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The Federal Government announced a mixed 2018 Budget for Hunter businesses on 8 May.

In what is likely to be the last budget before the next Federal election, it is not surprising that there were some income tax cuts announced which will hopefully help in boosting consumer spending, however, being a tax offset, the effect won't be until the 2019-2020 financial year.

A rather ambitious seven-year income tax restructure was also announced to try to reduce the marginal tax rate for most employees and provide greater incentive to earn more. Seven years is a very long time in politics and it remains to be seen how this plan proceeds over time, particularly if there is a change in government. The estimated cost of some \$140 billion over ten years will require steady economic growth to fund the scheme.

SMEs will be pleased that the \$20,000 asset write off has been extended for another 12 months.

The \$1.3 billion plan to grow Australia in medical technology, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, was pleasing and provides some direct opportunities for the Hunter.

There was a \$200 million increase for the Building Better Regions fund, so it is hoped that the local region will receive some of this.

It was, however, disappointing that \$2.4 billion was cut from the research and development tax incentive scheme, particularly when we are just more fully understanding the importance of innovation to our economic growth.

Apart from some announcements for the Williamstown RAAF base, it was also disappointing to see no mention for other Hunter projects, particularly the Glendale Interchange and the M1 link to Raymond Terrace. Perhaps being seen as relatively safe seats, the Hunter was never going to receive much for projects such as these in the run up to the next Federal election.

At the time of going to print, the Budget had been just announced, so no doubt in coming weeks there will be much more discussion and some of the fine print will become clearer.

This month HBR is celebrating its 13th anniversary of the first issue. We would like to thank all the readers, advertisers and story providers for helping to grow the publication and firmly establish it as the leading hard copy and online business and industry publication in the region.

The Hunter has changed greatly over this time and is well-placed for strong growth well into the future.

We look forward to continuing to serve the local business community during these exciting years.

Garry Hardie
Editor & Publisher

Future bright for the old Store

The future of The Store site has been unveiled, with the NSW Government announcing a \$200 million redevelopment by the Doma Group.

Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Andrew Constance made the announcement in Newcastle and said the milestone represented the start of what will be another catalytic change for the city.

"A year ago we announced that we were going to try something bold for The Store site, by testing the market to see if private developers would deliver a bus interchange as a part of a fully integrated development solution.

"Today I am delighted to say that we achieved that vision, and that following a competitive process, Doma Group has exceeded our expectations and will create something truly special for this great city."

Doma Group's Managing Director Jure Domazet said The Store site presented a complex challenge to incorporate a major piece of infrastructure with an integrated development that also enhanced opportunity and density around a major transport node.

"We have worked with our architects to create an innovative design that will deliver 13,000 sqm standalone office space, two residential towers as well as retail offerings that will complement the site's inclusion of a bus interchange."

Minister Constance said Doma Group's concept plan for The Store reflects government's high expectation for design excellence.

"The plan shows how innovative, quality design seamlessly integrates the site with the existing Newcastle Interchange, and uses quality architecture that is arguably as impressive as the recent NeW Space and Court House developments. "The design allows for the expansion of light rail, which means we are future proofing the site.

"We know that the site has local social heritage significance and through the project, this will be appropriately recorded and recognised.

"It is certainly an exciting time in Newcastle's history right now.

"Not only are we being creative in what we do, we are getting on with delivering outcomes as quickly as possible," said Minister Constance.

The NSW Government purchased The Store site in 2015, with the intention of transforming it into essential transport infrastructure. In 2012 the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy (NURS) identified it as a key site helping to underpin the westward shift of the CBD.



Concept illustration of the redeveloped site

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Affordable housing on closed rail corridor

The NSW Government has announced that an inner-city affordable housing development for 30 new dwellings will be delivered by Community Housing Provider (CHP) Evolve Housing on Newcastle's former rail corridor as foreshadowed by the NSW Planning Minister the Hon. Anthony Roberts MP in 2017.

Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter Scot MacDonald MLC said the announcement was a milestone for the revitalisation of the city and for the people who rely on affordable housing opportunities.

"Hunter Development Corporation (HDC) has led a competitive expression of interest (EOI) process," Mr MacDonald said.

"Evolve Housing has been successful and has committed to delivering 30 affordable rental housing units, which includes three specialist disability accommodation dwellings, giving more people greater access to a thriving city centre."

"It can be challenging to deliver affordable housing projects, located in key positions like this with attractive public domain, a future light rail stop and proximity to CBD employment. This delivers on NSW Government commitments including maintaining a strong community presence on the closed heavy rail corridor."

Andrea Galloway, Managing Director and CEO of Evolve Housing said that by committing to affordable housing and specialist disability accommodation they were working with Government to support the local community to thrive.

"We see every day the positive impact these type developments have on communities and we are very proud to provide the expertise to make the project possible," Ms Galloway said.

HDC released the EOI late last year for the Merewether Street site, which incorporated 1,600 sqm of former rail corridor land adjacent to Newcastle Museum.

"The development will include two retail spaces on the ground floor, which will provide activation to Merewether Street and the future public open space at the former Civic Station," Mr MacDonald said.

"HDC has worked hard to ensure the success of this opportunity, and I applaud them for pursuing affordable housing as a part of the holistic revitalisation of the city.

"As affordable housing is designed to give people a step up, only people who are employed on middle to low incomes, and meet strict criteria are eligible to apply for the rental accommodation.

"What Evolve Housing is also bringing to the project is supported living for people living with a disability – this creates another option for people who otherwise end up in full-care facilities.

"Over coming months, HDC will work with Evolve as it prepares to lodge a Development Application, which is expected around mid-year, with construction a possibility by the end of the year."



NSW Government to deliver \$30 million skills boost for small business in the Hunter

Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast and the Hunter, Scot MacDonald welcomed the announcement that local Central Coast and Hunter small businesses and their staff now have access to free business skills training thanks to a new \$30 million NSW Government initiative aimed at helping small businesses grow and thrive.

Mr MacDonald said the new Skills for Business program meant local companies and their staff could undertake free TAFE NSW qualifications in subjects including digital and financial literacy, cybersecurity and general business management.

"Small businesses are the engine room of our economy and the heart and soul of our regional towns," Mr MacDonald said.

"This initiative is all about giving small business owners the very best chance of not just staying in business, but taking their business to the next level.

"Running a small business can be incredibly rewarding, but also incredibly tough, and this is an opportunity for those small business owners and their staff to upskill in an area of need, for free!" Mr MacDonald said.

Skills for Business brings together TAFE NSW and other NSW Government business support services including Business Connect, to give small business owners and their staff a chance to undertake fully-subsidised training in courses including financial planning, taxation, risk management, legal decisions, using spreadsheets, social media tools, website creation and maintenance, creating an e-business, and cybersecurity.

The free TAFE courses will be delivered online, with a face-to-face component, to allow small businesses to learn when it suits them best, with live tutorials also on offer.

Transport subsidies for drought affected farmers

A new Drought Transport Fund has been announced by the Minister for Primary Industries Niall Blair to help assist farmers in the Lower Hunter to manage livestock through the current dry conditions.

The NSW Drought Transport Fund will provide up to \$20,000 in low interest loans, with a two-year interest and repayment free period.

The NSW Drought Transport Fund will complement existing transport subsidies for the cost of transporting donated fodder within NSW and transporting stock off a property for animal welfare purposes.

These measures form part of the wider NSW Drought Strategy, which includes a rural resilience program, rural support workers and financial counselling, and the Farm Innovation Fund for on-farm drought preparedness work and capital improvement.

The Farm Innovation Fund has approved \$54 million worth of low-interest loans this financial year, with almost \$9 million worth of loans applied for in March alone, and more than \$200 million since its inception in 2013.

Surfest crowdfunding initiative fosters ongoing community support

In keeping with the spirit of collaboration and community support, one of the Surfest Women's Pro crowd funders has donated its winnings from the 2018 event to two local charities.

As part of the crowdfunding initiative, all 86 businesses were drawn a surfer in the competition at Merewether in February. Funda Finance Partners drew Malia Manuel from Hawaii, who placed equal third, giving the Funda team winnings of \$2,000.

Based in Merewether and with a passion for supporting grass roots organisations, the team decided to donate the cash to local anti-domestic violence charity, Got Your Back Sista, and to the Mark Hughes Foundation in support of brain cancer research.

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Next three F-35A Joint Strike Fighters mission ready

Australia has taken delivery of the next three F-35A aircraft from Lockheed Martin.

Minister for Defence Senator the Hon Marise Payne and Minister for Defence Industry the Hon Christopher Pyne MP congratulated Defence and Lockheed Martin on reaching the important milestone.

Minister Payne said the F-35 program is on track to provide Australia with a fifth generation aircraft at the forefront of air combat technology.

"These latest aircraft are fitted with the program's final software system, which unlocks the aircraft's full war-fighting potential including weapons, mission systems and flight performance," Minister Payne said.

"The stealthy, advanced F-35A is a step change in the Australian Defence Force's capabilities, giving Australia an edge against the emergence of advanced capabilities in our region."

"Australia is the first international partner to accept jets with Block 3F capability, and this is another key step towards introducing the aircraft into service before its arrival in Australia in December this year."

Minister Pyne said this is another significant point in the Joint Strike Fighter program.

"Australia now has five aircraft at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona, USA, where our pilots are currently training. Five more aircraft are scheduled for delivery by the end of 2018.

"More than 50 Australian companies have directly shared in more than A\$1 billion in production contracts to date, providing further opportunities to small and medium Australian businesses which benefit through supply chain work.

"In 2016, the F-35 Program supported more than 2,400 jobs across Australia, which is set to grow to 5,000 by 2023.

The Australian Government is investing in 72 F-35A Lightning II aircraft to replace the current fleet of 71 ageing F/A-18A/B Classic Hornets.



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Over 1,000 new coal mining jobs for the Hunter

The strong turnaround in coal prices and steady demand for Hunter coal from our key export markets has delivered over a thousand new coal mining jobs to the Hunter over the last year.

The most recent figures from Coal Services show that there were 1,085 more Hunter coal jobs in December 2017 than at the same time in 2016, taking the region's overall coal mining job numbers to 13,138.

The growth in local coal mining jobs is also good news for more than 3,000 Hunter businesses that supply mining operations in the region, helping them employ thousands more workers.

"Local coal mining communities like Singleton, Muswellbrook, Cessnock and Maitland had a tough few years from 2013 to the end of 2016, so this jobs boost over 2017 is really good news for local Hunter economies," NSW Minerals Council CEO, Stephen Galilee said.

"A boost in local mining jobs also means a boost for local businesses directly supply the mines, and also cafes, mechanics, supermarkets and others that benefit from the increased economic activity and spending that a rise in local jobs generates."

"There's been a sustained recovery in business conditions for coal mining in NSW over the last 18 months. We've seen the average Free On Board (FOB) value of thermal coal per tonne rise from A\$68.27 in June 2016 to A\$114.82 by December 2017, the highest price since December 2011. The FOB value of coking coal per tonne has also steadied at A\$167.91 compared to the low of \$98.87 at the end of 2015. This has really helped deliver more jobs to the Hunter," Mr Galilee said.

"Strong demand for Hunter coal means more Hunter coal mining jobs. With the right policy settings that make the most of growing opportunities, our coal mining industry can continue to deliver employment, investment and economic stability well into the future," he said.



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Newcastle Grammar School centenary concert combines with A-League live site

Newcastle Grammar School teamed up with Newcastle City Council and Revitalising Newcastle to provide an incredible day of entertainment on 5 May at King Edward Park.

The event was a great success, with thousands of locals taking advantage of the great weather to enjoy the free concert and the A-League Grand Final, with food and beverages also available by local foodies.

The free Newcastle Grammar School concert was part of their 100-year anniversary celebrations. Newcastle Grammar School is one of Newcastle's most historically significant schools and has links to the earliest days of Anglican education in the city, beginning in 1816 when convict Henry Wrensford taught 17 children aged between 3 and 13 years in a slab hut, on the site of to-day's Cathedral.

Newcastle Boys' Grammar School opened on the present site in 1859 in Berkeley House and operated until 1902. Newcastle Church of England Girls' Grammar School was officially opened on 22 July 1918 with an enrolment of 56 girls. This marked the historically birth of the School today and each year they mark Founders' Day as a celebration

The festivities began with Australian celebrity, Justine Clarke from ABC kids at 3.20 pm and main act, John Morrison's Swing City Big Band featuring Jacki Cooper from 5.20 pm followed by local talent, Pete McCredie from 7.00 pm and then a live screening of the A-League Grand Final at 7.50 pm.

"We are so excited to share this moment with the community. The live screening after our school, local and national talents perform for our Centenary concert is a fantastic way for us to give more back to the community," said Mrs Erica Thomas, Head of School.



"The School has been part of the NGS landscape for 100 years and in our Centenary year we have much to celebrate together."
"Once we were made aware of so many people missing out on Jets tickets we wanted to help and called Newcastle City Council to find a solution," Mrs Thomas explained. "Our concert was already planned and this seemed a natural fit."



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4 Overall Graduate Employment - Undergraduate, Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching 2017 (qilt.edu.au)

PWCS release 2017 Sustainable Development Report

Port Waratah Coal Services have published their 2017 Sustainable Development Report, the sixth since the company commenced reporting on its management approach to sustainability and operational, environmental and social performance.

"Sustainability considerations are integral to Port Waratah's day to day operations" said Hennie du Plooy, Chief Executive Officer of Port Waratah. "We are continuously looking at how we can improve our operations to contribute to the global sustainability agenda in a local context."

"Our strategic focus is to meet the changing expectations and demands of our employees, customers and community. Our Sustainable Development Report is our annual scorecard, reporting on our performance against the commitments we have made to our stakeholders, in line with our values, business drivers and management processes."

Themed People and Partnerships the 2017 Report represents a step up in maturity, putting Port Waratah at the forefront amongst local industry in assessing and reporting on sustainability performance. The Report was prepared in accordance with the Global Report Initiative (GRI) Standards, and for the first time achieved the Core option. The Report also considers how Port Waratah's activities are positioned in the framework provided by

the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

The SDG's are a set of 17 goals ratified by UN Member States and identified for achievement by 2030. To understand its position, Port Waratah has mapped its operations within the SDG framework. The Sustainable Development Report demonstrates that Port Waratah already contributes to many of the goals, including; Gender Equality, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and Responsible Consumption and Production.

"We value this perspective because describing the impact of our activities against a framework such as the SDG's is one measure of performance through which we give local stakeholders comfort that our operations are managed to world class standards," Mr du Plooy said.

Port Waratah has been a part of Newcastle for over 40 years. Their terminal services underpin the activities of the Hunter Valley coal chain, providing a local service to local producers. Sharing their value locally is key to helping create prosperity for the Region.

