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2020 HUNTER MANUFACTURING AWARDS

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From the Editor



This issue includes a feature on Manufacturing – a traditionally important industry for the Hunter and one that has so much promise for the future prosperity of the region.

Hunter manufacturers are continually proving that they can compete in many areas with the best in the world. In this difficult year, many have also displayed great agility in facing the challenges of a

COVID affected marketplace and many have reacted swiftly to service new opportunities created by COVID.

The recent Hunter Manufacturing Awards (covered in this issue) again highlights the strengths and accomplishments of local manufacturers.

HBR has been a long-time supporter of local manufacturing and the reasons why we should all support local manufacturing are compelling.

Firstly, manufacturing is the second largest direct employer in the Hunter, providing jobs for thousands of locals.

Modern manufacturing is a high skills area and a major trainer of employees, providing them with a valuable skill set for life. Modern manufacturing also helps us better compete on the global market, lessening much of the impact of relatively high domestic labour costs.

The export of locally manufactured foods and allied services, as well as the replacement of imports, make major contributions to a healthier balance of trade for Australia.

We all know that innovation is a vital economic ingredient and modern manufacturing embraces innovation to help build wealth for the entire country.

What is not understood by many is that manufacturing has a huge multiplier effect estimated to be as high as five, meaning that the indirect benefits are huge. You may not consider yourself to be in the manufacturing industry, but your business or job may very well have manufacturing to thank for its very existence.

This year has also highlighted global supply chains and how they can be jeopardised by events such as COVID. It is vital that we have a strong local manufacturing sector to help insulate us from the worst of these impacts. A more aggressive China also highlights how we can be economically pressured by other countries if we become too reliant on them, for exports and imports.

For many economic and political reasons, it has never been a better time for governments and the wider community to support manufacturing in the Hunter and across the nation.

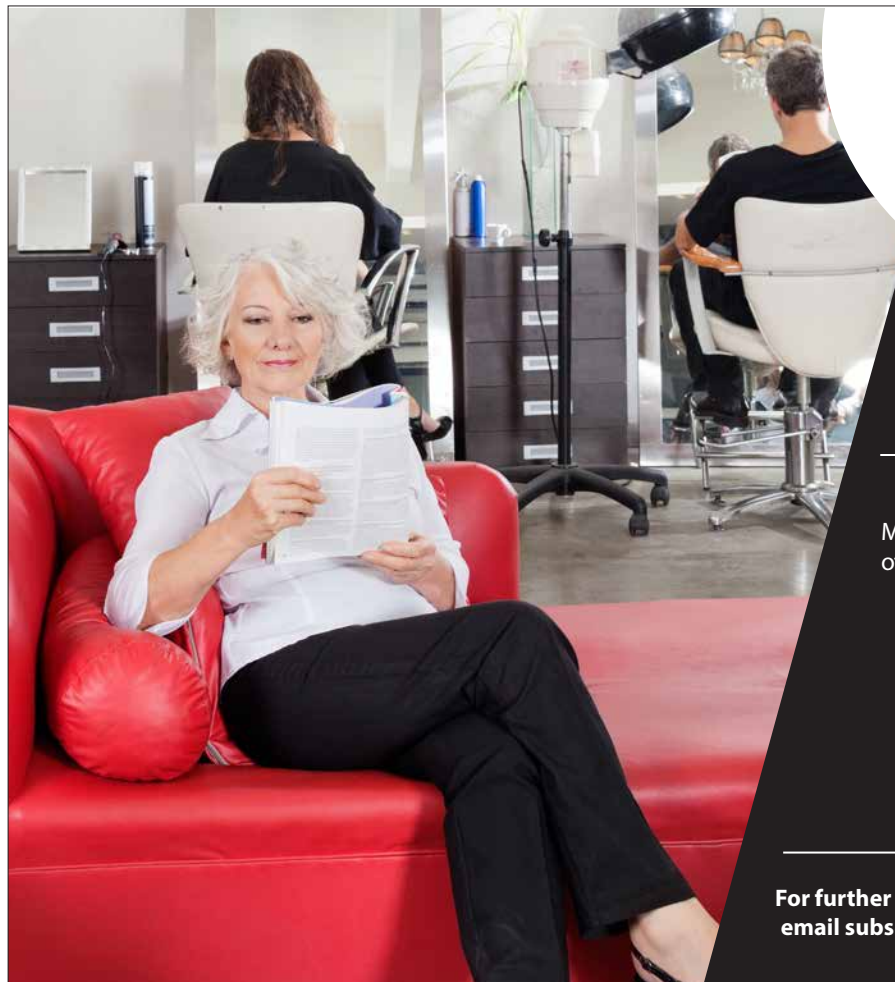
To put it bluntly, it is a no-brainer.

