL and Taylor, BAE Systems
- HSSE (Health, Safety, Security and Environment):** Riley Ferguson, UGL

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Bid/Tender Support

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Workforce Development Solutions

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Networking & Events

Apply their industry experience and knowledge of member capabilities to build cross-industry collaborative teams

Export Advice

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Ampcontrol powering NSW sites with renewable electricity

Ampcontrol has signed a 10-year Agreement that includes a long-term Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with progressive energy provider Flow Power to source renewable electricity that will offset the operating emissions for its NSW sites and support the local renewable energy industry.

Under the 10-year deal, Ampcontrol will initially source GreenPower certified electricity, with large scale generation certifications (LGCs) sourced from the Karadoc Solar Farm in north-western Victoria for the first 18 months.

"We want to lead the global energy revolution, and that begins within our business. Through changes made to our operational emissions, Ampcontrol can walk the talk in reducing our environmental impact and making more sustainable business decisions," says Rod Henderson, Ampcontrol Managing Director & CEO.

For the remaining eight-and-a-half years, Ampcontrol will take generation from both a NSW wind and solar farm in order to match its consumption profile as closely as possible. Together, the wind and solar projects are expected to deliver 100% of Ampcontrol's energy requirements per annum, including LGCs, ensuring total renewable coverage.

Ampcontrol initially collaborated with other Hunter-based organisations to form a renewable energy buying group. The Hunter group was formed through Ampcontrol participation in the NSW Government Sustainability Advantage program. It allows companies with similar net zero ambitions to notionally pool their power use and go to market to gain procurement efficiencies and the economies of scale necessary to facilitate renewable power purchase agreements (PPAs) with renewable generators.

This long-term renewable Power Purchase Agreement allows Ampcontrol to directly support its peers in the renewable energy industry and lead in their commitment to reducing emissions from manufacturing and the decarbonisation of industry, starting with their operations.

It is estimated Ampcontrol will reduce their operating emissions by a further 25% from their 2020 baseline, demonstrating their firm commitment to their interim net zero target of a 60% reduction in operational emissions by 2030.

Law firm bolstered by return of senior estate planning and elder law solicitor

Catherine Henry Lawyers, has bolstered its capability in its estate planning and elder law team with the return of Liza Stewart as a Senior Associate.

Principal, Catherine Henry, is delighted to have Ms Stewart back at the firm. She said Ms Stewart will be a highly valuable addition to the firm's wills and estates and elder law teams.

"Liza brings her outstanding legal knowledge and communication skills to legal practice to the benefit of clients," Ms Henry said.

"Whilst being a tough and experienced litigator, Liza also displays great warmth and empathy towards clients. She has a knack of making their experience with the law a comfortable experience."

Ms Stewart said the areas of elder law and estate planning work together to help people to effectively plan for growing older and to protect their wishes and interests.

"Many people don't like to think about growing older, so they push it all aside and don't plan for it," Ms Stewart said.

"As we age, we downsize accommodation, and our relationships and health issues change. Our personal and legal issues can become more complex and we can be at risk of elder abuse.

"The law can help us navigate these changes and make the most of our hard-earned assets - while we are living and after we have passed away.



Liza Stewart

"Having an updated will is a great start but there are other documents such as advanced care directives, powers of attorney and enduring guardianship that need to be considered so that problems don't arise.

"Elder abuse, particularly financial elder abuse is on the rise in Australia. Sadly, it is most often perpetrated by family

members or other close contacts."

Ms Stewart said the firm's most recent e-book - Growing Older - is a great resource for people wanting to understand how the law can help them before working with a solicitor.

Ms Stewart worked at Catherine Henry Lawyers as a paralegal while completing her Bachelor of Law degree and then as a Solicitor before joining another reputable local firm to specialise in estate law and litigation. She is completing an Applied Masters

Cedar Mill Group acquires Australia's leading design marketplace - The Finders Keepers

Cedar Mill Group has announced the acquisition of Australia's leading design marketplace, The Finders Keepers. This acquisition reflects Cedar Mill Group's ambition to play a significant role in fostering the creative, live music, events and tourism sectors by developing cultural and environmental spaces and opportunities.

In November 2023, the group also acquired The Olive Tree Market, Newcastle's premier art, creator and design market, as part of its overarching mission to invest in projects and businesses that encourage tourism and deliver economic boosts for the region.

The Finders Keepers will extend this commitment, offering creatives commercial and growth opportunities beyond regional markets. The deal will also provide the wider community with expanded designer, artist and stallholder offerings and experiences, as well as further investment in their regions.

Established in 2008 by Sarah Thornton and Brooke Johnston, The Finders Keepers has grown from a humble side passion to a multi-market hub for design innovation and creativity. Driven by a vision for an event that didn't exist at that time, The Finders Keepers was created as a place where communities could come together under one roof to shop, explore and discover the finest offerings from designers, makers and entrepreneurs.

Over the past 16 years, The Finders Keepers has evolved and innovated, starting from its modest beginnings in Sydney and expanding to Brisbane in 2009 and Melbourne 2010 respectively. In 2018 Thornton and Johnson introduced an Indigenous Program to elevate First Nations designers and makers. A bespoke Online Marketplace e-commerce platform was launched in 2019, and in 2022 The Finders Keepers Summit was created to empower small creative business owners.



Tempting your team back to the office

Temptation may seem a strange word to use about the office. But that is where we find ourselves in this 'living with COVID' world. The pandemic changed how people work and, with unemployment at record lows, employers are finding that the carrot beats the stick. Workplace fit-out company Evoke Projects has some tips for tempting your team back to the office.