"Contributing locally in a sustainable manner is important to us. Over 80 per cent of our 2017 expenditure was spent in the local region, equivalent to approximately 80 million dollars. In addition, we invest three quarters of a million dollars annually in local community projects and are proud that 74 per cent of our employees live in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie local government areas" Mr du Plooy said.



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Kristen Keegan Future Leaders Program Scholarship Recipient

HunterNet and the Hunter Business Chamber have announced Teegan Bell, Customer Experience and Airport Operations Officer at Newcastle Airport as the second recipient of the Kristen Keegan Future Leaders Program Scholarship.

The Kristen Keegan Future Leaders Scholarship is a joint initiative between HunterNet and the Hunter Business Chamber, aimed at honouring Kristen's legacy. The Scholarship covers the tuition for one participant as part of the HunterNet Future Leaders Program 2018.

The Assessment Panel, comprised of Anita Hugo (Hunter Business Chamber) and Tony Cade (HunterNet), received a number of high calibre applications from young leaders across the Hunter. Applicants were required to submit a letter, addressing the following criteria:

- What would participation in the program mean to you
- Demonstrate your aspiration to succeed in your chosen pursuit and how financial and moral support would further your education or personal development
- What does the heritage of our region mean to you and how can this be respected while creating the necessary change, innovation and progression to take our region forward

The assessment panel said "We are very pleased to announce that Teegan Bell is the 2018 Kristen Keegan FLP Scholarship recipient. This year's candidates were all of a very high calibre which makes Teegan's success even more significant. We look forward to seeing the benefits this Program brings to Teegan's future development."

Teegan's application detailed her aspirations to become a future leader in the Hunter, highlighting the importance of meaningful working relationships within the local community. She demonstrated a commitment to personal and professional development through

"This year's candidates were all of a very high calibre which makes Teegan's success even more significant. We look forward to seeing the benefits this Program brings to Teegan's future development."

her work coaching cheerleading and gymnastics, along with her career progression at Newcastle Airport.

"I believe that this type of program is leading the way in the Hunter to develop young leaders, outside of the normal study and workplace environments. I believe that being a part of this program is beneficial to self-growth, career development and supporting others" Teegan said.

Teegan is studying a Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice part-time through Open Universities while working full time at Newcastle Airport.

Wind farm approved for the Upper Hunter

The NSW Government has approved a wind farm that will deliver 800 new jobs in the Warrumbungle and Upper Hunter Shire local government areas. The \$642 million Liverpool Range Wind Farm will generate enough to power nearly 500,000 homes.

Situated east of Coolah and northwest of Cassilis, the development will feature 272 turbines and four substations.

It will take three years to build the wind farm that will span 36 km from north to south and 20 km east to west. Once complete, it will be one of the largest wind farms in Australia.

Minister for Planning and Housing Anthony Roberts said the State Significant Development would pour large amounts of money back into the Upper Hunter community.

"It will also offer community funding contributions of up to \$800,000 a year through a voluntary planning agreement with Warrumbungle and Upper Hunter Shire Councils," Mr Roberts said.

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Stylish overhaul for the East End



Hunter Street - Artist Impression

Blue stone footpaths, cobblestone laneways and new outdoor eating and retail opportunities are part of a vision to give Hunter Street East a cool urban feel straight out of Soho New York.

The Hunter Street Newcastle East End Stage One Streetscape Plan will complement the current redevelopment of the David Jones building and nearby projects to reinvigorate two blocks bound by Perkins, Newcomen, King and Scott streets.

Including a safe, separated two-way cycleway, new furnishings, street plantings and street art, the plan stands to reinvent the city's former commercial centre as a tourism, residential and hospitality hub.

Other features of the proposed overhaul include:

- A two-way cycleway separated from traffic and the footpath by an 80 cm island and 30 cm kerb respectively (on Hunter Street's southern side)
- New street trees and furniture with smart city connectivity
- A broad, raised cobblestone pedestrian crossing at Market Street
- A bitumen roadway for westbound traffic with kerb and guttering
- Accessible ramp in Market Street to replace the Morgan Street laneway ramp to make a direct connection to the waterfront from Hunter Street

"This is a very exciting plan for Newcastle," Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said.

"It details a visionary project to support the growth of residential development, boutique retail, hospitality and tourism in Newcastle East.

"It will see Hunter Street revert to a traditional high street with kerb and guttering that better define usages and help attract more residents, students and visitors to the precinct.

"Avenue tree-planting, increased public seating and footpaths with distinctive finishes and historical interpretation will encourage more outdoor dining and create a whole new Soho-like feel with vastly improved connections between the harbour foreshore and Cathedral Park."

If eventually supported, the plan will see the 40km/h speed limit for westbound motorists replace the current 10km/h limit, with parking retained along the northern side of Hunter Street.

The surrounding Laing and Morgan Street laneways are also set for dramatic improvements under the plan.

New retail opportunities, street art, seating and planting could transform the former while detailed paving with interpretative inlays and catenary lighting stand to help the latter flourish as a pedestrian-friendly space.

Also under the plan, the Morgan Street staircase will be reorientated north-south and offer seating on double height stairs next to access stairs.

Shade trees and other plantings along the terraces will make the area a cooler, more attractive place to relax and access Cathedral Park, as a Masterplan to turn it into an open air museum takes shape.

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WITH THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

Let's talk with.....

Michelle CRAWFORD

1. In a few words tell us about your current role.

My title is Chief Conversationalist for Being More Human. I wanted to come up with something that reflected what we as humans do all the time, this was it! It certainly creates some great conversations! I am responsible for the brand's direction, strategy, vision, keynote speaking and content generation. My technical area is Executive Development and Executive Coaching.

2. How have you reached this point in your professional life?

I started life working at humanitarian aid agencies in warzones in Africa, Asia and Europe. From there I went to healthcare and education, then a commercial consulting role across nearly every industry imaginable! The only thing I knew for sure is that I would help people in some way. That has been the theme, through refugee camps, to workplaces, to boardrooms.

3. When you're not at work, where can we find you?

A trip with my kids to every sport imaginable, I'm a huge reader and podcast listener, and I am in cafes a looooot. I don't separate work and home, it is all my life. I love to travel as well, the more exotic the better!

4. Where do you find inspiration?

Normal people, my kids, Richard Branson. I am inspired by anyone who doesn't give up, is focused on the present and future, and who wants to have a positive impact on people around them and the world at large and has figured out that working in their sweet spot is the most eminently sensible thing to do.

5. What advice would you give to someone just starting out in your field?

Do anything, work for nothing, be persistent - you will get your foot in the door! Decide what you want and go for it. I did exactly that and it got me my first lot of jobs. I wish someone had told me that it is action that matters, not a certain kind of action.

6. What's something most people don't know about you?

Years ago, I was in Cambodia and caught in the middle of a military coup. One army was approaching another and I was in the town that they would collide in. I literally believed I was going to die so wrote a letter to my friends and family accordingly. I ended up getting evacuated in a military helicopter and being written about in the SMH! And living to tell the story!



7. How would you like to see the Hunter evolve over the next decade?

I think that there are so many fantastic individual and group efforts happening in the Hunter. However, I think that Extreme Collaboration at a larger scale is not happening as much as it could be and certainly not leveraged. I have a vision for the Hunter that every single action, Individual, Team, Organisational and Community is linked explicitly to the Global Development Goals, to harness alignment at a massive level.

To pull this off, this region would attract so much attention (good for us) and act as a model of how this could be replicated in other locations. Even better, it gives the globe a chance to reach the goals by 2030.

Our brand www.humanpower.com.au is designed for this to happen, we want everyone in the Hunter to be part of it, to reveal the true power of humanity.

8. What's your favourite Hunter restaurant/café/bar?

Hard one, Apothecary Kitchen under Greater Bank

9. Are you reading anything at the moment?

I'm always reading multiple books. I'm writing a book called Being More Human about the five different mindsets that we find ourselves in, which will be out later this year. One book I am reading at the moment is Richard Branson's Finding My Virginity.

10. Do you have a favourite sport or team?

I am so not a classic Novocastrian when it comes to this... Sorry to disappoint! Too busy with my head in a book! I do like live footy games though, the vibe is always fantastic.

11. What's the best line from a film you've ever heard?

Hmmmm not sure, but my favourite film is Blood Diamond, a story about corporate diamond smuggling in West Africa.

#HunterInnovate

MAY 2018 EDITION

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HUNTER WATER TO PILOT TAKADU AS PART OF ITS DRIVE TOWARDS TOTAL EFFICIENCY

The second largest water utility in NSW, Hunter Water Corporation, has selected TaKaDu's Integrated Event Management solution as part of its concerted efforts to achieve total water efficiency. Serving around 600,000 people, Hunter Water is deploying TaKaDu's technology with predictive analytics to give them greater visibility of its water network, tackle data sources and reduce water loss.

Richard Harris, Chief Information Officer at Hunter Water, said, "We are committed to saving water as part of our efforts to provide our customers with affordable products and services."

"To achieve this aim we actively invest in new innovations and by using TaKaDu's technology, we can extract the most value from all our data sources and address all types of issues like leaks, bursts and faults in almost real-time - fixing any problems quickly and preventing service interruptions."

TaKaDu's cloud-based service enables utilities to detect, analyse and manage network events and incidents such as leaks, bursts, faulty assets, telemetry and data issues, operational failures, and more.

Amir Peleg, TaKaDu's Founder & CEO, said, "Hunter Water is recognised as one of the most progressive water utilities in Australia. We're delighted to add them to our global customer base, representing our seventh customer in Australia spanning water utilities across Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales. With the current water situation in Cape Town, it's evident that water is a more critical natural resource than ever, and it's encouraging to see Australian utilities taking important strides towards water efficiency using digital solutions like ours to drive operational change and empower their workforce."

TaKaDu is the central layer for all events detected by its analytics and other alerting systems (acoustic, customer calls, satellite, etc.). The TaKaDu system also integrates with other IT systems, such as work order, CRM and asset management, etc., and interacts with other smart city components for higher efficiency as part of the Smart City global trend.

HUNTER RESEARCHER LEADS NEW CONCUSSION GUIDELINES

HMRI clinical neuropsychologist Dr Andrew Gardner will play a key role in protecting Australian athletes from concussion on the field, with new state-wide guidelines.

As part of a NSW Government grant to Sports Medicine Australia, Dr Gardner will lead a series of more than 30 community workshops aimed at increasing awareness around concussion in a bid to prevent long-term injury.

A member of HMRI's Brain and Mental Health research program, Dr Gardner said he was hopeful new guidelines would increase awareness for first responders.

"The most important point is that we need to recognise when an injury may have been concussion. We don't have to make a diagnosis of concussion, we just have to ensure we're making an informed judgement as soon as possible.

"I truly hope this work will make a difference to the understanding and management of athletes who have sustained a concussion, to ensure that the player's short and long-term welfare is considered every time," Dr Gardner explained.



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LEARNING TO UNLEARN AND SO MUCH MORE

Christina Gerakiteys
UtopiaX and IdeationWorX

A report from the 2018 Front End of Innovation conference held on 23-16 April in Boston, USA.

Day one of the Front End of Innovation is complete. There is so much information to absorb and share. The information comes to you from speakers and workshop presenters, and from other delegates in conversations, both brief and extended. The information flows from you to other delegates in conversation and in participation in interactive activities. This is why nothing will really replace 'being there'. The energy in a face to face conversation isn't replicable online.

This is my fifth FEI. I am addicted to learning and expanding my knowledge and my resource kit. I write innovation programs for organisations and consult with SMEs. I awaken hearts and minds to what is possible. And if I don't have a handle on what is happening I can't inspire those I work with to seek what might be possible in their industry.

Sometimes it's not just what you learn. I present at, or attend, several conferences and summits (at home and internationally) each year. And I read. A lot. So for me it's also about spotting trends and themes. Here's the ones that emerged today.

Transformational Innovation. Most transformational innovations come from outside of a company or organisation. Peter Koen, the founder of the conference stated, "You don't see what you are looking at, you see what you are looking for". And I get it. We've been programmed by our routines and what we experience regularly which makes it difficult to see something with fresh eyes.

I walk. When I am at a conference I make sure my accommodation is at least 40 minutes from the venue. As I walk I observe. People, buildings, horizons, plants, the pavement... everything. When I return home, I take the same skill with me for a few days and see my own city through the eyes of a traveler. If we are going to encourage transformative and disruptive innovation, we need to break the schema. That's why innovation usually comes from people outside the organisation. It is developed by users.

Be Your Own Customer. The recently departed CEO of GE believes the best way to advance industries, particularly the health care industry, is to be your own customer. When developing a Value Proposition that is valuable, we need a customer. Crucial to innovation and business success are the conversations we have with our customers. Talk to people who use the product. Seems ridiculous to even be writing those words yet I have worked with people who make so many assumptions on behalf of the customer it is embarrassing. What we want are outcomes for customers, and they go beyond solutions to problems.

Tactility and Experience. Nothing 'does it' better than experiential learning. Per Kristiansen is the author of Building a Better Business with LEGO Serious Play. LEGO is a great way to express things that you cannot find the words for. It also introduces the concept of play, which frees creativity. It certainly isn't a secret that creativity is one of the most sought-after qualities in C-Suite executives. The beauty of LEGO according to Kristiansen is, "It makes the intangible concrete. We start with the individual. Everyone has the same bricks and everyone is equal".

Unlearning. Magnus Lindkvist, Futurologist, closed the day. Just as important as what we learn, is what we need to unlearn in order to relearn. It's not the first time I've heard this. And it's not the first time I've heard the story of Ignaz Semmelweis, who, in 1847, proposed doctors wash their hands to reduce the

mortality rate in maternity wards.

Semmelweis had no scientific explanation for his findings. Some doctors were even offended at the suggestion their hands were disease carriers. Semmelweis died in a mental asylum and it wasn't until years after his death that his theory was accepted. Had the doctors been willing to unlearn their schema, that everything had to be first proven, countless lives may have been saved.

Day one is complete. I have had numerous meaningful conversations, had important learnings reiterated (after I unlearned them of course) and sated my curious mind. For today. Tomorrow we begin again.



Christina Gerakiteys is a Creativity and Innovation educator. As the founder of Ideation At Work, she inspires hearts and minds to possibility. Christina writes and facilitates Innovation Programs.

NEW PROGRAM PROVIDING LOCAL PROFESSIONALS WITH SKILLS OF THE FUTURE

The legal, accounting and finance professions have been hit hard by tech disruption, with smart software replacing manual tasks like book keeping, more accessible algorithms developed to fight legal battles, and many complex financial, legal and accounting processes becoming automated over the last five to 10 years.