Garry Hardie
Editor and Publisher



ON THIS MONTH'S COVER

HMA Manufacturer of the Year for Less than 50 Employees – Rotacaster.



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TASMANIAN DEVILS RETURN TO MAINLAND FOR FIRST TIME IN 3,000 YEARS

For the first time in 3,000 years, the Tasmanian devil is back in the wild on mainland Australia, an historic moment that is critical to rewild Australia, the country with the world's worst mammal extinction rate.

Aussie Ark, in partnership with Global Wildlife Conservation and WildArk, recently released 11 Tasmanian devils into a 400 hectare wildlife sanctuary on Barrington Tops. Actor power couple Elsa Pataky and Chris Hemsworth, who is a WildArk Ambassador, helped release some of the animals into their new home.

"In 100 years, we are going to be looking back at this day as the day that set in motion the ecological restoration of an entire country," said Tim Faulkner, president of Aussie Ark, which has been working with Tasmanian devils for more than 10 years with the goal of someday returning them to the wild.

"Not only is this the reintroduction of one of Australia's beloved animals, but of an animal that will engineer the entire environment around it, restoring and rebalancing our forest ecology after centuries of devastation from introduced foxes and cats and other invasive predators. Because of this reintroduction and all of the hard work leading up to it, someday we will see Tasmanian devils living throughout the great eastern forests as they did 3,000 years ago."

Tasmanian devils vanished entirely from mainland Australia in large part because they were outcompeted by introduced dingoes, which hunt in packs. Dingoes never made it to Tasmania, but across the island state, a transmissible, painful and fatal disease called Devil Facial Tumor Disease (DFTD)—the only known contagious cancer—decimated up to 90 percent of the wild population of Tasmanian devils. Just 25,000 devils are left in the wild of Tasmania today.



Chris Hemsworth and Elsa Pataky release Tasmanian Devils

For the last decade, the Aussie Ark team has been building an insurance population of Tasmanian devils and learning everything they can about the animals, including about their reproductive physiology, behavior, and ecological needs, all leading up to the reintroduction, which took place on September 10 and followed a successful assisted trial release with 15 Tasmanian devils. Twenty-six total devils now call the wild of mainland Australia home.

Aussie Ark's partners include Global Wildlife Conservation, WildArk, Glencore, Australian Geographic, Australian Reptile Park, WIRES and FAME.

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BUILDING A UNIFIED VOICE FOR THE HUNTER

On 22 October, The Hunter Joint Organisation and the Committee for the Hunter signed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining their shared commitment to providing a unified voice and platform for collaborative action on issues of strategic importance for the Hunter region.

The Memorandum was signed by Cr Bob Pynsent, Chair of the Hunter JO and Mayor of Cessnock, and Richard Anicich AM, the Chair of the Committee for the Hunter, with CEOs Joe James and Alice Thompson also present. The signing was held at Maitland's Coquun restaurant on the banks of the Hunter River, a natural symbol of the common destiny and connection that exists across our region.