Advantages of working in the office

Team presence helps to develop a stronger workplace culture through better team connection. Collaboration is easier and more spontaneous. Employees can quickly access other team members to 'get things done', which heightens the sense of day-to-day achievement. Businesses have better oversight and control of time and task, but the jury is out on productivity benefits: some people have an effective home office fit-out while others have too many distractions. Socially and economically, small businesses and event organisers are supported when the city is buzzing with life from Monday to Friday.

What temptations do workers need?

Let's consider what workers miss when they work at the office. They primarily miss the convenience and the flexibility they have at home. They begrudge the time spent commuting and the expense of public transport or fuel and parking. Families miss the shared childcare opportunity. Some people worry about the risks of catching COVID during their commute or while working in a cramped office fit-out.

Research has consistently showed that most people do not want to work remotely full-time, as humans are naturally social animals who enjoy collaboration and team camaraderie. Therefore, the answer to tempting people back to the office is to remind them of the advantages of office connection while adding extra perks.

Open discussion and transparency

Start by seeking out your team's feedback. Ask for ideas about what to introduce to the office to make it more attractive. Suggestions might include exercise or yoga classes, after work drink sessions, or a monthly dinner club. Be prepared for some of those ideas to require ongoing financial support, such as on-site childcare, subsidised travel or free coffee.

People who have an amazing home office fit-out might not appreciate how difficult remote work can be for those who share a small apartment. Explain that the business is trying to find a workplace solution that suits everybody.

Remind people about the benefits of working in the office, but also be honest if you have concerns about productivity or distractions during remote working time.

Tempting office fit-out

The office design team at Evoke Projects have been helping clients with their office fit-outs for many, many years. Even before the pandemic, modern office designs were a temptation

in themselves. Who wouldn't choose to work in an aesthetically pleasing workspace?

To tempt people back to the office, ensure you have the features of an office fit-out that can be difficult to achieve at home... ergonomic office furniture, latest technology, plentiful storage, task lighting, quiet spaces, flexible work zones for different tasks, to name a few. Now add some homely elements that workers would usually miss when they attend the office, such as lounge furniture, plants, an area to rest and recharge, perhaps even a sleep or reading nook. You are offering them the best of both worlds!

Flexibility for better health and well-being

The flexibility and convenience that people enjoy when working from home does not have to be lost at the office. Let people know that you respect their time and independence. Introduce more flexible hours into the workday, with start and finish times of choice and flexible lunch and break times. Some people might prefer a two-hour lunch break so they can take an exercise class, shower and eat. Others might prefer frequent short breaks throughout the day.

Hybrid working patterns also give flexibility to work from home on some days and in the office at other times.

COVID-safe office fit-out

It is important to recognise that each employee will have a different attitude to COVID. Coloured wrist bands (e.g., red, amber, green) can quickly convey somebody's personal feelings about social distance comfort. Some team members will want to live like the 'old days' and happily sit close. Others prefer a strict 1.5 metre social distance. Ensuring that co-workers respect each other during this time is vital for the cohesion and strong company culture that you want to engender.

It is worth revisiting some of the traditional COVID-safe workplace fit-out recommendations:

- plexiglass barriers
- hand sanitiser
- fresh air and HEPA air filters
- outdoor workspaces
- touchless soap/taps/hand dryers/light switches
- automatic flushing toilets
- hands-free door handles
- regular and well-communicated cleaning schedule

Of all the recommendations above, the workplace fit-out team at Evoke Projects choose 'Open discussion and transparency' above all else. If employees feel listened to and appreciated, they will be tempted back to the office because it is the place where their health and well-being is most supported.

To discuss workplace design and fit-out ideas to tempt your team back to the office, please call Evoke Projects on 1300 720 692.



COMING EVENTS.....

29 April 2024, 10.30 am – 11:30 am

Community & Business Women's Network

Central Coast Women in Business 2024

Venue: The Berkeley Centre

Cost: Free

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/central-coast-women-in-business-2024-tickets-850128405947?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

2 May 2024, 12.00 pm – 2:00 pm

Myrtec

Myrtec May 2024 Techshop | Newcastle Business Luncheon on CoPilot/Gemini

Venue: Suite 3 Level 1 97 Hannell Street, Wickham NSW 2293

Cost: Free

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/myrtec-may-2024-techshop-newcastle-business-luncheon-on-copilotgemini-tickets-857592350807?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

7 May 2024, 7.00 am – 9:00 am

HIA

Trade Breakfast

Venue: HIA Office, Mayfield West

Cost: Members: \$25 – Non Members: \$50

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/trade-night/hunter-nsw/2024/hia-information-session-mayfield-west-may07>

8 May 2024, 5.00 pm – 7:00 pm

HIA

Trade Night

Venue: Club Foster

Cost: Members: \$25 – Non Members: \$50

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/trade-night/hunter-nsw/2024/hia-information-session-forster-may08>

22 May 2024, 9.00 am – 10:30 am

HunterNet

IP Seminar Series – Event 2: Trade Marks and Brand Protection

Venue: HunterNet Cooperative

Cost: Free (Members Only Event)

<https://events.humanitix.com/ip-seminar-series-seminar-2-trade-marks-and-brand-protection>

23 May 2024, 4.30 pm – 6:00 pm

HunterNet

Business Succession Planning Forum – Event 3: Business Sale & Restructuring

Venue: HunterNet Cooperative

Cost: Free (Members Only Event)