With the list of industries disrupted by tech and AI now longer than the not-yet-disrupted list, local business leaders Michelle Crawford and Christina Gerakiteys have responded by developing a new leadership program Your Relevant Future to support finance, legal and accounting professionals by improving their interpersonal and leadership skills, as well as their human empathy.

Launching in Wickham in June this year, the program provides continuing professional development (CPD) and online continuing legal education (CLE) points and will cover Vision Goals and Purpose; Leveraging Exceptional Leadership; New Ways of Working - Expert to Advisor Transition; The Connected Team and Strategic Collaborations; Wellbeing for Growth; Branding in the New World Order; and Creativity and Innovation.

Michelle Crawford, who runs Being More Human and co-founded Human Power, and Christina Gerakiteys, who heads up UtopiaX and the Hunter Innovation Festival, decided to merge their skills in HR and innovation to develop Your Relevant Future after it became obvious that these industries were ripe for disruption and that market changes brought forward the need for professionals to transition from technicians to trusted advisors.

Christina explains, "Accounting has already undergone huge changes with programs such as Xero, and there are already algorithms being written to fight legal battles in the ether. The rules of engagement in innovation suggest that when you identify a problem, you do your best to solve it".

To register, visit the Your Relevant Future Humanitix page (<http://bit.ly/URF18>) or find out more by contacting Michelle Crawford via www.beingmorehuman.com.au, michellec@beingmorehuman.com.au or on 0432 265 335.

AMPCONTROL CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF MAKING A POWERFUL DIFFERENCE



Neville Sawyer AM, CEO/MD Rod Henderson and Peter Cockbain AM at the Ampcontrol 50th Birthday function at the Newcastle Museum on Thursday 12 April 2018.

April marked a very significant milestone for Hunter-based electrical and electronic engineering company Ampcontrol, who proudly celebrated 50 years in business.

From simple beginnings in a small shed in Newcastle in 1968, Ampcontrol established itself in underground mining, becoming recognised leaders in the design and manufacture of safe and reliable electrical solutions to power and protect Australia's resources sector.

With a complex product offering that serves an essential function in the operation of most Australian mines, Ampcontrol has taken its experience in the highly regulated resources sector and applied its problem solving capabilities across multiple markets, including Australia's growing infrastructure sectors.

Motivated by an innovative, can-do attitude, Ampcontrol's ability to make it happen is what has set this Hunter based company apart and makes its story of resilience and growth so compelling.

"What Ampcontrol is today is the sum of its parts," said Peter Cockbain AM, Ampcontrol Co-Founder and Technical Director.

"In fact, we rely on the team to achieve the outcomes that we plan for the future. I often say, I can't do it, you can't do it, but we can – and it has worked for us for the past 50 years" added Peter.

This half century milestone sees Ampcontrol celebrate its successes with over 450 people across its Hunter operations, representing almost half of its entire employee base.

"As leader of this great organisation, I am proud to represent a fantastic group of people who bring skill, creativity and commitment to our business every day. I am excited about the future and to see where we can go in the next 50 years," said Rod Henderson, Ampcontrol CEO and Managing Director.

Ampcontrol designs and manufactures some of its most complex and innovative products and system solutions from its Hunter operations, with the business winning a Hunter Manufacturing Award in 2017 for Design and only last month, was recognised as Supplier of the Year by NSW Mining.

Ampcontrol celebrated their 50th birthday with local government representatives, past and present employees and customers during an event at the Newcastle Museum on Thursday 12 April, 2018.

It takes experience to develop something this important.

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COUNCIL BEGINS ROLL OUT OF SMART CITY TECH

Infrastructure that will place Newcastle at the forefront of Australian smart cities has started being rolled out across the city, with the first of seven sensor gateways installed at National Park.

A carrier-grade Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) will be installed to provide low cost, low-power connectivity that will support millions of wireless Internet of Things (IoT) sensors and data collecting devices.

This will enable a wide range of smart city applications to improve liveability by:

- helping motorists find parking spaces,
- better integrating transport services,
- helping council better manage park and recreation facilities
- signaling when to collect waste,
- and providing businesses valuable insights.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said the LoRaWAN gateways to be installed would allow businesses and community groups over a wide area of Newcastle (see map) to connect for free and collect valuable data.

"This is a very exciting high-tech development for the city," the Lord Mayor said.

"By investing in this infrastructure, we will provide a platform for community groups, education and research providers, industry, businesses and entrepreneurs to develop their own smart applications and ideas. From collecting information on foot traffic to the state of council-owned sporting ground and enabling community and environmental groups to create their own coal dust sensors, this is a big technological breakthrough for the city. The seven gateways will enable connectivity that would have otherwise been far too costly."

Council's Smart City Coordinator Nathaniel Bavinton said National Narrowband Network Co (NNNCo) had been chosen to install the LoRaWAN based on a track record of deploying carrier-grade networks within infrastructure.

"A smart city needs a carrier-grade network that, as well as supporting community groups, is designed from the beginning for business-case driven IoT solutions that add value to the city and create a sustainable business model," Bavinton said.

"NNNCo has proven its ability to deliver through successful LoRaWAN deployments in Australia and we look forward to a close partnership with them."

NNNCo Founder & CEO Rob Zagarella said Newcastle's network would be the first large-scale LoRaWAN network in Australia.

"Working with Newcastle will enable us to guide other cities to transform their services and infrastructure through carrier-grade LoRaWAN IoT networks and enable these networks to grow across the country," Zagarella said.

"LoRaWAN's capabilities are extremely well suited to smart city requirements and the technology is already used in cities across Europe and the US, where it's proven to be reliable, secure and affordable at scale."

Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter Scot MacDonald said the NSW Government was proud to contribute \$4.98 million to this landmark infrastructure project.

"We are committed to funding vital infrastructure projects that stimulate growth and create investment opportunities for the Hunter," Mr MacDonald said.

"This project is a demonstration of the economic and community benefits of the Hunter Infrastructure Investment Fund."

As well as the National Park installation, LoRaWAN gateways are set to be installed at Newcastle Region Library, Strzelecki Lookout, Fort Scratchley, Beaumont Street Clocktower, Merewether's Townson Oval and Lynn Oval, Stockton, with other suburbs to follow.

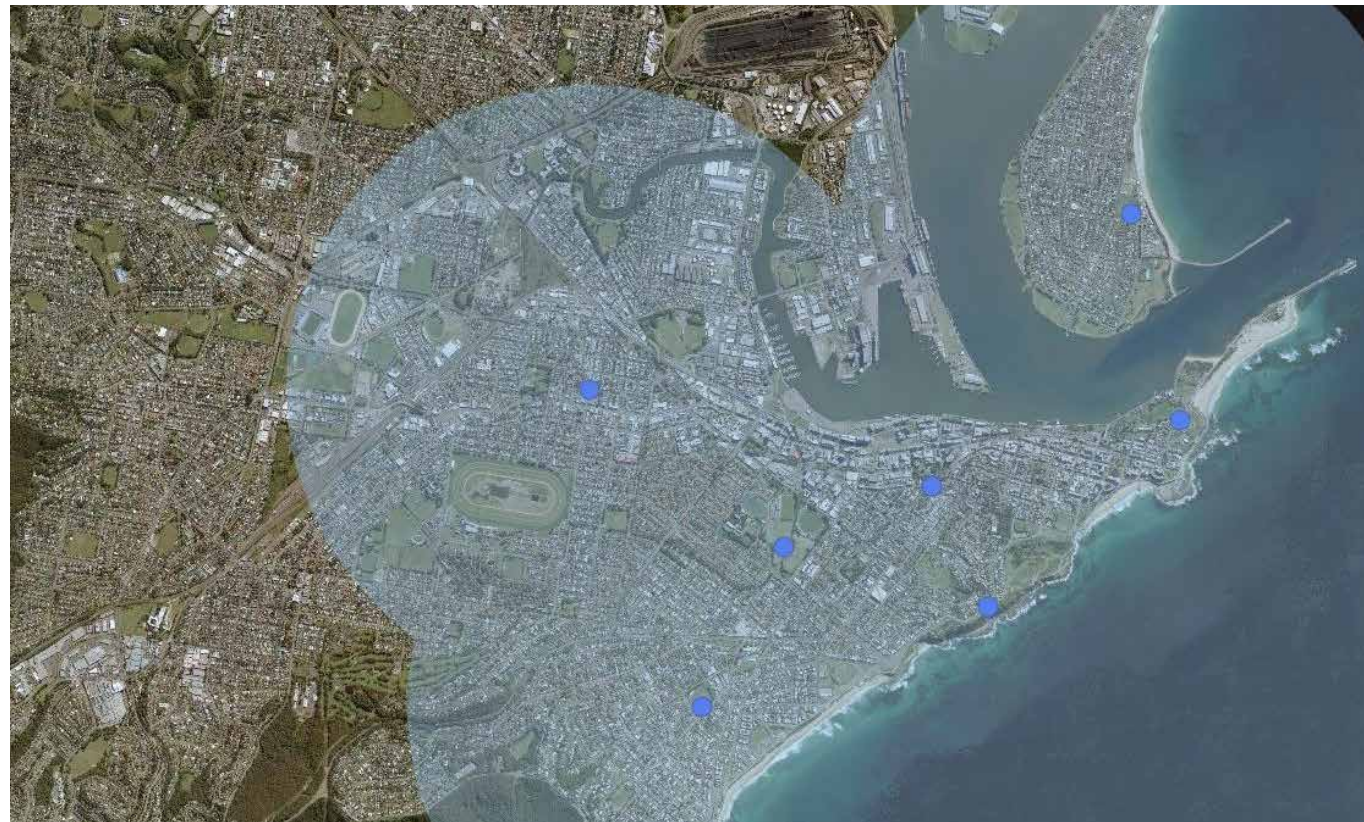
Newcastle City Council adopted the Newcastle Smart City Strategy in July last year. The document outlines an ambitious Council-led collaboration to diversify the regional economy and encourage innovation while attracting investment.

The roll out of the LoRaWAN network is part of the Hunter Innovation Project (HIP), a collaboration between Council, The University of Newcastle, Newcastle Now and Hunter DiGiT.

The Hunter Innovation Project (HIP) is funded by a \$9.8 million commitment from the NSW Government through the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund and an \$8 million contribution from its partners and investors.

The project involves the installation of smart technology and Wi-Fi throughout the city's CBD by 2019 and subsequent innovation hub and digital precinct.

*The Internet of Things is the interconnection via the Internet of computing devices embedded in everyday objects, enabling them to send and receive data.



LOCAL CENTRE UPGRADES UNDERWAY IN CARRINGTON'S MAIN STREET

Carrington will soon become one of Newcastle's first suburbs to offer free Wi-Fi in its local centre. Revitalisation works have commenced in Young Street, bringing improvements to roads, pathways, and parking plus new street trees, bike racks and bins as well as access to free Wi-Fi.

The \$3million upgrades to Carrington's Young St are being funded through Newcastle City Council's local centre renewal program.

"Council continues to deliver on our vision for city-wide urban renewal, setting the direction for growth and revitalisation," said Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes.

"It's really exciting that Carrington together with Beresfield will be the first local centres to have access to free Wi-Fi, through technology being installed as part of our Smart City strategy."

"We want our city's local centres to reflect a sense of place and local character," said the Lord Mayor. "Planning for this project has included extensive community consultation, including the choice of appropriate street tree species for the location, and we have also chosen drainage solutions specific to the area, including permeable paving."

"Young St Carrington is already a strong community hub and the renewal project reflects the expectations of the community and Council for a vibrant centre."

Council consulted with the Carrington community to hear their ideas and ensure that what they value about Young St is maintained and this feedback was incorporated into the public domain plan for the area.



Young St render courtesy NCC

AUSTRALIA HAS 5 LANDING PADS GLOBALLY

Christina Gerakiteys
UtopiaX and IdeationWorX

What's a Landing Pad?

Landing Pads provide market-ready Australian startups with access to some of the world's most renowned innovation and startup ecosystems.

I was in San Francisco in April and met with Gabe Sulkes who oversees the Australian Landing there. Based at WeWork, successful applicants claim a desk, effectively giving them a 90-day operational base. There are five Landing pads globally - Berlin, San Francisco, Shanghai, Singapore and Tel Aviv.

It's an immersive environment and experience, designed to help startups grow their business by facilitating in-market business development, introductions to investors and mentor networks and strategic business opportunities. Participants benefit from Austrade's business services and in-market learnings from local and international experts.

The program is designed to help startups go global. If you want to apply, you need to demonstrate traction, scalability and the unique selling proposition of your venture.

I asked the current cohort how they were funding their accommodation and expenses and most said they had budgeted around \$12K for the 90 days. With rents rising due the continuous influx of people into Silicon Valley, most had found reasonable accommodation through Airbnb.

And as most people with diverse skills find when they are thrown into a room together, the collective brains trust was invaluable when it came to obstacles and problems that needed solving.

The Australian Landing Pads enable startups to rapidly fine-tune their pitch, commercialise their offering, identify partners, customers and investors, and access global markets. For more information visit <https://www.australiaunlimited.com/LandingPads>

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NEED A BREAK?

The many benefits of upgrading your airfare

Adam Pearson
Escape Travel

When travelling by air, there can be a temptation to shop around for the cheapest airfare, particularly in today's online world where an array of options are at your fingertips.

But remember, the cheapest option does not necessarily mean the best deal or best value and invariably does not provide the best experience.

With such a wide array of possibilities, a travel consultant can be a great ally in sifting through the available options and come up with a solution that will best suit your circumstances and provide real value.

One aspect that travellers sometimes do not properly evaluate is upgrading from economy class to business class or first class.

We all probably have some idea of the more visible advantages in terms of comfort when travelling, but upgrades provide a variety of advantages that are often overlooked.

Some of these advantages of upgrading include:

- A larger luggage allowance – usually 30 kg for business class and 40 kg for first class against around 20 kg for economy
- A dedicated check-in line at the airport which saves you having to line up with hundreds of economy class passengers
- Business and First Class passengers are usually entitled to an Express Pass through Customs
- Once through Customs you can enjoy your pre-flight time in a private airline lounge with complimentary food and beverage and quite often wi-fi internet service.
- At boarding time a special announcement is made in the lounge allowing you enough time to proceed to the gate where you join a dedicated First/Business Class boarding line.
- Once on board you are directed to your seat and typically greeted with a glass of orange juice, champagne or similar.
- Substantially more space- business class passengers could have up to three windows between each row of seats instead of one in economy class. You can sit down, stretch your legs out and not touch the seat in front.
- Your tray table is 'set' at meal times with a linen table cloth, real cutlery, plates and glassware. Dinner is a choice that is cooked individually and wines are selected from a premium wine list. Dining time is flexible.
- Your chair becomes a bed (depending on the airline), reclining to a flat surface.
- Some airlines actually make up your chair into a bed complete with pillow, sheets and blankets for you to sleep in



provided pyjamas so not to crumple your clothes.

- Business Class passengers receive priority disembarkation and, if in transit, have a lounge to go to where complimentary food, beverages and shower/toilet facilities are available.
- On completion of your journey, your luggage comes out first - all First/Business Class luggage is tagged 'Priority'.
- Some airlines offer a complimentary chauffeur service to or from the airport (within a certain radius)
- Most Business/First class fares offer bonus frequent flyer points – often double and sometimes triple that received when travelling economy class.
- And above all else, start your holiday and finish your holiday in much better shape.

So next time you are planning air travel, make sure you at least consider upgrading your flight for the wide range of benefits it provides and a much more enjoyable experience all round.

For further information on upgrades and other travel tips, contact Escape Travel on (02) 4959 8666 or email adam.pearson@escapetravel.com.au



Born and bred in Newcastle, **Adam Pearson** and his father opened Harvey World Travel together 21 years ago, before rebranding to Escape Travel a few years ago. Mr Pearson and his wife Fiona took over the business in 2015 and operate from five Hunter offices. In the 29 years he has been in the travel industry Mr Pearson has helped thousands of Novocastrians take amazing holidays.

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Who is responsible for the culture in your business?

Scott Douglas
SIDCOR Chartered Accountants

The recent Australian Cricket controversy may have been about ball tampering and alleged cheating, however what came into focus very quickly was an aspect that effects business at every level, and that is culture.

In a business context, culture is the unwritten way your team go about their day to day responsibilities. It is reflective of the behaviours, beliefs and communication styles of the people in your organisation.

Through clarity of your vision, values and the people you hire into your team, you can be more deliberate in what your culture looks like and create a standard for how everyone in the business acts with customers, the community and each other.

What appeared to be lacking with the Australian Cricket team were those clear guidelines on how the team were expected to act, their core values if you will, which would act as their guiding principles to whatever situation may have arose. Those in power, from the CEO to the coach, were responsible for establishing this through their leadership, however the culture existing appeared to be more reactive and based on winning, than the continuation of a more proactive, deliberate approach to the behaviour they expected of the team.

Who is responsible for leading the culture in your business? Have you made a deliberate choice as to what you want the culture to look like, and are you setting expectations and hiring accordingly within your team to match that. If not, you are running your business through rules not principles, and although you may get compliance, a strong culture empowers your team to respond to any situation from those principles, regardless whether its covered in the rule book. For the Australian cricket team, this would have prevented any suggestion of sandpaper to be used on a cricket ball from ever leaving the dressing shed.

For further information contact SIDCOR on 1300 743 267, email scott@sidcor.com.au or visit www.sidcor.com.au



Scott Douglas, the CEO at SIDCOR Chartered Accountants, has over 20 years' experience in accounting and taxation, having begun his career with international accounting firm KPMG. With extensive experience in a variety of industries and with all types of businesses from local entrepreneurs to national organisations, Scott is perfectly suited to provide solutions needed to minimise tax and maximise wealth. Scott has a Bachelor of Commerce from Newcastle University and is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Safe harbour and directors' liability for insolvent trading

Sam Roberts
Roberts Legal

On 19 September 2017 amendments, to the Corporations Act 2001 commenced which create a "safe harbour" for Directors to protect them from personal liability for debts incurred by an insolvent company in certain circumstances.

Why the need for safe harbour

Prior to the amendments, the provisions of the Corporations Act governing corporate insolvency focused on the need for Directors to appoint Voluntary Administrators of a company if they suspected that the company was insolvent in order to avoid the risk of the Director being found personally liable for debts that the company incurred whilst it was trading insolvently. The appointment of a Voluntary Administrator is frequently followed by the appointment of a Liquidator and results in the total loss of any goodwill of the business of a company and the fire sale of assets and little or no recovery of debts for unsecured creditors.

The purpose of the safe harbour provisions is to encourage a culture of restructuring in Australia by offering protection to Directors who are proactively taking steps to achieve a better outcome for the company than the outcome likely to flow from the immediate appointment of an Administrator or Liquidator.

Insolvent trading & directors' personal liability

Under Sections 588G(2) and 588M of the Corporations Act, a Director of a company to whom the safe harbour provisions do not apply is personally liable for loss or damage that a creditor suffers in relation to a debt where:

1. The company was insolvent at that time the debt was incurred, or became insolvent by incurring the debt
2. There were reasonable grounds for suspecting that the company was insolvent or would so become insolvent
3. The Director was aware at that time that there were such

grounds for so suspecting, or a reasonable person in a like position would be so aware.

When is a company insolvent

Generally, the test for determining whether a company is insolvent is whether the company is able to meet its debts as and when they fall due.

What is "Safe Harbour"?

A Director will be safe harbour from the provisions of Section 588G(2) of the Corporations Act if:

1. At a particular time after the Director starts to suspect the company may become or be insolvent, the Director starts developing one or more courses of action that are reasonably likely to lead to a better outcome for the company, and
2. The debt is incurred directly or indirectly in connection with any such course of action during the safe harbour period.

As safe harbour may, however, apply from the time that a Director suspects that a company is or may become insolvent, it is recommended that Directors act promptly to ensure the safe harbour applies as soon as they have any concerns about the company's ability to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

What is a better outcome?

"Better outcome" for the company, means an outcome that is better for the company than the immediate appointment of an Administrator, or Liquidator, of the company.

The early evaluation of the company's financial position and an assessment of the likely outcome of the Administration or Liquidation of the company are essential for maintaining safe harbour protection and assessing whether proposed courses of action are reasonably likely to lead to a better outcome.

What is restructuring?

Restructuring is a corporate management term for action taken to reorganise or change operations, structures or financial accommodation of a company for the purpose of making it more profitable, better organised for its present needs or the elimination of financial harm.

Conditions for Safe Harbour Protection

A Director will not be eligible for safe harbour protection in relation to a debt if, when the debt is incurred, the company is failing to:

1. Pay the entitlements of its employees (including superannuation), by the time they fall due, or
2. Meet its taxation law reporting requirements, and such failure amounts to less than substantial compliance with the relevant matter or is one of two or more such failures by the company during the 12 month period prior to the debt being incurred

Period of safe harbour protection

The safe harbour protections will, subject to the above conditions, commence when a Director who has begun to suspect that the company may become or be insolvent starts developing a course of action that is reasonably likely to lead to a better outcome for the company and will continue thereafter until the earlier of the following times:

1. If the Director fails to take any such course of action within a reasonable period after that time – the end of that reasonable period,
2. When the Director ceases to take any such course of action,
3. When any such course of action ceases to be reasonably likely to lead to a better outcome for the company, and
4. The date of appointment of an Administrator, or Liquidator, of the company.

Appropriately qualified advisors

The obtaining of advice from an appropriately qualified entity is one of the circumstances that the courts may consider in working out whether a course of action is reasonably likely to lead to a better outcome for the company. There is, however, no definition of 'appropriately qualified entity' in the Corporations Act.

An appropriately qualified entity would conceivably include:

- A business accountant
- An insolvency lawyer
- An insolvency practitioner
- A turnaround management specialist
- Other business advisors.

Implications for accountants, lawyers and other advisors

Accountants, lawyers and other advisors who have an ongoing retainer or relationship with a company and its Directors need to be wary that their common law duty of care owed to Directors now extends to advising Directors in relation to:

- the available safe harbour laws, and
- the need to promptly develop and implement a

Restructuring Plan if the Director suspects insolvency.

Where insolvency is suspected, advisors would also be expected to act promptly to assist Directors to invoke the safe harbour protections and to develop and implement a Restructuring Plan within a reasonable time.

From a litigator's perspective, advisors who are not familiar with safe harbour protections, and/or who fail to provide Directors of companies with appropriate advice at the earliest possible time face the risk of actions for professional negligence by Directors against whom a claim for insolvent trading might subsequently be brought by a Liquidator of the company. Significantly, as the requirements for invoking safe harbour are relatively low, it is likely that in most cases Directors might have been easily able to invoke safe harbour protections had appropriate advices been given and that, therefore, the risk for advisors who fail to give appropriate advice is significant.

In order to assist accountants, general practitioners and other business advisors to provide appropriate early advice to Directors, Roberts Legal have developed a short Information Sheet: 'Safe Harbour, What Directors who suspect Insolvency should do' and sample Safe Harbour Resolution available on request, which we recommend be provided to Director clients promptly if there is any reason to suspect that the company is or may become insolvent.

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER: This article is intended to provide comment and information of a general nature only and is not legal advice. Whilst the information was accurate on the day of publication the law may have changed since that date. Roberts Legal is not responsible for any actions taken or not taken on the basis of this information. You should obtain specific legal advice on any matters of interest or concern arising from this content.



Sam Roberts is the founder and Managing Director of Roberts Legal. He is one of only four accredited specialists in commercial litigation in the Hunter and Central Coast regions and is the team leader for the Commercial Litigation, Building & Construction and Insolvency & Restructuring teams at Roberts Legal.

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NEWCASTLE ART GALLERY

Lauretta Morton has been appointed as Director at the Newcastle Art Gallery. Lauretta has over 35 years' experience in the visual arts and creative industries. Morton's relationship with Newcastle Art Gallery began as an exhibiting artist in the 1990s. Her expertise and commitment as an arts administrator later earned her several key positions at the gallery - exhibitions coordinator and touring exhibitions manager, assistant director, art gallery manager and art gallery director.



RDA HUNTER

Federal Minister for Regional Development, Territories and Local Government **John McVeigh** has announced **John Turner** as the new chair of Regional Development Australia (RDA) Hunter. Mr Turner has a history of activity in the Hunter region, having been on Greater Cessnock City Council, the Member for Myall Lakes and establishing a number of businesses in the area. He has been a member of Regional Development Australia Hunter for three years, first as Deputy Chair then as Acting Chair.



DIAMOND IT

Diamond IT has welcomed **Glendin Franklin-Browne** to their management team to head up their Technology Consulting offering. Glendin has worked across a breadth of industries including local government, professional services, not for profit and more recently entertainment and hospitality. He has worked with leading organisations such as Uniting Care, Hunter Water, Integrated Living Australia, Leah Jay Property Management and The Wests Group.



NEWCASTLE MUSEUM

Julie Baird has been appointed as director of the Newcastle Museum. Julie has over 25 years' professional experience in the museum sector. She has worked at Newcastle Museum since 2002. Her career has focused on spreading knowledge about history and museums in unusual or popularised forums, working with diverse communities such as embroidery guilds, pay TV audiences, female prisoners, bike clubs and punk bands.



BAKER LOVE LAWYERS

Baker Love Lawyers is proud to announce that experienced legal practitioner, and former Newcastle Deputy Lord Mayor, **Jason Dunn**, is returning to the firm. Bringing a number of years' of legal experience to Baker Love, Jason will deliver expertise in property law, estate planning and commercial transactions to the firm's clients. This is not the first time Jason has been part of the firm, having worked with Baker Love from 2012 to 2014.



NCIG

Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group (NCIG) has appointed **Phil Garling** as the new Chairman of its Board. Phil succeeds Michael Egan who chaired the NCIG board for seven years. Phil has an impressive background in the mining, energy, property and infrastructure sectors through executive leadership and board positions. He is eager to use his experience gleaned in these roles over the past 30 years to support NCIG as Chairman.



Looming crisis in land values

\$100 and 1.6% of the land value between the threshold and the premium rate threshold, \$3,846,000, and 2% after that.

For the Newcastle local government area, a minimum charge of \$896.30 is levied, plus a waste charge of \$231.58. Additionally, there is a \$25 per 350 square metres of land fee for stormwater services that totals \$1,152.88.

Then 1.6681% of the value of property plus an extra special levy depending on your location will apply in some areas.

That means for every \$100,000 of land value increase above the threshold you or your tenants need to find \$3,266.81. This impost is an extra charge that shouldn't be sniffed at by landowners.

However, spare a thought for Hunter Street owners where land value has surged from \$820,000 to \$1,850,000 in one year. This increase equates to an extra \$33,648.14 in land tax.

The moral of the story is that whether you're a tenant or an owner, monitor your land value and remember you only have 60 days from receiving your notice to register an objection.

For further information contact Steve Dick on 0425 302 771, email steve@rhplus.com.au or visit www.rhplus.com.au.



Steven Dick has had a varied background with experiences in geotechnical engineering to hospitality and catering. He also represented at NBL Level Basketball. His expertise, experience and analytical skills have seen him involved with a number of companies at board level. He has also attained the highest level of recognition in the LJ Hooker and Raine & Horne Commercial Organisations.

Steve Dick Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle

In my 25 years of selling and leasing real estate, I have learned a few valuable lessons.

One lesson involved never trusting an owner who provides only a verbal estimate of a property's outgoings. Remember outgoings can include council and water rates, insurance, land tax and body corporate fees. There will also be management fees, non-structural maintenance such as cranes, air conditioning, other plant and equipment, gardening, fire safety and so on.

My client, let's call him John, told me his outgoings were no more than \$7,000 p.a. These expenses were passed on to the tenant and the solicitors and a lease for \$55,000 p.a. plus outgoings and GST was prepared, signed and the tenant happily moved in. The building was on a busy road which the tenant needed for their business.

As we were appointed to manage the property, we required copies of all the outgoings. We finally pulled this information together and to our horror, and the surprise of the tenants, the outgoings were \$26,000 p.a. – almost half the value of the rent.

Why were they so out of kilter? Over time John was patting himself on the back congratulating himself every year as his land value came in – and was perpetually increasing. It was a great buy, and the government was proving that to him.

However what John failed to realise was that each time his land rose in value so did his land tax and council rates as both imposts are tied to the value of the property. The only properties that won't incur a land tax impost are:

- your home
- your farm, known as primary production land
- any land with a value below the taxable threshold

How is land tax calculated?

Land tax is calculated against the total value of your taxable land above the threshold, which is \$629,000. The amount of tax paid is

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New Greenfield Code welcomed

The Property Council has welcomed the State Government’s new Greenfield Housing Code that allows one and two storey homes, renovations and extensions to be carried out under a fast-track complying development approval.

The changes start on 6 July 2018 and will save councils, industry and homeowners time without compromising on outcome. The new Code will be included in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes 2008).

“Housing codes are something the Property Council has long advocated for to ensure good, high quality development can be provided more quickly; codes are important to increase housing supply and bring down home prices,” Property Council NSW Executive Director Jane Fitzgerald.