<https://events.humanitix.com/business-succession-planning-forum-event-3-business-sale-and-restructuring>

28 May 2024, 5.00 pm – 7:00 pm

HIA

Trade Night

Venue: Maitland Toyota

Cost: Members: \$25 – Non Members: \$50

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/trade-night/hunter-nsw/2024/hia-information-session-mayfield-west-may28>

30 May 2024, 5.00 pm – 7:00 pm

HIA

Trade Night

Venue: Scone Mitre 10

Cost: Members: \$25 – Non Members: \$50

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/trade-night/hunter-nsw/2024/hia-information-session-scone-may30>

20 June 2024, 8.00 am – 9:30 am

HunterNet

IP Seminar Series – Event 3: Patents, Design and Confidential Information

Venue: HunterNet Cooperative

Cost: Free (Members Only Event)

<https://events.humanitix.com/ip-seminar-series-seminar-3-patents-designs-and-confidential-information>

27 August 2024, 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

HIA

Finance and Admin Workshop

Venue: HIA Office, Mayfield West

Cost: \$110 – \$220

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/workshop/hunter-nsw/2024/workshop-mayfield-west-aug27>

23 September 2024, 8.30am – 2.30pm

Regional Angel Investor Network

RAIN PitchFest Newcastle – Session 1

Cost: Free

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rain-pitchfest-newcastle-session-1-tickets-826219443597>

26 September 2024, 8.30am – 2.30pm

Firewire Digital

Newcastle SEO Conference 2024

Venue: Rydges Newcastle

Cost: \$375

<https://www.firewiredigital.com.au/newcastle-seo-conference/>

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RECENT COMMERCIAL SALES

Boolaroo industrial facility fetched over \$17 million

111 Munibung Road, Boolaroo is a first-class industrial facility positioned within a popular industrial precinct. The modern facility, with a total office area 1,715 sqm and total building area of 6,981sqm, is leased to Sheffield Group, a 100% Australian owned and operated tool and hardware manufacturing company. Operating since 1970 the company are a major supplier to multiple retail stores and buyer groups worldwide. The business has taken on a 10 year lease in the location with options to extend. The property was sold as a tenanted investment for \$17,867,014 through the team at Commercial Collective.



Evatt Chambers Building sold

380 Hunter Street, Newcastle, known as the Evatt Chambers Building, has been purchased by a locally based investor through Commercial Collective. The property, featuring the long running bar, Coal and Cedar, was sold at Auction in March for \$1.6million. Other tenants in the building include The Lincoln Room Barber and an occupied office space on the second level.



ICONIC GLADSTONE HOTEL 36 Mitchell Street, Stockton



FOR SALE BY EOI

Closing 4pm, Thursday 16th May 2024

- Freehold offered for the first time in over 30 years on a W.I.W.O. basis
- Situated on large corner block of approximately 1,113m² that offers ample outdoor areas & also redevelopment and/or subdivision potential STCA.
- Improvements comprise a two storey Hotel rebuilt in 1937 & having an efficient floor plan layout with single liquor service area on the ground floor & several rentable guest rooms & self contained apartment upstairs.
- Features also include a full Hotel Licence, on-site restaurant, main street visibility and a thriving community. Also includes gated off street parking, secure double garage and laneway access which enhances the redevelopment potential of the property.
- Trading hours, restaurant and beer garden are well under utilized & the outlook and real estate values in Stockton are only getting better.

For further details or an inspection contact **DAVID ROGERS**
admin@dowlingcommercial.com.au | 0425 267 111 | 02 4969 8000

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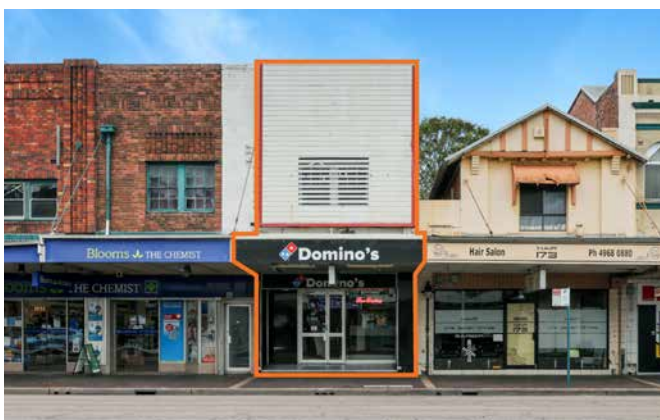
Historic ANZ Bank building sold

In a landmark transaction that highlights the enduring appeal of Newcastle's commercial property market, the historic ANZ Bank building at 102 Hunter Street has been sold for \$3,500,000 through the team at RWC Newcastle. Originally constructed in the 1920s as a bank building, the property has evolved into a cherished landmark in the CBD. Its rich history dates back to its origins as a hotel known as The Ship Inn in 1848, under the licensee of Newcastle's first mayor, James Hannell. Over time, the building transitioned into a purpose-built banking facility, featuring a classical Inter-War Palazzo style. One of the building's standout features is its original bank vault on the basement level, now repurposed as a cool room for the gastropub The Ship Inn. This unique adaptation adds character to the property while preserving its historical charm. The property garnered strong interest throughout the sale campaign, attracting enquiries from investors in Newcastle, Sydney, and interstate. With fully leased office spaces on the upper levels and a net annual income of \$197,000, the property offered stability and potential for future growth. Its lettable area of 900 sqm provided ample opportunities for businesses seeking a prime location in Newcastle's CBD.



175 Maitland Road, Mayfield sold at auction

A tenanted investment with long term ASX listed tenant Dominoes, 175 Maitland Road, Mayfield has sold at Auction in March 2024 for \$950,000. The property last sold 21 years ago in 2003 for a price of \$360,000. The sale was facilitated through the team at Commercial Collective.



Hunter & Central Coast housing approvals 2023

The latest ABS figures on new home approvals indicate that home building activity across the Hunter and Central Coast cooled slightly in 2023, reported the Housing Industry Association.

"In 2023 total dwelling approvals in the Hunter fell 7.4%, while on the Central Coast total dwelling approvals fell 2.9% compared

to the 2022 calendar year," said Craig Jennion, HIA Hunter Executive Director.

"This is in contrast to all states and territories that saw a greater decline in the 2023 calendar year. Nationally total approvals fell 15.4%, while in NSW approvals fell 17.7%.

"There was a total of 4,786 building approvals across the Hunter in 2023 and 1,586 on the Central Coast. Combined this is 6.3% weaker than in 2022, and 15.2% lower than 2021. It is 12% lower than the pre covid year of 2018.

"In the Hunter detached homes remained the preference for home buyers, accounting for 55.6% of all approvals. This is despite a 17.7% increase in multi-unit approvals. On the Central Coast the mix was more even, with multi-unit approvals remaining a slight preference, accounting for 50.2% of all approvals.

"Much of the heavy lifting for the residential sector continues to occur in the statistical areas of Central Coast, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Cessnock. These top locations for approvals accounting for 89.5% of total approvals", said Mr Jennion.

"Regionally Newcastle was the biggest mover with total housing approvals increasing by 114%. Detached dwelling approvals increased 16% while multi-unit approvals increased by 159%. Strong approvals in the December Quarter 2023 assisted this result.

"The value of approved major renovations and alterations increased in 2023, with Hunter approvals increasing by 10.7% to \$306.2 million and the Central Coast increasing by 2.9% to \$165.2 million.

"Looking ahead, residential building activity will remain strong on the back of the pipeline of work approved over the past two years, however the impact of increases in interest rates and construction costs has impacted consumer confidence for detached dwellings.

As a result, further growth in multi-unit approvals is expected in the coming years supported by strong intrastate migration.

"Pleasingly, the relative affordability advantages the region has over other locations will support continued demand for new homes, ensuring the important contribution residential construction provides the local economy continues," concluded Mr Jennion.

New online tool to simplify development controls in Newcastle

City of Newcastle (CN) is making it easier to access design or development guidelines with the introduction of an innovative, interactive online tool.

The user-friendly digital portal was launched to coincide with the new Newcastle Development Control Plan, which came into effect on 1 March 2024.

Designed with intuitive features to improve the users' experience, the new DCP tool boasts quick navigation options, robust search functionality, and has the ability to mark favourite sections for easy reference.

Additionally, users have the convenience of downloading both the entire plan and specific sections.

The online tool will enhance accessibility and efficiency for all stakeholders, from industry experts to community members. The DCP was updated in 2023 following community consultation, with the new provisions coming into effect on 1 March 2024.

The enhanced provisions are informed by commitments made in the Newcastle 2040: Community Strategic Plan, Local Strategic Planning Statement, Local Housing Strategy document, and reflect best practice guidelines for development.

Key amendments include measures to address the impact of urban heat, liveable housing requirements, provisions to help increase walking, cycling and public transport use and revised measures for the retention or planting of street trees with a development.

Revisions were also made in areas of flood management, Aboriginal cultural heritage, City Centre developments and density controls, as well as built and landscape heritage.

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SWIFT has numerous sizing options with suites ranging from 98 sqm, 194 sqm, 247 sqm, 371 sqm and 636 sqm. Take advantage of the enviable Newcastle West CBD positioning with entry pricing at \$895,000 + GST.

COMMERCIAL
COLLECTIVE

CONTACT AGENTS

Jared Harris 0410 611 482
Commercial Collective

SWIFT

BESPOKE OFFICE SUITES
HUNTER ^{NT}

Key Features:

- 5 floors of sustainably designed suites
- Generous private and communal outdoor areas
- Premium end of trip facilities
- Completion Spring 2024

ALTIM

PROPERTY

altimproperty.com.au

SMSFs and overseas property – is it possible?

One of the benefits of having your own Self-Managed Superannuation Fund (SMSF) is the ability to choose your own investments which a retail or industry fund cannot provide. However, with benefits comes responsibility and the restrictions in place may make some of your investment choices not feasible within a SMSF environment.

SMSFs regularly purchase property in Australia however TSP Accountants are often asked whether a SMSF can purchase property overseas. The good news is yes but trustees should be aware of the following issues:

1. Does the investment meet the Sole Purpose Test?

This is the question that must always be considered whenever a SMSF invests. Will this investment fit in with the Fund's sole purpose to provide retirement benefits to members? The purchase of a unit as part of a hotel chain in New Zealand may be a good investment and satisfies the sole purpose test. However, members and their relatives are not allowed to use the unit, or obtain other hotel chain benefits, as part of this investment. Doing so, provides a dual purpose and breaches the sole purpose test.

2. Can the SMSF borrow to purchase an overseas property?

The short answer is yes. SMSFs are allowed to purchase a property using a Limited Recourse Borrowing Arrangement (LRBA). An LRBA has set guidelines on the level of equity, term of loan and interest rates. The rules are restrictive and complex.