“In essence; it is a simplifying of the development process and aligning the requirements for development across greenfield areas; the planning rules and the code are also presented in plain English to clearly explain planning rules.

“Complying development is faster than traditional development applications, taking about 20 days compared to 71 days as it

meets already agreed stringent standards and local council zoning requirements which means high quality development in the right places.

“Homeowners can also save \$15,000 on new homes built under the Code, reducing pressure on home prices.”

Hunter-based Compass Housing expands into Sydney with tender win

Hunter-based community housing provider Compass Housing has won a major tender to manage 335 social and affordable housing properties in Sydney.

Not for profit property developer BlueCHP Limited issued the tender to have a single provider of tenancy management, property maintenance and asset management services.

BlueCHP currently provides some services and has community housing providers undertake some services for the portfolio.

Most of the BlueCHP properties that Compass will manage are in Western Sydney. Compass will manage the properties from July 1 and the tender will initially run for three years. Approximately 75% of the portfolio is affordable housing and 25% social housing. There may be more properties added to the portfolio as the tender progresses.

Compass Housing group managing director Greg Budworth said the tender was important for its expansion into Sydney.

It takes the number of properties managed by Compass to approximately 4,800.

“Having our integrated tenancy management and property management expertise in both social and affordable housing recognised outside of the Hunter is very satisfying,” Mr Budworth said.

“It is a credit to our high skilled team,” he said.

“Expanding our services creates economies of scale and efficiencies that benefit our services and tenants in the Hunter, central Coast and other regions in which we operate,” he said.

BlueCHP assists in the growth of community housing by providing affordable and subsidised housing solutions to people on low to moderate income and families in housing stress. It is a Tier 1 Community Housing Provider, under the National Registration Scheme for Community Housing (NRSCH). During its 10 years of operation it has delivered 1700 dwellings, retaining 750 which are home to more than 1,300 people.

Compass Housing is based in the Hunter and has grown to be an international community housing provider managing more than 4,800 properties in Australia, New Zealand and Vanuatu.

Property industry confidence reaches record high

Confidence across Australia’s property industry has surged to its highest level in the six year history of the ANZ/Property Council Survey according to results of expectations for the June 2018 quarter.

The survey is the largest of its type and measures the views of more than 1,000 property industry professionals across the country. It provides valuable insight into sentiment in the property industry which employs 1.4 million Australians and supports the wages of more than one in four Australians.

“Given the economic significance of the Australian property industry, the results from this survey are cause for optimism,” said Ken Morrison, Chief Executive of the Property Council of Australia.

“Getting the policy settings right for the property industry such as better planning, cutting red tape and providing policy certainty don’t cost the budget bottom line but does deliver a real boost to confidence which in turn drives investment, expenditure and employment,” Mr Morrison said.

The national confidence index for the June quarter has climbed four points to 143 – the highest on record. A score of 100 is considered neutral.

After negative sentiment around the Federal Government’s performance for the past six quarters, there has been a lift for the June 2018 quarter from across all the states and territories surveyed with a matching rise in confidence in the national economic outlook.

“We’re seeing confidence across the industry at elevated levels in all states and territories, with South Australia, Queensland and the ACT the stand-outs in terms of improvement this quarter. Expectations around economic growth in South Australia and Queensland have especially strengthened this quarter.”

Australia-wide, there are positive expectations around capital growth for retirement, office, industrial and hotel property, although a drop for retail which is reflected across all the markets surveyed. Housing prices are expected to increase in all capitals except Sydney.

Sentiment around construction activity in the retirement, hotels, office and industrial sectors is strongest, with a decline in retail and a slight lift in residential. Sentiment for residential construction is down 4.9 points and 12 points for retail over the 12 month period to June 2018.

There is a widespread expectation of an increase in interest rates during the next 12 months although the survey shows less concern about the availability of debt finance than the last quarter.

Cities and infrastructure is now the most critical issue for the Federal Government, surpassing economic growth. This is followed by housing affordability, economic growth, tax reform, energy efficiency and global capital.

Daniel Gradwell, ANZ Senior Economist, said the June quarter survey result shows that the optimism in the property sector has continued into 2018. Nationwide confidence rose to the highest level on record, with improvement across all states and territories.

“The convergence across the country continues. We have previously highlighted the trend improvements in Western Australia and Queensland, but South Australia has been a quiet achiever, and is now the most optimistic region in Australia,” Mr Gradwell said.

“The outlook for the housing sector is improving. Expected construction activity has slowly picked up, and a large backlog of work will underpin activity this year. Price expectations are also stabilising in positive territory, with the exception of New South Wales.

“But it’s not all smooth sailing. The retail sector has been under pressure for some time, and respondents are increasingly pessimistic about the outlook for the next 12 months. Expectations of price growth and construction activity are falling, and any improvement feels some time away,” Mr Gradwell said.

RECENT SALES

70-72 Broadmeadow Road, Broadmeadow Terrace
\$1,910,000

Two attached fully refurbished showrooms with a 5 year lease back and \$80,000 per annum net income over 43% of the building. Estimated \$140,000 per annum net fully leased income.

SOLD BY: Knight Frank

39 Bonville Ave, Thornton
\$2,550,000 + GST

Warehouse with loading docks & at-grade access sold to an owner occupier.

SOLD BY: Steven Dick – Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle

467-469 Pacific Highway, Belmont
\$2,700,000

Two fully leased detached single storey buildings with high exposure to the Pacific highway. Net passing income of \$164,557 per annum.

SOLD BY: Knight Frank

16 Channel Road, Mayfield
\$3,650,000

Located within the Steel River Industrial Estate, the subject property benefits from direct access to major arterial roads leading to Sydney, the North Coast and the Upper Hunter Valley. Lease until 2022.

SOLD BY: Knight Frank

Heritage Parc, Rutherford
N/A

Seniors living development site located within the Heritage Parc residential community.

SOLD BY: Knight Frank

35-37 Watt Street, Newcastle
\$2,685,000

Located on a prominent corner in Newcastle East currently utilised as a 17 room boarding house.

SOLD BY: Knight Frank

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FOR LEASE

THORNTON

30 Glenwood Drive, Thornton (Unit 3)

Modern tilt panel industrial unit featuring approx. 204m² of warehousing plus air-conditioned offices and mezzanine storage. Auto high clearance roller door and onsite car spaces are also a feature of this neat property.

Lease: \$29,500pa + OGs + GST

PAUL TILDEN 0425 302 772

FOR SALE

RUTHERFORD

339 New England Highway, Rutherford

This 18,590m² site includes 4,620m² of warehouse, showroom, offices and workshops with huge exposure to the highway.

Sale: Expressions of interest - Closing 13th July 2018

STEVE DICK 0425 302 771

FOR LEASE

HAMILTON

24 Beaumont Street (Suite 1), Hamilton

Well located ground floor office featuring reception, boardroom, office & (2) training rooms + plus added bonus of 3 undercover car parks.

Lease: \$70,000 + OGs + GST

JASON MORRIS 0425 302 778

FOR SALE

CARDIFF

84 Munibung Road, Cardiff

Well exposed industrial complex comprises a warehouse, office/showroom & display area, reception plus mezzanine warehouse, lunch room and office.

Sale: \$3,700,000 + GST

ALAN TONKS 0425 302 770

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MARYVILLE

1 Edwin Street, Maryville

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MATT NELSON 0425 302 776

FOR LEASE

NEWCASTLE EAST


21 Parnell Place, Newcastle East

Located in Parnell place Newcastle East, the first floor space has the potential to be a unique office space with un-paralleled views of the harbour.

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STEVE COX 0425 302 773





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This property has it all, featuring:


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- Rear loading dock with lockup garage
- Mezzanine level for office space
- Air-conditioning
- Full amenities
- Prime shop front and large window displays

Ideal for numerous uses (STCA)

Please call **Brendan Sarroff** on **0400 986 779** or Matthew Higgins on 0403 706 042 now to discuss this awesome investment opportunity.

THORNTON

FOR SALE
\$56,000pa + Outgoings + GST



RARE DUAL WORKSHOP FACILITY

The subject property is located on the northern side of Wood-ford Place, within the popular Thornton Industrial Estate. The property is positioned within close proximity to major arterial-roads including the New Eng-land Highway, the Pacific High-way, the Hunter Expressway and the M1 Pacific Motorway.

Unit one at the front of the property consists of reception, three private offices downstairs and a large open office area upstairs, all air-conditioned. There is also a kitch-en/lunchroom and amenities with a shower, and the work-shop has access through two roller doors.

Unit two at the rear of the property consists of a lunch-room/office with air-conditioning, kitchen area and amenities. The workshop has access from a single roller door and has three phase power.

Please call **Brendan Sarroff** on **0400 986 779** to discuss this awesome investment property.

P: 4933 6299 W: starrpartners.com.au

Blockchain application centre set to make the Hunter a major technology location

Australian stock exchange listed The IOT Group has partnered with Hunter Energy to recommission The Redbank power station at Singleton and established Australia's first Blockchain Application Centre which will supply Blockchain operators with electricity at wholesale prices.

They have also announced that two cryptocurrency miners have already been signed up.

To use conventional banking as an analogy, the Blockchain is like a full history of a financial institution's transactions, and each block is like an individual bank statement. As it is a distributed database system, serving as an open electronic ledger, a Blockchain can simplify business operations for all parties. For these reasons, the technology is attracting not only financial institutions and stock exchanges, but many others in the fields of music, diamonds, gold, power, insurance, and Internet of Things (IoT) devices. Advocates have also suggested that this kind of electronic ledger system could be usefully applied to voting systems, weapon or vehicle registrations by state governments, medical records, or even to confirm ownership of valuable items such as artwork.

While banks and financial institutions were initially hesitant to explore these technologies, they have now started looking into how the Blockchain might provide generous cost savings by allowing back-office settlement systems to process trades, transfers and other transactions much faster.

IOT is building a 2 hectare commercial premises facility at the Hunter Energy Power station to house blockchain and data centres. The power station has a capacity of 150 MW and will provide pre-grid prices of just 8 cents per kWh, dropping to 5 cents at night time. Typically consumers pay around 28 cents per kWh.

Hunter Energy will transform, build Tesla Battery, will build Solar energy and renewable energy. Hunter Energy aims to build green energy over the next three years.

There reportedly been high demand for space at the complex with two deals secured and a wide range of interest from across the globe.

Executive Director and Founder of IOT Group Limited, Sean Neylon said “The interest in our Blockchain Applications Complex has been extremely high.”

We welcome both companies and look forward to working with them."

This deal will generate long term revenue and profit for IOT from the supply of power and the rental space within the BAC."

It is expected that IOT will secure agreements for at least 10 megawatts of Power in Q2 of this year with further expansion on this during Q3 and Q4 2018.

"10 MW of power with contracts for up to 9 years generates long term revenue and profit for IOT and builds shareholder value in the company."

Hunter lawyer develops Australian-first construction payments app

A Hunter lawyer is behind a new, Australian first, App to help those in the construction industry to get paid.

The Australian first SOPA (Security of Payment Act) Toolbox App has been developed by Director of Keystone Lawyers, and expert in construction law, Lou Stojanovski.

Mr Stojanovski said he developed SOPA Toolbox because he continues to see contractors miss out on progress payments because they are unaware of the security of payments system and deadlines. He also sees builders fail to respond to claims on time forcing them to make payment on claims they would otherwise dispute. He said the App reminds builders and subcontractors of the deadlines and takes them through every step in what can be a complex process.

"The App interprets the flow of the legislation for users, guides them through the steps in the process and provides downloadable relevant documents," Mr Stojanovski said.

"Important dates are automatically stored on the user's calendar and reminders prompt you what do next," he said.

"SOPA Toolbox takes the guess work out so you don't miss out on getting paid."

"it is a must have tool for everyone in the construction industry Australia-wide."

He said cash flow is critical in business. The App is very cost effective because it saves the cost of a lawyer unless people really need one.

"SOPA Toolbox is time saving too; putting information at people's fingertips, wherever they happen to be."

The Act gives all contractors undertaking construction work and suppliers of goods or services the right to receive 'progress payments' for work performed. It sets down maximum payment deadlines and the option of adjudication if payment is not made on time.

The App is configured for variations in the legislation across each Australian state and territory. It is currently available for iPhone users via iTunes and an Android version is being finalised. Users receive a free trial run through before subscribing to the full features.

Mr Stojanovski warns that the App doesn't replace the importance of carefully reading contracts but said it is a simple tool that can track progress claims and responses to help ensure people get paid on time.



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Common cyber security blunders threaten SMEs

Small business owners are predominantly focused on major breaches to their business data, unaware that the real threats to their cyber security occur on a more micro scale, according to recent research undertaken by Servcorp.

With an increasing number of business activities moving online, more businesses are finding themselves burdened with financial losses, damaged reputations and serious threats to their customers' data that result from common cyber security compromises.

Alarmingly, 77% of small business owners whom consider technology to be critical to their business have done things that could compromise the security of their IT system, exposing themselves and their customers to costly consequences.

The study also revealed businesses employing five or more staff members were found to be much more likely to have been affected by a virus (60%) than those that do not employ additional staff members (29%).

Small business owners perceive the greatest threats to their business data and email to be viruses (78%), malware (63%) and spyware (51%), however, two thirds of SMEs (66%) have unknowingly exposed themselves a data breach; compromising the security of their IT systems, customer data and databases.

Despite one in three small business owners (36%) referencing technology as critical to their operations, they admitted to the following:

- Downloading files from a USB stick (49%)
- Using the same password for multiple internet sites (39%)
- Opening an attachment in an email from an unknown source (11%)

"These findings reinforce the need for business owners to ensure that their facilities and associated IT services are managed and operated in a secure manner. Data security is easy to overlook, especially when business owners' first priority is generally sales and business management," Liane Gorman, Servcorp General Manager ANZ said.

"Data security and compliance are vital to the management of any business. If you are a business you need to ensure your infrastructure has sufficient measures in place to protect information and IT systems, provide secure access to internet services and maintain the security of the workspace.

"For our clients, it's part of the reason they look to a serviced office solution – it offers surety, security and stability in their operations. It is not enough for workplaces to simply rely on a secure internet connection or refer to a procedure document when they employ staff. Especially in lieu of the recent changes to the Notifiable Data Breach laws."



Are you set up to manage the Notifiable Data Breaches Scheme?

Ollie Schofield
Nettko

What is the Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) Scheme?

The NDB scheme is new legislation that requires businesses to notify the Australian Information Commissioner, and any affected individuals, of any data breaches that occur within a business that is likely to result in 'serious harm'. Serious harm can be psychological, emotional, physical, reputational or any other forms of harm. The scheme provides affected individuals with an opportunity to take steps to protect their personal information following a breach.

What is an eligible breach under the NDB scheme?