Combine this with the rules and complexities of another country may make the task too difficult.

Furthermore, whilst it is possible, the question remains - will an Australian bank lend funds to purchase an overseas property?

3. Will this purchase create an in-house asset?

Some countries do not allow direct ownership of a property by an Australian SMSF. For a SMSF to acquire an overseas property, they may need to establish a company in the country in which the property is located. This may create further issues as the SMSF's investment becomes the shares and not the property. Ownership of these shares may cause problems with the in-house asset rules.

If the level of a Fund's in-house assets exceed 5% of the Fund's value, then a contravention will occur and steps are required to be taken to bring the in-house asset percentage below the 5% mark. This may result in the need to sell the investment at a time when prices are low and/or costs, including taxes are high.

Whilst the option of purchasing an overseas property is possible, the rules for doing so are complex. You should always seek professional advice before making any decisions.

For further information please contact TSP Accountants to find out more about the implications for your SMSF on (02) 4926 4155 or email admin@tspaccountants.com.au

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40 years

Want to consolidate your UK pension with your Australian superannuation?

Robert Coyte
Shartru Wealth

Providing you are over of the age of 55 and intend to retire in Australia permanently, there are many reasons to transfer your UK pension to Australia.

Potential Tax advantages

Transferring your UK pension to an Australian QROPS superannuation fund offers potential tax advantages, including the ability to draw tax free income for life in retirement.

A Qualifying Recognised Overseas Pension Scheme (QROPS) is a pension scheme recognised by His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) for accepting UK pension transfers.

Mitigating currency Risk

Another advantage of transferring your UK pension to Australia is the potential to avoid currency fluctuations. Exchange rate changes can significantly impact your pension's value over time. By transferring your UK pension to Australia, you can convert your UK Pension into Australian dollars, reducing the risk of currency fluctuations eroding your pension's value.

Simplifying financial planning

Consolidating your pension assets in one country can simplify your financial planning. Managing pensions across different countries can involve different tax rules, regulations, and time zones. Transferring your UK pension to Australia allows you to

streamline your pension management, making it easier to track your retirement savings and plan for the future.

Your UK Pension pathway

Your UK Pension pathway to Australia is determined by the Applicable Fund Earnings (AFE) or the growth of your UK pension since you have been in Australia.

Depending on the how long you have been a resident of Australia and the growth of your UK pension over that time, will determine: 1. How much can you initially transfer to Australia under Australian Superannuation contribution laws? 2. How much tax you will pay.

Your UK pension makes up just one part of your retirement plans in Australia.

To determine your UK Pensions pathway to Australia and make your UK pension part of your retirement plans now, contact Shartru Wealth on 1300 478 424 or email ukpensions@shartruwealth.com.au for a no obligation review of you UK pension situation.

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Robert Coyte has over 30 years of experience in commercial banking, financial markets, stockbroking and financial planning. Robert started his career with Westpac, accumulating 5 years' experience in Commercial Banking and Financial Markets. Robert joined the financial planning sector in 1999, doing his training with AMP. In 2008, Robert successfully applied for his own AFSL. In 2012, he became the Chief Executive Officer of Shartru Wealth Management.



Have you migrated or returned to Australia, from the U.K. with a U.K. pension?

14 Macquarie Street, Belmont NSW 2280
PO Box 565, Belmont NSW 2280
P: 1300 478 424
E: advice@shartru.com.au
W: www.shartruwealth.com.au

Considering establishing an SMSF?

Daniel Clements
PKF Sydney & Newcastle

Setting up a Self-Managed Superannuation Fund (SMSF) requires careful planning and adherence to regulatory requirements. Here's a checklist to guide you through the process:

Pre-Setup Considerations

1. Research and Education:

- Understand the roles and responsibilities of SMSF trustees.
- Educate yourself about SMSF regulations, investment options and taxation implications.

2. Financial Planning

- Assess your financial situation and retirement goals to determine if an SMSF is appropriate.
- Seek professional financial advice to evaluate the suitability of an SMSF for your circumstances.

Setup Process

1. Decide on your trustee structure

There are two trustee structures to choose from:

- Individual trustees: two to six individuals who act personally as trustees, or
- Corporate trustees: a trustee company with one to six directors.

The number of individual trustees, or directors of the corporate trustee, will depend on whether your SMSF is a single-member or a multi-member fund.

It is generally recommended to use a corporate trustee due to the following advantages:

- its long-term benefits, as a company continues even after the resignation or death of a director.
- A corporate trustee provides limited liability for the directors. This ensures litigation against the trustee of the SMSF is generally limited to the assets held in the name of the corporate trustee and does not extend to the directors (unless they are fraudulent in their duties).
- If an SMSF has a corporate trustee, ATO penalties for breaches of the superannuation law are imposed on the company and not each director. With individual trustees, penalties are imposed on each individual.

2. Engage an SMSF professional

Once the trustee structure has been determined, you will need to provide your SMSF professional with specific information for the setup, including:

- Proposed Name of Fund
- Proposed name of the corporate trustee (if using a company)
- Director Identification Number for all directors (if using a company)
- Once the SMSF professional has all the required information they will prepare the establishment documentation for signing.

3. Fund establishment

The SMSF professional will apply for a Tax File Number (TFN) and an Australian Business Number (ABN) for the SMSF. This also registers the SMSF with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Before the ATO issues a complying status for the new SMSF, they will complete their own checks. This process can take over four weeks and may include:

- Checking for any personal and associated entities outstanding ATO payments and lodgements
- Checking the members taxation history and whether they are fit to be a trustee of an SMSF
- Calling the members to check identification and to ensure they understand their responsibilities as a trustee.

4. Open a bank account for the SMSF

A bank account in the name of the SMSF needs to be opened. This is for managing contributions, investments and expenses. To open a bank account the trustees will need to provide the bank with the original or certified copy of the trust deed.

5. Investment Strategy

Develop an investment strategy that aligns with the fund's objectives, risk tolerance, and members' retirement needs. Document the investment strategy and review it regularly.

For further information please contact Daniel via (02) 4962 2688 or email dclements@pkf.com.au



Having started with PKF over 10 years ago, **Daniel Clements** passion, knowledge and leadership skills has enabled him to continue to grow as a professional and be seen as a role model and mentor to his team. Daniel manages the PKF Superannuation team, a team who he is very proud to work alongside of because of the positive morale that has developed, further adding to the quality service they deliver to over 500 funds.

2024 HUNTER INVESTMENT PROSPECTUS

YOUR NEXT SMART BUSINESS, INVESTMENT & LIFESTYLE CHOICE IS ON THE HORIZON

Published by Hunter Business Publications Pty Ltd, the Hunter Investment Prospectus is an important promotional project for the Region that is distributed as a high-quality hard copy as well as online.

View a copy of the 2024 Hunter Investment Prospectus online at www.hunterinvest.com.au

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For queries or feedback regarding the **2024 Hunter Investment Prospectus**, please contact:

Hunter Business Publications Pty Ltd P: +61 2 4062 8133 E: info@HBRmag.com.au W: www.HBRmag.com.au

Are psychosocial risks and hazards in the too hard basket?

Faith Eson
Foccale Safety Management

Today in this fast-paced work environment, meeting safety obligations is imperative and a fundamental aspect for the success of the business. Yet, many workplaces are struggling to make meaningful changes in their safety culture by addressing psychosocial risks and hazards.

Whilst general safety measure focus on physical well-being, today it's important for workplaces to consider psychosocial factors which can have profound consequences on workers and the viability of the business.

Understanding Psychosocial Risks and Hazards

The first step, is to understand that psychosocial risks encompass a broad range of factors within the work environment that can impact mental health, that affects individual's well-being and contribute to absenteeism, presenteeism, turnover, and diminished morale.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines psychosocial risks as "factors originating from the way work is designed, organised, and managed, as well as from the social context of work, and they have the potential to cause psychological or physical harm." A disregard of these risks not only undermines worker welfare but also undermines workplace resilience and competitiveness.

The Impact of Psychosocial Risks and Hazards

The impact of psychosocial safety in workplaces, if left unmanaged, can be likened to a silent but potentially explosive force. Much like cancer left untreated, psychosocial risks and hazards have the capacity to build momentum, quietly infiltrating the fabric of the workplace until they reach a tipping point.

Once an incident arises, these risks can spread rapidly, disrupting the functionality of the workplace much like cancer infiltrating different organs. This disruption weakens the operations of the workplace, leading to decreased productivity, poor morale, low job satisfaction thus; increasing workloads and stress levels. Ultimately, this can result in regulatory intervention, legal matters, reputational damage, and a plunge in revenue to irrecoverable levels.

Effective Management is Key

However, this negative trajectory is preventable and can be effectively managed. While it requires concerted effort and a shift in workplace culture, the outcome can be of significant benefit to the viability and growth of the workplace. Indeed, this shift aligns with the requirements of safety laws and regulations, which mandate the protection of workers' mental and emotional well-being.

Though, it is important to recognise that psychosocial risks and hazards have always existed in the workplace. What has changed is our understanding of the impact and the realisation that they are detrimental to both workers and the workplace. With education and proactive changes in workplace practices, these risks can be better managed, leading to a healthier and more sustainable work environment for all.

In Summary

For those workplaces that are stuck with out-dated safety practices, proactively take action in transforming and encompassing mental health and safety in the workplace as this can positively impact the business by prioritising safety, empowering workers, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, as well as, creating a safer work environment, that improves productivity and reduces workplace incidents and injuries.

Embark on the journey where workers return home safely and the business can thrive.

For further information contact Foccale Safety Management on (02) 4968 2199 or email info@foccale.com



Faith Eson has over 20 years' experience working in large government organisations, medium and small business organisations with roles from administration, Workplace Safety Management System (OHSMS), Injury Management and Rehabilitation, Safety Audit, Records Management, Investigation and Training. In the last 8 years Faith has provided services to businesses from trades, retail to professional, from micro to corporate, assisting with their compliance processing, by designing and developing their safety management systems and programs whilst mentoring and coaching their management teams.

Almost one in five employees state their work often triggers mental health challenges, yet nearly nine in ten managers' report they are satisfied with their organisation's ability to create psychologically healthy workplaces for workers, according to a recent study by Allianz.

These shocking results highlight exactly why Hunterlink EAP is passionate about delivering comprehensive mental health care and training.

As one of Australia's specialist Employee Assistance Provider, we know better than anyone that workplaces who fail to invest

in psychological health suffer more critical incidents, higher staff turnover, worse team cohesion and culture, lower productivity, increased absenteeism, and diminished overall employee well-being.

Our Mental Health Awareness training is designed to equip your workplace with the guidance, tools, skills, and insights necessary to cultivate a supportive and resilient environment.