An eligible data breach occurs when three criteria are met:

1. There is unauthorised access to, or unauthorised disclosure of personal information, or a loss of personal information that an entity holds
2. This is likely to result in serious harm to one or more individuals, and
3. The entity has not been able to prevent the likely risk of serious harm with remedial action.

How do you work towards preventing serious harm through breaches?

- Intrusion Detection and Prevention: Implement software that continually watches for attempts at unauthorised intrusions, that blocks them automatically and alerts you when spotted.
- Implement anti-virus and anti-phishing solutions that have entire teams devoted to watching your devices.
- Prevent access to questionable websites with content and web-search filtering. Customise lists of sites to prevent these from being accessed by users within a network or VPN.
- Use advanced Malware Protection to protect your network and devices from harmful spyware, adware and ransomware being downloaded onto your devices.
- Protect unauthorised access using Office 365 with Multi-factor Authorisation i.e. staff will receive a message to their mobile when they sign-in at a different location or PC on their Office 365 account.
- Prevent malicious links, attachments and files being opened by staff with solutions that protect your business from threats. Receive a report on blocked links, understand their source and become proactive on what to avoid on the web.
- Secure your files, emails and associated content with a 'Rights and Information Management' solution that has custom policies to encrypt your data and sets document access and function levels.



Not sure if the NDB relates to your business?

The NDB scheme applies to any organisation that the Privacy Act 1988 requires to take steps to secure certain categories of personal information. This includes:

- Australian Government agencies
- All businesses and not-for-profit organisations with an annual turnover of \$3 million or more
- All private sector health service providers
- Those that trade in personal information
- Some TFN recipients
- Those that hold personal information in relation to certain activities.

However, even if your business doesn't turnover \$3 million annually, it is important to protect your customers' data from any vulnerabilities within your system. We recommend all businesses undergo a security assessment to identify any gaps or potential risks.

To coordinate a free security assessment or for any questions, contact Nettko on 1300 NETTKO (1300 638 856). For more information on the NDB Scheme, visit the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner website at www.oaic.gov.au.



Ollie Schofield is an Account Manager employed at Newcastle's Cloud Specialist company, Nettko. Since 2012, Ollie and his team have been helping hundreds of businesses across Australia move their business to the Cloud, while implementing the right measures to protect businesses against breaches and threats. To get in contact with Ollie, email Ollie.schofield@nettko.com.au

Prepare your business for the Notifiable Data Breaches Scheme.



nettko

What is the Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) Scheme?

If your business experiences an eligible data breach that is likely to result in serious harm, new legislation requires you to contain the breach, take remedial action and to notify the Australian Information Commissioner and any affected individuals.

How Nettko can help protect your business from threats and breaches:

- ✓ We'll perform a security assessment to determine any potential security threats
- ✓ Develop an IT security solution that's custom-built for your business, using the latest technologies from Office 365
- ✓ Implement intrusion detection and prevention measures
- ✓ Protect your system with anti-virus and anti-phishing solutions
- ✓ Prevent against any future threats with content and website filtering
- ✓ Protect against unauthorised access, malicious links, attachments and files
- ✓ Continue to manage your system end-to-end so you can focus on your business.

We have security solutions for all business types and sizes, even if your business is outside of the legislation. Contact us today for a free security assessment.

(1300 NETTKO)

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Video content: is your audience watching?

Gavin Banks
Good Eye Deer

Good Eye Deer is full-service video production agency that produces content for national and multi-national brands.

We are often asked, why do some online videos resonate with target audiences and produce ROI results, when others don't? Here are some basic tips to help you and your marketing team produce video content that will help get audiences watching:

1. Style & content

- Avoid using video to deliver complex messages or detailed information. Video is an emotional medium. Detail is best served by copy.
- Focus your content on helping customers understand the benefits of your offering, rather than the features of your product or service.
- Move beyond talking-head testimonials. Ernest performances from clients can be powerful. But even when clients say all the right things, the way someone looks, speaks or dresses can alienate an audience. If you want a testimonial video, flesh out your characters (with relevant visual overlay) so your audience can find something to relate to.

2. Concept development

Addressing the touch points below will help you design a video that will emotionally resonate with your target market.

- **Audience:** know your audience and their values. Focus on speaking to them in a tone / style / language they understand and already resonate with.
- **Message:** use the film to speak to the core values that your brand stands for. Try not to be literal. Film is a visual medium, play with it!
- **Brand:** Your brand is one of your most important assets. Make sure that the production values of your video reflects your brand.
- **Delivery platform:** Knowing how, where and why your audience will interact with your video will help inform a concept that will work on that platform.

3. Planning

Good films don't just happen, they are carefully planned.

- Poorly made or positioned videos will damage your brand. If you can't produce video content that contributes to your audience, don't do it – or wait until you can afford to.
- Think 'Big-picture': avoid creating videos in isolation or with a range of different providers. Make sure your videos serve as part of a greater plan – that builds brand and user engagement.
- Identify where video will provide the best leverage: make fewer, better videos with a focus of impacting your audience emotionally.
- Strategy: Consumers are looking for solutions. They just need to understand that your brand can provide it. Identify the emotional hot-buttons you want video to address and focus on that. One message delivered clearly is more powerful than many messages bundled together.

Good brand films, commercials and branded content can do wonders for your brand. They have the ability to take on a life of their own and work for you 24/7. Social media, YouTube and the web in general offer a myriad way to make impressions on audiences. If you follow these suggestions, you'll be on your way to producing content that will capture rather than alienate your audience.

For more information contact Gavin via 0425 302 260, email gavin@goodeyedeer.com.au or visit <http://goodeyedeer.com.au/>



Gavin Banks is a Director, Cinematographer and Producer at Good Eye Deer. Gavin was raised travelling the world with a humanitarian organisation where his parents were councillors. This upbringing exposed him to a wide range of communities and people. Such early experiences enabled him to understand the power of communication and the power story has for conveying ideas. Gavin's humanitarian past, his love for story and his fascination with the artistry of cinema was the foundation for him entering the film industry.



Garret Norris
Healthy Business Builder Group Pty Ltd

Increasing sales levels can be tricky. It could mean having to help your sales team develop skills that they do not naturally excel in. If you are wondering how to increase sales conversions, then here are a few tips to help you improve.

Connect emotionally

Most people make decisions based on emotions and this aspect should be well understood by sales people. If you want to increase sales conversions, your team needs to appeal to the emotional side of potential customers. This means that the sales people should make sure that they help potential customers to make a connection that is not vague, but concrete with the product or service being offered. By emphasising the customer's pain points and needs, the sales person can appeal to the customer's emotional side.

Increase perceived value

Most people will only purchase something if they can see the benefits or value that the purchase will have for them. Therefore, if sales people want to close more sales, they need to increase the perceived value of the product or service that they are selling in the eyes of the potential customer. A few ways to increase perceived value include adding on bonuses or free extras, updating the product or service, making a comparison between the item for sale and comparable alternatives on the market, and clearly articulating the benefits that the buyer will receive from the purchase.

Stop selling products and services and sell a solution

Buyers are not interested in buying a product or service. What the buyer is interested in is finding a solution to a problem. This

means that the sales person should focus on the issues that are of greatest concern to the customer and relay how the purchase will alleviate these issues for him or her.

Believe in what you sell

Many times sales people have trouble closing the deal because the customer can see that they are not enthusiastic about what they are selling. Sales people have to believe that their product or service is truly the answer to the customers problems. In order to improve sales, sales managers should work with sales people to help them improve their deliveries when it comes to the sales messages. This will help sales people to better appeal to customers and close more deals.

If you are looking for assistance with developing your company's sales team, call the Healthy Business Builder Group on 1300 833 574, email info@healthybusinessbuilder.com



Garret Norris is the Healthy Business Builder Group founder and principle. With over 30 years of experience and outstanding results in sales and sales management Garret is a highly in-demand trainer and coach to some of the largest organisations including Financial Modelling International (FMI), Computerland UK, Price Waterhouse Coopers and Mouse Training Company (MTC).

ABC Photosigns Newcastle now part of the SignPlace Maitland

The SignPlace Maitland, celebrating 20 years of service to local businesses since 1998, is the new owner of ABC Photosigns Newcastle.

This is an opportunity for ABC Photosigns Newcastle to offer more products and also a faster and reliable service to the Hunter.

ABC Photosigns, a market leader in the real estate industry for over 20 years, is offering a unique and specialised range of services to agencies to use their advertising and marketing campaigns to ensure that they remain ahead of competition and maintain market dominance.

ABC Photosigns offers a personalised online design including a user friendly online ordering portal, available 24 hours a day. They provide an immediate confirmation of installation and or removal of signboards including an installation photo sent for the customer to view.

Photo signboards provide a powerful means to instantly signal that a property is up for sale, providing quick information about what is beyond the façade.

Studies have shown that "Signboards are still an incredibly important part of the marketing strategy to sell a property - they are cost effective marketing tools to advertise properties for sale. In a \$10,000 marketing campaign, a signboard equates to 3% to 4% of the marketing budget."

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Three steps to inbound marketing success (and what does it mean?)

Jennifer Young
Out of the Square

If you're in marketing or sales you've no doubt heard the term "Inbound Marketing"... but how many of us actually understand it? We know we should be doing it, but where do we start?

1. Attract

While EDMs, branded content, video and social all play a vital role in an Inbound Marketing Strategy, many would agree Search Engine Optimisation is where it begins.

It's estimated that search engines drive over 90% of all website traffic and the majority of people searching haven't made their mind up about a brand before starting their search. This means, appearing at the top is an invaluable advantage over competitors. Add the fact it's cost effective and excellent ROI and it's no wonder SEO is a top priority for most marketers.

Take our client Reflections Holiday Parks for example, now on the first page for 89% of their search terms, resulting in a 275% increase in organic traffic.

Ranking highly in search means click-throughs and click-throughs lead to conversions. If you let SEO inform your content strategy, you can speak directly to your customers' needs, making you the obvious choice when they're ready to part with their money.

2. Convert

The best way to practice Inbound Marketing is to be helpful. It sounds simple, but many organisations are reluctant to 'give away' their smarts for free. What they don't realise is that in doing so, they not only gain trust, but position themselves as an authority.

If you're putting helpful content out there and it's optimised, you are well positioned to be found by your ideal customer and earn not only their trust, but their spend too.

Another client of ours, Greater Bank, do this particularly well with their Here's How campaign by using genuine customer stories to show how they've helped people achieve their goals.

This campaign combined with their thorough online library guides, calculators and videos authentically position them as truly helpful, uncomplicated and trustworthy which helps them attract new customers.



3. Analyse

OK, so you've got the content, it's optimised and you're turning up in all the right searches. Your ideal customers are clicking through and you are converting them. Job done, right? Wrong. This is often one of the biggest mistakes. The set and forget mentality could be costing your business money.

You may be getting 100 people to your site where 20 become leads and 5 convert to customers. What if, 30, 40 or 50 of them became leads which doubles or triples the conversions? You haven't done any extra work. You're still using the same content. So, how do you improve on your existing success and maximise your ROI?

Data. If content is king, then data is what the king eats for breakfast. Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO) is the practice of making the good better and it's vital. It involves tracking, measuring and analysing, then using that to inform your strategy and optimise the user experience.

Marketing without measurement is like driving with a blindfold on. It's dangerous, just plain unnecessary... and in the end it will hurt.

A good Inbound Marketing Strategy will enable you to attract, convert, analyse and repeat.

For further information contact Out of the Square on 02 4929 6640, email jen@outofthesquare.com.au or visit <https://outofthesquare.com>



Jennifer Young is the Senior Digital Strategist at Out of the Square. Jen has over a decade of agency experience specialising in Digital Marketing. Originally from the United States, she received her Master of Marketing from the University of Newcastle in 2007 and is passionate about helping clients develop a cohesive digital approach that drives meaningful results.



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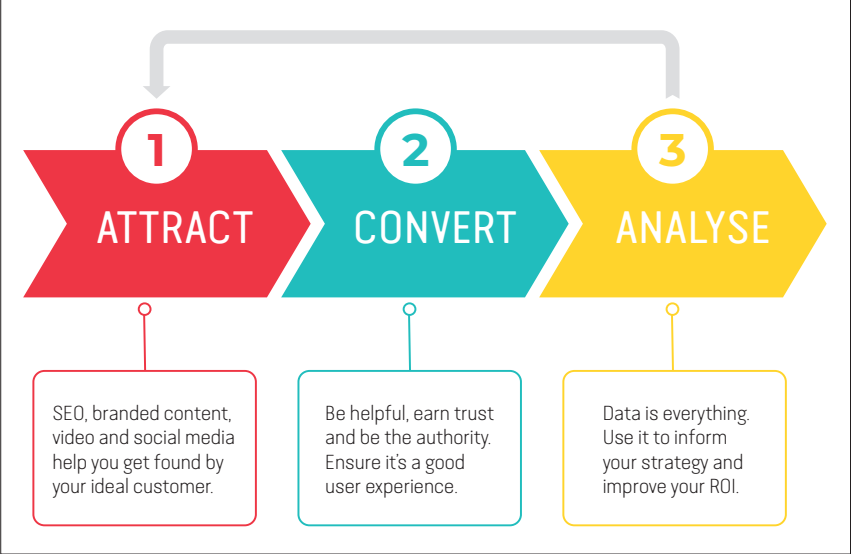


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Promotional products provide affordable, accountable, measurable advertising

Greg Frame Frame Promotional Products

Now more than ever, marketers need to reward and build brand loyalty. It is important to continue to acknowledge and thank clients, employees and suppliers.

Statistics from APPA (Australasian Promotional Products Association) show that marketers spend more than \$1.34 billion dollars (AUS) and \$144 million (NZ) a year on promotional products for one reason, they work.

- 52% say their impression of a company is more positive after receiving a promotional product.
- 76% recall the name advertised on the product.
- 55% keep the item for more than one year.
- Nearly 50% of recipients use them daily.
- 52% of people do business with a company after receiving a promotional product
- Spend less, achieve more and remind people about the benefit of doing business with you.

Promotional products in the home:

- How many people have at least one promotional product in their kitchens? 91%
- How many have two or more in their kitchens? 81%

In fact, the kitchen is the #1 place people use and keep their promotional products. (People spend on average 3-5 hours a day in their kitchens)

Promotional products in the office:

- How many people have at least one promotional product in

their offices? 74%

- How many have 2 or more in their offices? 59%

In the work place, more than half of people hold onto their promotional product from 1 to more than 4 years.

Reach & recall:

- 71% of business travellers surveyed reported receiving a promotional product in a 12 month period.
- 33.7% of this group had the item on their person.
- 56% of people kept their promotional product for more than one year.
- 76.4% said they kept their promotional product because it was useful.
- 76.1% of the respondents could recall the advertisers name on the product.