This comprehensive program goes beyond merely raising awareness; it actively empowers

your employees and leadership to proactively address psychological health challenges and recognise psychological hazards that may be in your workplace.

No workplace is the same, which is why Hunterlink is committed to delivering our services tailored to your unique needs and preferences.

Together, we can build a better future for your organisation and employees.

Get in contact with us to learn more.



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Air monitoring for silica exposure

Why air monitoring matters

Air monitoring plays a crucial role in assessing and managing silica exposure risks. By measuring airborne silica levels, employers can identify areas of concern, implement effective controls, and protect workers' health.

Frequency of air monitoring

Baseline monitoring: Conduct baseline air monitoring to establish the initial exposure levels when workers begin tasks involving silica. This provides a reference point for future assessments.

Regular monitoring: Regular monitoring is essential to track ongoing exposure. It ensures compliance with the new Safe Work Australia Workplace Exposure Standard (WES) and helps identify any deviations.

Task-specific monitoring: For high-risk tasks (e.g., cutting, grinding, or drilling), monitor silica levels during actual work. This ensures accurate data related to specific activities.

Monitoring methods

Personal sampling: Collect air samples directly from workers' breathing zones using personal sampling pumps. These pumps capture the dust particles workers inhale.

Area sampling: Place stationary air samplers in work areas to assess overall airborne silica levels. This helps identify hotspots and evaluate control measures.

Real-time monitoring: Use real-time instruments (such as direct-reading dust monitors) to provide immediate feedback. These devices display silica concentrations instantly.

Interpreting results

Comparing to WES: Compare monitoring results to the new WES

(0.05 mg/m³). If levels exceed this limit, reassess controls and take corrective actions.

Action levels: Set action levels (e.g., 50% of the WES) to trigger interventions. If levels approach or exceed action levels, investigate promptly.

Health surveillance: Regular monitoring informs health surveillance programs. Detect early signs of silicosis or other related illnesses.

Record keeping and reporting

Records: Maintain detailed records of monitoring results, including dates, locations, and exposure levels.

Reporting: Report findings to workers, health and safety representatives, and relevant authorities. Transparency is crucial for accountability.

Control measures based on monitoring data

Engineering controls: Adjust ventilation systems, water suppression, and dust extraction based on monitoring results.

Respiratory protection: If exposure exceeds WES, provide appropriate respiratory protective equipment.

Training and education: Use monitoring data to reinforce safe work practices and educate workers about silica hazards.

Conclusion

Air monitoring is not just a compliance requirement; it is a vital tool for safeguarding workers. By diligently monitoring silica exposure, employers can create healthier work environments and prevent the devastating effects of silicosis.

Remember, knowledge is protection, and regular air monitoring empowers us to make informed decisions. Let's prioritise worker well-being and ensure a safer NSW workforce.

For further information contact Hazmat Services on (02) 4961 1887 or email info@hazmat-services.com.au



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NSW Government provides free Asbestos Awareness and Safety short course

SafeWork NSW, Building Commission NSW, and TAFE NSW have partnered to provide an online 'Asbestos Awareness and Safety' course free to the public to increase awareness of the safety risks relating to asbestos.

This short self-directed online course, called a microskill, is aimed at anyone likely to encounter asbestos in their workplace.

It is hosted on the Construct NSW digital learning platform, part of a wider suite of courses built in collaboration with the Department of Customer Service and Building Commission NSW.

The NSW Government priority is to ensure the safety of workers and the community when managing asbestos.

Recent reports of asbestos in mulching products has highlighted the need for readily available asbestos awareness training.

The 'Asbestos Awareness and Safety' microskill will be free to anyone in Australia for a period of 3 months, with the potential for extension pending public demand.



The 2½ hour course covers:

- recognising the risk and serious long-term impacts of asbestos exposure
- recognising the roles, responsibilities, and legislation for asbestos related work
- how to determine if asbestos containing material may be present
- identifying asbestos containing materials and hazardous activities that lead to asbestos exposure
- identifying suitable control measures for asbestos and asbestos containing materials (ACM)

- how to safely handle asbestos and ACM
 - inspecting worksites and communicating asbestos risks and asbestos controls with an informed perspective.
- Completion of the course provides asbestos awareness training. Further training is required to conduct licensed asbestos removal work.

To register for the course at TAFE NSW visit <https://store.training.tafensw.edu.au/product/asbestos-awareness-and-safety/>

This course is available fully discounted until June 13th 2024

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Safety innovators shine at 2024 Hunter Safety Awards

Swietelsky Rail Australia were the true champions of the 2024 Hunter Safety Awards, taking out Best WHS Health and Wellbeing (SME) as well as being awarded the prestigious 'Gold' Safety Helmet in the WHS Business of the Year category.

The 2024 Awards revealed the outstanding winners across 12 categories, once again putting safety at the forefront in the Hunter region.

Businesses and individuals from across the Hunter were crowned champions for demonstrating positive approaches to Work, Health, and Safety (WHS) in their workplace.

This year's Hunter Safety Awards took centre stage on Friday 15 March 2024, where over 300 passionate individuals came together to create an atmosphere that was dedicated to championing safety, innovation, and WHS.

Founder of the Awards, Sarah-Jane Dunford expressed how amazing it was to bring together diverse minds and organisations who were all dedicated to shaping the future of work health and safety in the Hunter region.

"At this year's awards we recognised not only achievements, but a shared commitment to pushing the boundaries of safety and fostering innovation. The Hunter region is a hub of excellence in safety, and this event serves as a dynamic platform to honour those who lead the charge in redefining standards," Sarah-Jane said.

"It wasn't just an award ceremony, it was a testament to the unwavering dedication that is moving us toward a safer, more innovative future."

Now in its eighth year, the Awards recognised businesses and individuals across 12 different categories of health and safety.



The Swietelsky Rail Australia team after winning WHS Business of the Year Award with Managing Director, Anne Moddero holding the gold trophy

Managing Director of Swietelsky Rail Australia, Anne Moddero, couldn't believe they managed to take home not only one, but two awards for their first time as finalists at the Hunter Safety Awards.

"We pride ourselves on creating a workplace that is diverse, as well as an environment where all staff feel safe and supported. So, for that to be recognised on a level like this is incredible," Anne said.

"Being safety-focused is one thing but celebrating it with so many likeminded individuals and other amazing Hunter businesses has just been outstanding and we looking forward to doing it all over again next year."

WHS Champion of the Year for 2024 was Paul Olive, the Safety Manager at PLUS ES. His mantra is 'safety is managing risk through



WINNER 2024

WHS Business of the Year
Best Health and Wellbeing
Program (SME)



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relationships.' This mantra resonated with judges, as well as the fact his own team nominated him for this honour saying that he is more than a manager, he's a true leader.

Another winner, Newcastle Airport is continuing their commitment to WHS with 2024 being the second year running they've been recognised, this year for Best WHS Health and Wellbeing Program (Large Organisation). They provide their staff with tailored support services from personalised counselling to stress management programs.

Coal Services Mines Rescue was also a winner, taking out the Best WHS Training Program. At the heart of their win is Mines Rescue's Generic Underground Induction course, a comprehensive training initiative designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in the NSW underground coal mining sector. This course not only provides essential technical training but also places a strong emphasis on WHS practices, ensuring that workers are well-prepared to navigate the inherent risks of their environment.

Another previous winner taking out a category in 2024 was Fenech Demolitions, a second generation, family run business with a goal is to deliver ecologically responsible demolition projects. This year they were proud winners of the Best WHS Improvement (SME) award.

Events like this wouldn't be possible without the support of committed sponsors in the local area, including AGL who have now been the major sponsor for over 5 years.

"Each year we are proud to support this incredible event and the 2024 Awards were no different. The winners of each category really are champions of safety in the workplace. It's fantastic they have been recognised by their peers, which highlights the importance of bringing likeminded individuals together to celebrate and continue the journey of improving safety, health and wellbeing in our region," AGL General Manager Bayswater, Len McLachlan said.

The full list of 2024 Hunter Safety Awards winners are as follows:

- **WHS Business of the Year:** Swietelsky Rail Australia
- **Best Health and Wellbeing Program (Large Organisation):** Newcastle Airport
- **Best Health and Wellbeing Program (SME):** Swietelsky Rail Australia
- **Best WHS Improvement (Large Organisation):** Metso
- **Best WHS Improvement (SME):** Fenech Demolition
- **Best WHS Management System (Large Organisation):** Westpac Property Group
- **Best WHS Management System (SME):** Machinemonitor
- **Most Innovative WHS Idea (Large Organisation):** Singleton Council
- **Most Innovative WHS Idea (SME):** SafeGauge
- **WHS Champion of the Year:** Paul Olive (PLUS ES)
- **Young WHS Leader of the Year:** Kurt Speers (Red Insight)
- **Best WHS Training Program:** Coal Services Mines Rescue



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We have spent over two decades refining our protocols and procedures. We learned from our history of providing commercial and industrial demolitions, developing clear management plans for WHS, Quality, Environment, Asbestos & Hazardous material, Waste Management, and more. For us, it was essential to have structured, sustainable processes in place ahead of time - ready to answer any workplace challenges.

Today, this is how **Fenech Demolitions** operates on every project. When we partner with a client, we guarantee our diligence in safety and quality will extend to every part of the project.



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I bought a book called "1001 Uses for Binary".

When I got home, I was disappointed to find out there were only 9 entries.

A man walks up to a librarian and asks, "Do you have any books on Pavlov's dog and Schrödinger's cat?"

The librarian responds, "It rings a bell but I'm not sure if it's here or not."

An accountant is having a hard time sleeping and goes to see his doctor.

"Doctor, I just can't get to sleep at night," he says.

"Have you tried counting sheep?" inquires the doctor.

"That's the problem. I make a mistake and then spend three hours trying to find it."

My boss told me, "Dress for the job you want, not the job you have."

Now I'm sitting in a disciplinary meeting dressed as Spider-Man.

Andy supported himself in university by working as a waiter in a restaurant.

"What is the standard tip?" enquired a customer.

"Well, this is my first day," Andy explained, "but the other guys said that if I earned five dollars out of you, I'd be doing fantastic."

"Is that correct?" grumbled the consumer. "In that case, please accept twenty dollars."

"Thanks. I'll put it towards my education money," Andy stated.

"By the way, what are you studying?" the customer enquired. "Applied psychology."

I said to my wife, "For the last 15 years, all you've done is find mistakes in anything I say."

She said, "16 years..."

Little Johnny asked the teacher, "Can I be punished for something I haven't done?"

The teacher replied, "Absolutely not! That would be unfair."

Johnny is relieved. He replies, "Oh, good to know because I didn't do my homework."

I have an inferiority complex, but it's not a very good one.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Safety is something that happens between your ears, not something you hold in your hands."

- Jeff Cooper

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