How effective are promotional products in staff retention, motivation and brand interest?

- 75% of Human Resource managers surveyed are using promotional products in recognition programs.
- 72% of marketing and HR managers say that promotional products are very effective in motivation and retention of staff.
- 100% of advertisers said that adding a promotional product returned a favourable response to their campaign.
- 69% of advertisers said promotional products increased brand interest and 84% it created more favourable impressions of the brand itself.

Understanding the medium:

- A product is just a product, until it is linked with a promotion, it then becomes an advertisement.
- The most successful advertising campaigns are the result of a planned strategy.
- Throwing products at your target market without that planning is a waste your marketing dollars.

- The product is only one component in the whole campaign.
- The creativity used to get a response is the key to increasing profits and promoting brands.

APPA (Australasian Promotional Products Association) promotes the development and good standing of that segment of the advertising industry which is concerned with the manufacture, distribution and application of promotional products in accordance with business practices and ethics which meet the highest industry and community standards. For over 25 years APPA has represented the regions of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands. Frame Promotional Products is proud to be one of APPA'S longest standing member.

For further information contact Frame Promotional Products on (02) 4962 5644, email greg@framepp.com.au or visit www.framepromotionalproducts.com.au



Greg Frame is Managing Director of Frame Promotional Products. With a global reach and worldwide sourcing of promotional products, Frame Promotional Products is focused on locals (80% of business comes from the Hunter). Greg has grown the showrooms at Adamstown to include a huge range of promo merchandise and apparel, with over 3000 items of apparel on display. He has also developed the business to become leaders in their industry with in-house printing, embroidery and graphic design, operating as a one stop shop.

Cool tips for a promo piece too hot to handle

Marc Brabander BINK Creative

In our design studio, BINK Creative, we deal with a large range of businesses – from sole traders to large corporations. During the past 14 years, we've seen and worked it all, but there is a common theme that runs through all our design work; it is a basic principle that should be applied to create promotional pieces that gets your message across effectively.

It is well understood that to build a fire you need three things: fuel, oxygen, and heat (or ignition source). Similar is true for the key elements required for a successful promotional piece – be it a flyer, poster, postcard, sales brochure, promotion, and the like. Keeping to the fire theme... the three critical 'elements' you need to set your promo material ablaze are:

Key Message, and Audience = **FUEL**

Distribution Type = **OXYGEN**

Call to Action = **HEAT**

Some of you might not be too familiar with some of the lingo, so let me explain these three 'elements' a little further.

FUEL – Key Message and Audience

Ask yourself two simple questions:

1. What is the main purpose of sending this promo piece – what's the key message you wish to get across?

Take your time, and sit with that question. What is the ONE thing you wish to get across? The whole purpose might be a special offer (like 20% off), or 'get a free info pack', or that you've won an award, or more generally informing people about your products/services. The important thing is that there's one thing that becomes the key message. It's easy for the offer. A little harder when you only want to talk about your

product/services... in that case, you must find a key point of difference that makes your products/services unique and run with that as your key message. And make it snazzy, because without enough fuel in your promo piece, it will just fizz out like a wet fire cracker. One of the main problems designers come across is that people want to say it ALL, and therefore confusing the message. Consider this... it's all great fun having a bright and big party and everyone's having a good time. But the best conversations are had when there's just the two of you. Similarly, with promo pieces – keep it simple, keep it to one key message. You'll get the cut-through you're after.

2. Who are you talking to - to your current customers, or potential customers?

You talk in a different tone when you talk to you best friends (your customers) or people who you've just met (potential customers). Knowing the 'who' will set the tone for both the wording and graphics.

OXYGEN – Distribution Type

Working out where you are going to distribute the promo piece should be reasonably straightforward. You might wish to do a Facebook promotion, or email to your customer database; or you might consider a mailbox drop, direct mail, or putting flyers at certain places such as the information centres and the like, or hand them out at networking events. Or it could be and advertisement in the newspaper or school newsletter.

Whatever distribution you end up choosing for your promo piece, knowing the where will provide you (or your designer) a critical bit of information that will help with the design of a promo piece that sets your message alight.

HEAT/IGNITION SOURCE

The good old 'Call to Action'. It's all well and good having a great key message (be it an enticing offer or otherwise), but without telling the audience you are reaching out to where/how to contact you is... well, without action.

A great call to action not only leads the customer, it also lets them know what the result will be when they follow the call to action. For example:

As a minimum you need your contact details (a simple Phone + Number). You'll be doing a little better with a "Call now + Number" You'd be doing better still with "Call us today and we'll help you save money on your xyz." It seems simple, but there's some real techniques to writing a good call to action – something to discuss another time perhaps.

As with anything, there is no real right or wrong way of doing things, just better ways.

And that is in very broad terms one of the first steps to creating and designing a promotional piece for your business. Hopefully you'll find it a good reference point for when you next start developing your promotional piece.

For further queries contact Marc on (02) 4990 3230 or email marc@binkcreative.com.au



Marc Brabander is the owner and Creative Director of BINK Creative – providing quality design work since 2002 and winner of the prestigious Business of the Year Award and Business Services Award at the 2010 Hunter Region Business Excellence Awards.

Facing up to the new Facebook algorithm

Lauren Taylor
Taylor Made Marketing

Poor old Zuckerberg has been copping it of late. While the US Senate has been throwing a few big punches his way (and a lot of small misdirected ones), the Zuck has also managed to land a few bruisees of his own.

Earlier in the year, Facebook announced changes to its algorithm that has had brands seriously concerned about what it means for their marketing efforts on the platform. But before you start freaking out about it being the end of the world, let's take a look at the changes and how you can navigate your way around them.

Here's what our mate Mark had to say:



He then went on to say that Facebook are "limiting" public content from brands and businesses, looking to hold them to a higher standard. According to Zuckerberg, brand content should encourage "meaningful interactions between people."

So, what does this really mean? Basically, Facebook is prioritising comments and conversation over shameless promotion. They're trying to reduce the level of marketing 'spam' brands are putting out there. Oh, and he wants you to pay for advertising, of course!

It makes sense, Facebook wants to get rid of the tactics marketers use to game the algorithm, like click bait and 'tag a mate who...' posts and make the platform about genuine content. But, it also means brands will have a more difficult time showing up in the feeds of their fans and followers.

So how can brands and businesses survive the new algorithm?

Here's some ways you can encourage interactions without getting the big 'eff' book offside:

1. No need to bait

Facebook has banned 'bait' posts but posting genuine opinions that will spark comments can get people engaging. Be bold with the content you're posting as long as you don't go too far.

2. Ask questions

While explicitly asking for comments or shares is a no-no, posing questions to your follower is a spam-free way to encourage a response.

3. Put it on film

Facebook loves video content and encourages brands to develop their own content. Video gets six times as many interactions than other posts so it's worth giving it a go. While it's only a rumour, some trials have shown that Facebook punishes brands that post YouTube videos rather than uploading the content directly, so keep that in mind.



4. Don't be desperate

If you have to ask people to like, share or comment on your posts then there's a good chance they're not actually that good. And Facebook won't like it either. Try using humorous or educational posts and establish what your audience actually likes rather than begging for engagement. Why not try using a meme?

5. Sinking by linking

Don't feel the need to always be linking back to your website. Facebook doesn't really approve and linked posts don't usually perform as well as video, image or text posts anyway.

So don't start pulling your hair out just yet. There's still hope. In fact, if you're smart with the content you're posting this algorithm change could actually have benefits. As Facebook stamps out spammy marketing tactics, your brand has the distinct opportunity to rise above the mediocrity.

Thanks Zuckerberg!

For more information contact Lauren on 0477 566 022, email lauren@taylormademarketing.com.au or visit <http://www.taylormademarketing.com.au/>



Lauren Taylor is the director of Taylor Made Marketing, a boutique agency based in Newcastle offering digital marketing services, events management and PR. She has worked on big name brands around the world and now works with small businesses to help them with straight-forward marketing advice.



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How to ask for testimonials

Daniel Borg
Psyborg

What is a testimonial?

A testimonial is a recommendation from a satisfied customer conveying the performance, quality and value of a service or product. They can be requested for or just given when work has been completed.

Why are testimonials important?

Testimonials can be an extremely strong and necessary marketing tool.

If a new client or customer is trying to decide whether to choose to work with you, then a few good testimonials can prove that you really are the right choice.

When perspective clients or customers are searching for an expert they often visit webpages, social media, Facebook reviews, GoogleMyBusiness reviews to learn what quality to expect from a business, and essentially decide whether or not they will choose that business to give their work to.

What type of testimonials is there out there?

Testimonials can be text, image, or video. While a written testimonial is the most common form of testimonials, images and videos can be very effective as well. Images may be of a client using their purchase or showing a final product. In my line of business it might be a client standing in front of a sign I created. Often images will include a written testimonial as well stating why they are happy with the completed work. Videos can be

great because unlike written content, you can see the customers expression and passion for what they are talking about. It is good to keep all forms in mind when asking for a testimonial and perhaps give the client the option.

There are some 3rd party review sites where testimonials can also appear. These generally rate a particular profession though and unless you are in that profession and keeping an eye online to see if any reviews have been written they may or may not work for your business. Some of these include Rate My Agent, FourSquare, TripAdvisor, GoogleMyBusiness, Yelp and more.

Also tools such as Facebook & GoogleMyBusiness reviews are becoming more and more popular and you can choose to put testimonials on your businesses website.

How to ask for a testimonial?

Firstly make sure you are testimonial worthy! Make sure you do a great job consistently! You should work like everyone you work for is going to review your business. This way you should never have a bad testimonial and you can ask everyone for a testimonial.

It's pretty easy to get testimonials and no harm in asking. Not everyone has the time to do one and people are forgetful so don't push it but, at the end of a job, ask for it in a survey form via an email with a link to the form. Surveys are easy to create, easy to fill out and can give some great information about a business. Within the survey a written section can give more detail and be used on your websites or social media if desired (ask permission in the survey). Also if some negatives do come up in the survey you can either work to rectify the issue or keep it in mind for future business dealings.

If you are after reviews on GoogleMyBusiness or the like then give written instructions with screen shots on how to complete it and offer a discount or a gift to encourage clients to do it.

An example of how to do this is... you could offer a box of chocolates with a note on the lid explaining how to give a review on GoogleMyBusiness, this could be a small flyer with graphics showing the steps. This would be effective because every time the customer has a chocolate you are reminding the customer to write the review. It may take a little while but no doubt by the time the customer has finished the box of chocolates the review would have been made.

Summary

Word of mouth is an amazing advertising tool. Testimonials aid in this as it can help build and promote a business giving it credibility. Remember to work like everyone is reviewing your business and don't be afraid to ask for a testimonial at the end of customer interaction! This is made a lot easier by coming up with a system for asking that could involve templated emails, online surveys and carrot to encourage the user to take action. Check out some of my testimonials at psyborg®.

For more information contact Daniel via 0414 914 087, info@psyborg.com.au or visit <https://www.psyborg.com.au/>



Daniel Borg is an Honours Graduate in Design from the University of Newcastle. He also has an Associate Diploma in Industrial Engineering and has experience from within the Engineering & Advertising Industries. Daniel has completed over 1900 design projects consisting of branding, illustration, web design, and printed projects since psyborg was first founded.

The Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre celebrates 20 years

The Forum is a leader in providing quality health, fitness, sport & recreation services to its Newcastle community and surrounds. 27 February 2018 marked the 20 year anniversary of The Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre on the Callaghan Campus of the University of Newcastle.

Planning in early 1997 for the opening of The Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre, the Board of Directors of the newly formed entity formally noted that their collective aim was for the "establishment of programmes, facilities, and management practices...which as a totality would contribute to the expansion of the intellectual and social skills of students and staff of the University through participation in physical and other activities under the aegis of The Forum."

The mantra of "Mens Sana in Corpore Sano" translated to mean "a healthy mind in a healthy body" was the inspiration that gave the Directors further belief "that the healthy lifestyle espoused in The Forum would be an example to and available for the Newcastle community."

Twenty years on, and by any measure, it can be seen that these aims have been achieved many times over and while the facilities and services provided at The Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre are designed around participation opportunities for the University community, the centre has always been accessible to all.

The Forum is the preferred training venue for elite teams, having hosted a number of elite Olympic, Commonwealth Games & World University Games teams and competitors. As well as teams such as the Australian Rugby League and Rugby Union teams,



Newcastle Jets, Newcastle Knights, Sydney Swans and Geelong AFL teams along with a wide range of state and local teams and competitors. The Forum is also proud to have assisted in hosting a range of events including the Eastern University Games, National Indigenous University Games, International Children's Games and the Asia Pacific Special Olympics.

The Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre has a number of unique roles including the enhancement of the student experience on the Callaghan campus as well as supporting health and wellbeing of the broader Newcastle and Hunter community.

The Forum is not just a gym – it is actively part of the community.

Newcastle University Sport (NUsport), is proudly associated with the University of Newcastle and manages The Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre on the Callaghan Campus and The Forum Health & Wellness Centre in the Newcastle CBD.



"Love what Garry & the team have created with this magazine. No other publication that deals with SME's comes close to HBR. It has been an awesome tool for promoting our brand in the local community"



Paul Siderovski
Managing Director
SIDCOR Chartered Accountants

<http://www.sidcor.com.au/>

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20 YEARS



1996	1997	1998	2000	2001	2006	2018
 Construction of The Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre commences in August.	 The Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre is completed in late October 1997 (winning the Dangar Award for design excellence).	 The Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre is officially opened by Chancellor Ric Charlton AM on 27 February 1998.	 The Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre hosts the Dutch, Argentinian & Irish Swim Teams in their preparation for the Sydney Olympics.	 Newcastle University Sport (NUsport) is registered as a not-for-profit company in May to bring the University of Newcastle Sports & Aquatic Centre Ltd and the Sports Union together under a single entity.	 The Forum Health & Wellness Centre Harbourside opens in October in the heritage Perway Store in the Newcastle Honeysuckle precinct.	 Mark the milestone of 20 years since The Forum opened with \$12.75 per week* memberships. <small>*For one location. Visit www.theforum.org.au to find out more.</small>




www.theforum.org.au 02 4921 7001



Massage is good for business

Shivani Gupta
Endota Spas

Many people still view massage as a luxury item – something you have when on an overseas holiday. But massage is increasingly seen as an important part of people's health and wellbeing regime just like eating well and exercising. Many business leaders now realise the benefits of massage for themselves and their staff. Massage isn't about pampering, it is about improving productivity. An investment in massage is cost effective given the benefits it can have on employee output and reductions in absenteeism and sick leave.

Here's five ways massage benefits business

Spark creative ideas and boost productivity.

Research has validated the positive effects of massage therapy on job performance and mental alertness resulting in improved accuracy. We constantly ask leaders and staff to think outside the square but always don't create the right environment to effect that behaviour. Sometimes people need to stop their mind and relax in order to solve a problem or think of a better solution. For the past 20 years, there have been numerous studies linking massage to improved brainpower and productivity. It is common sense that if you are in a better mood you are more likely to be energetic, productive and work effectively with others. Getting a good night's sleep is vital for well-being and productivity. And, you guessed it, studies show massage helps people to sleep better as well as helping those who have trouble comfortably resting.

Ease stress

The business world is fast-paced and stressful. Stress is a major cause of absenteeism, sick leave and presenteeism in Australian workplaces. Health insurer Medibank Private estimated in 2008 that workplace stress was costing the Australian economy \$14.81 billion a year. Stress related presenteeism and absenteeism are directly costing Australian employers \$10.11 billion a year. Almost a decade ago now, the study estimated 3.2 days per worker were lost each year through workplace stress. Those figures will have increased. According to the Mayo Clinic and a number of other studies, massage has proven to be an effective treatment for reducing people's stress levels. It can also help people experiencing anxiety and depression.

Reduce pain and boost immune systems

Massage helps in reducing repetitive musculoskeletal injuries and other injuries. This means massage can be a cost saver to business with fewer workers' compensation claims and lower sick leave rates. Helping people staff to stay well and healthy has increasingly become something businesses invest in through gym memberships and workplace programs to encourage

healthy eating and exercise. Massage is something business should consider incorporating into such programs. A study by the Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre found people who received Swedish massage showed changes in their immune system responses after the sessions. Massage also counteracts all the sitting people now do in their daily work lives, easing back pain, another common workplace injury.

A better staff or client reward

Massage makes for a powerful and smart addition to staff incentive and rewards programs. You are not only rewarding people with something they will appreciate and want to use but also giving them something that will benefit the business too.

It also is a great alternative to wine, chocolates or flowers for those customers or clients to whom you want to send a thank you or an apology. If you've caused a customer stress, what better way to say sorry than with something that helps take their stress away.

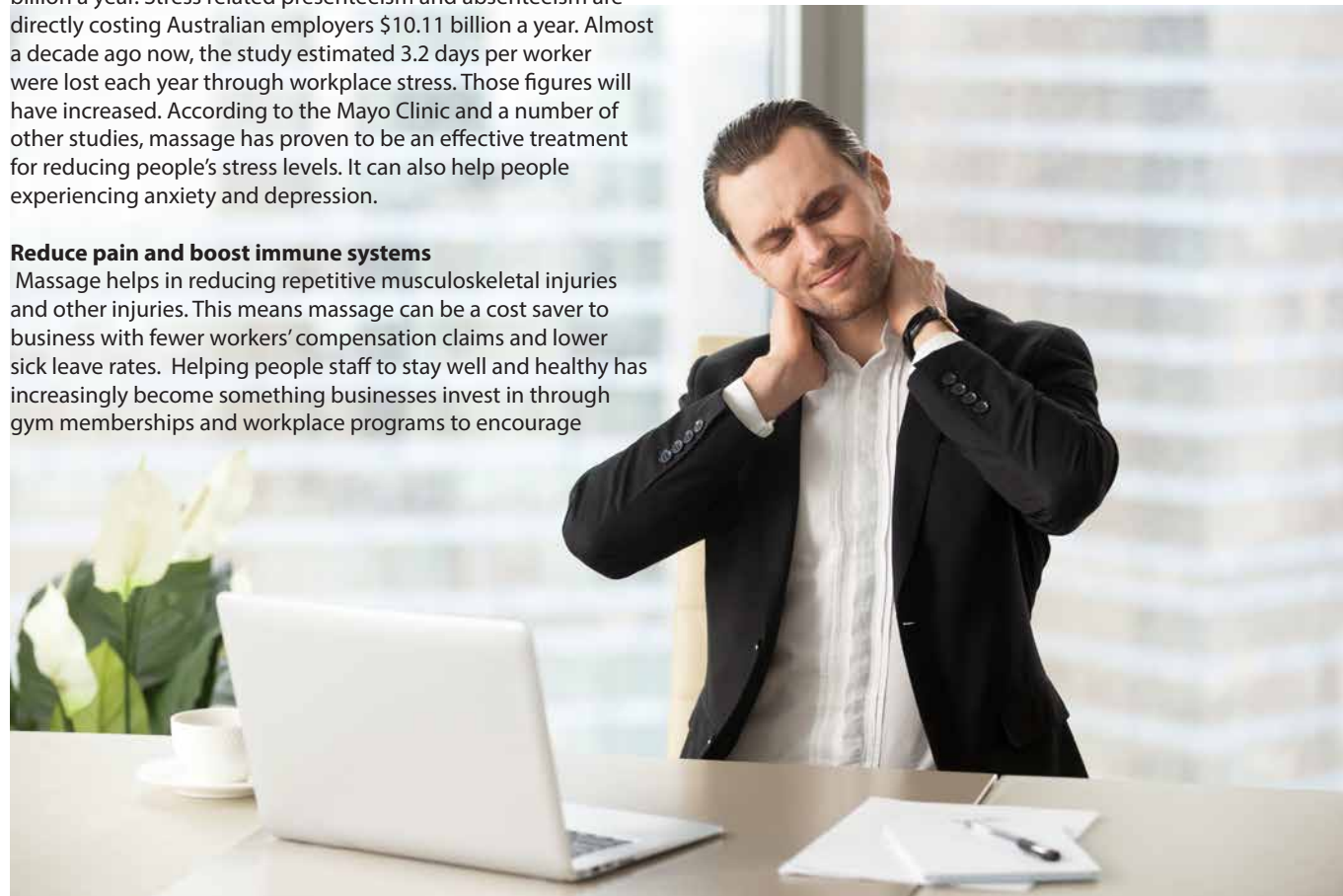
Choose the right massage

Massage is a skill and getting incorrect massage may cause harm. Use trained, qualified massage providers. Many providers can offer in house massage and also offer corporate rates and programs. For example endota spas in the Hunter offers bonus vouchers for bulk purchases by businesses.

Sometimes solutions to business problems have been sitting under our noses for a long time. When you are looking at ways to boost productivity in your workplace, one solution may be to invest in a practice that has been used since ancient times.



Shivani Gupta is the owner of the Hunter's three endota spas in Stockland Green Hills, Westfield Kotara and Newcastle. Visit endotaspa.com.au



NCIG bouncing into healthy practice with Ethos

A partnership between two Hunter based companies is leading the way in health and safety practices.

With the goal of improving overall health and safety, the team at Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group (NCIG) joined forces with workplace health services specialists, Ethos Health to develop a program customised to the needs of people working at the coal loader. The Bounce program utilises best practice solutions developed by Ethos Health in fatigue management, workplace ergonomics, injury prevention and health and wellbeing programs.

CEO of Ethos Health, Dr Trent Watson, said NCIG was a great example of a workplace that was motivated to support its team to be fit, well and healthy.

"Most of us spend at least a third of our lives at work. For NCIG, it was vitally important that its employees were in the best possible position to be well and work safely," Dr Watson said.

Ethos Health commenced working with NCIG's workplace safety team in 2010, to help customise programs to suit the type of work, shifts and environment at Kooragang Island. Since that time, the partnership has continued to create ways that effectively engage employees to be motivated about good health while managing the risks and associated costs of injury and fatigue.

NCIG Workplace Health, Safety & Environment Manager, Nathan Juchau, said that the Bounce program kicked-off with assessments of personal health and was followed by education programs.

"Our goal was to motivate people to take control of their health. For many of us this was about understanding the spiralling effect of weight gain, the importance of exercise and practical ways to strengthen our bodies to prevent injuries and manage our workplace activities," Mr Juchau said.

NCIG also implemented a team challenge to encourage exercise and movement. NCIG Maintenance Planner, Brett Mills, took-out the team challenge in 2017 raking-up more than 1.9 million steps in just eight weeks.

NCIG Safety Officer, Lauren Ross, said that Brett's efforts continued to motivate everyone else.

"We set high targets of about 70% participation for the program but in our most recent challenge there was 98% participation and employees.

The Bounce program also includes a range of practical stretch exercises designed to improve strength and agility with employees reporting less strain on their bodies since participating.

Dr Watson said that organisations that promoted health and wellness programs in the workplace experienced great outcomes for their team and the bottom line.

"Employees that engaged in customised programs were two and a half times more likely to be a best performer, about three times more likely to be more productive and eight times more likely to have employees engaged in the business," he said.

"Businesses also find that program benefit employee retention, innovation and reduce workplace injury, loss time and bottom line costs," he said.

Is your team leaving work as healthy as they arrived?

Ethos Health enables businesses and their employees to assess their level of health risk, then develop and integrate effective behaviour changes that make a tangible difference to health.

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How do we attain a mentally healthy workplace?

Kim Elkovich
A Higher Self

‘I was having a lot of emotional difficulties and requested time off or a modified work schedule for medical reasons. My employer demanded a diagnosis so my psychiatrist provided a diagnosis. My employer denied the request and noted that if I had serious psychiatric issues than I needed to resign’. (Employee Statement, 2011).

The fostering of a mentally healthy workplace and supporting employees with mental health issues is a complex matter. Although the above example of discrimination is extreme, discrimination towards mental illness is common. However, when its estimated on average 17-20% of workers in any 12- month period [1] present with mental health concerns it does raise the question how do operational managers and HR departments lack such knowledge?

The two primary reasons are mental health stigma and mental health illiteracy. Stigma stops business from prioritising mental health and acquiring mental health knowledge and skills. Fear of prejudice also prevents employees from disclosing mental illness, for example, what is easier to do? phone your boss to say you won’t be in for work today due to a stomach virus or you have just had a panic attack. Unfortunately, when the illness remains invisible its easier for employers to interpret a decline in productivity or increased absenteeism as a performance management issue when in fact the employee needs psychological assistance.

Stigma feeds illiteracy: when we avoid a topic, we fail to learn about it. Beyond Blue [2] estimates as a result 40% of Australians living with depression never seek help. Not being able to recognise mental health issues prevents early detection and intervention which is paramount in treating the illness. In the workplace early detection reduces staff presenteeism which in turn reduces the risk of personal injury.

So, how do we attain a mentally healthy workplace? The research emphasises integration of both individual and organisational strategies are needed. The Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance in their 2014 report [3] outlines six key target areas:

- 1. Designing work that minimises psychological harm- OHS, Anti-Discrimination, Privacy laws provide the minimal requirements.
- 2. Promoting Protective factors- This includes effective workplace bullying policies and processes. We have 20years of research into workplace bullying and despite this 50 per cent of workers still report experience with workplace bullying [4].
- 3. Enhancing personal resilience – Employee stress management training. Stress is a trigger for both physical and mental illness.
- 4. Promoting and Facilitating Early Help Seeking Behaviour – encouraging EAP use and wellbeing checks
- 5. Supporting worker Recovery from Mental illness- The Australian Human Rights Commission “2010 Workers with Mental Illness: A Practical Guide for Managers” [5] is a must read.
- 6. Increasing Awareness of mental illness and Reducing Stigma – Mental Health First Aid Training reduces stigma.

Fostering a mentally healthy workplace is challenging. It requires a shift in thinking, the adoption of new language, skills and processes. Heightened emotional intelligence is imperative. The call to adapt is clear and yet for some of us it seems we will need to learn the hard way.

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Kim Elkovich is the Managing Director at A Higher Self. Kim’s corporate career began at 22 years of age within the pharmaceutical industry. Across 15 years Kim climbed the corporate ladder to hold both National sales and marketing management roles. Whilst consulting for the Ministry of Health in 2004 Kim commenced her study in the field of psychology. Now at 48 years of age Kim has combined both her corporate and clinical experience – Her company A Higher Self designs and delivers niche workshops/ programs that foster a mentally healthy workplace.

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 A farmer is in court, suing the trucking company whose truck injured him in an accident. He is on the stand, and the company's lawyer is questioning him, trying to disprove the merit of his claim.

"Mister Brown," the lawyer says, "did you not tell the responding officer, after the crash, that you were -and I quote- fine?"

"Well," says the farmer, "you see, I was driving my mule to town..."

"Sir, please answer the question. Did you or did you not say you were fine?"

"Well now, you have to understand, I was driving my mule..."

"Sir! Stop avoiding the question. Remember, you are under oath! Did you not tell the officer you were fine?"

The farmer turns to the judge and says, "Your honor, I am trying to answer the nice man's question, but he won't let me."


The judge says "I'll allow it, but it better be relevant."

The farmer thanks him and begins, "Well, you see, I was driving my truck to town, with my trailer hitched to the back and my mule in the trailer. As we cross an intersection, this big truck blows past the stop sign and smashes into us. The truck splits in two, I'm thrown into one ditch on the side of the road, the mule is thrown into the other, and the truck just keeps going."

"Now I'm in bad shape. My arm is broke, my leg is broke, half my ribs are broke. But my mule is in worse shape, from what I can hear. She's screaming and thrashing and making a pitiful racket."


"I hear tyres come to a stop on the gravel, a door close and footsteps crunching across the road to the other ditch. I hear the mule screaming for a minute more and then a shot rang out, and it went quiet. The footsteps then start to come my way. I look up to see a state trooper putting his gun back in his holster."

"He says to me, sir, I am terribly sorry. Your mule was gravely injured, she was in terrible pain, and I had no choice but to put her down. ... How are you?"

 A van full of nuns is driving through Romania. The nuns get to Transylvania and a vampire jumps onto their windshield. The nuns panic and one in the back yells to the driver "Speed up! Speed up!" So the driver hits the gas and no matter how fast they go the vampire holds on tight.

"Hit the brakes! Hit the brakes!" Another nun yells from the back seat, and the driver hit the brakes as hard as she can and the van skids to a stop, but the vampire is still there.

"Show him your cross! Show him your cross!" Comes a scream from the back. The driver rolls down her window and yells at the vampire "get off my damn windshield!"

 A police officer stopped a motorist who was speeding down a main street.

"But officer," the man began, "I can explain."

"Just be quiet," snapped the officer.

"I'm going to let you cool your heels in gaol until the chief gets back."

"But, officer, I just wanted to say . . ."

"And I said to keep quiet! You're going to gaol!"

A few hours later the officer looked in on his prisoner and said, "Lucky for you that the chief's at his daughter's wedding... He'll be in a good mood when he gets back."

"Don't count on it," answered the fellow in the cell. "I'm the groom."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take."

- Wayne Gretzky - *Legendary former professional ice hockey player and coach*

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