Cr Bob Pynsent said that the MoU signifies a shared desire to deliver outcomes for the region. "We owe it to our communities to speak to State and Federal decision-makers with a unified regional voice wherever and whenever possible. As a collaboration of councils in the Hunter region we understand both the challenge of genuine collaboration and its power. This Memorandum of Understanding underpins our intent to work with Committee for the Hunter, with the region's best interests at heart. The MoU will connect our local government leadership with other thought leaders across the region, to deliver joint advocacy and action on shared priorities for our communities."

"The Committee for the Hunter was established in response to a belief that the Hunter needed a unified voice that enabled regional leaders to identify long-term goals for the region and improve collaboration between community, industry and governments to achieve these. The MoU is a significant step in bringing those key stakeholders together to present that unified voice, which can only lift our influence in Macquarie Street and in Canberra", said Richard Anicich.

The MoU speaks to the common strategic objectives of influencing policy in the interest of the Hunter region, attracting and enabling investment, and building capacity within the region.



Richard Anicich AM, Alice Thompson, Cr Bob Pynsent & Joe James.

\$9 MILLION PORT STEPHENS KOALA SANCTUARY OPENS

Environment Minister Matt Kean MP joined Port Stephens Mayor Ryan Palmer on 25 September to officially open the Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary, with the gates opened to the general public on 26 September.

A partnership between Council, the NSW Government and volunteer care group Port Stephens Koalas, the Koala Sanctuary is focused on sustaining and protecting the threatened species for years to come.

The long-awaited conservation facility is purpose-built to care for sick, injured and orphaned koalas, and it also provides visitors the opportunity to see the marsupials in their natural habitat and learn about our unique koala population.

Environment Minister Matt Kean said the state-of-the-art facility will play a crucial role in helping preserve our koala populations through care, research and education.

"This new sanctuary will not only help protect and care for our iconic koala populations, but it will also provide a boost to the local economy driving eco-tourism dollars to the region," Mr Kean said.

"The research and eco-tourism facility based right here will see people from all over the world come and learn about the Australian koala population, providing much needed public awareness and education."

Holiday Parks Section Manager Kim Latham said the Sanctuary will offer unique experiences with koalas in a natural and idyllic bushland setting.

"The Sanctuary will offer tailored and educational tours from local guides on how we care for sick, injured and orphaned koalas to give them the best opportunity to return to the wild.

"At the same time, we're providing a unique experience for visitors to view koalas in their natural habitat via the Newcastle Airport SKYwalk and elevated viewing platform.

"The immersive educational Sanctuary Story Walk, Fat Possum café and deluxe 4-star guest glamping accommodation, also provides an incredibly exciting addition to the Port Stephens' tourism offering," she said.



MAITLAND REGIONAL ATHLETICS CENTRE OFFICIALLY OPENED

The Maitland Regional Athletics Centre at the Maitland Regional Sports Complex was officially opened on 12 October.

The \$10.5 million project was joint funded by Council and Restart NSW Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund, and includes a World Athletics Certified synthetic athletics track, playing field, track and field facilities, floodlighting, a grandstand with capacity of 560, changerooms, canteen, two large function spaces and car parking.

Mayor Loretta Baker said "One of the key objectives of Council is to ensure that our growing community has the facilities and services it needs. This facility is a welcome addition to the high quality sporting options already available in the city.

"From hosting local clubs and school athletics to drawing major athletics events to the area like zone and regional carnivals, we're so excited to see the benefits of this facility for the community."

The Maitland Regional Sports Complex was awarded \$5.5 million

under the NSW Government's Hunter Infrastructure Investment Fund and will now attract more visitors to the Hunter region, with enhanced event capabilities, complete access for people with disabilities and increasing visitor spending in the region.'

Council will work with local and regional sporting groups to educate them on the many unique features of the site with access for the general public planned to commence in time for summer walks and exercise with family and friends.

The completion of the Maitland Regional Athletics Centre is stage two of the total three stages of the wider Maitland Regional Sports Complex redevelopment.

Stage three of the redevelopment includes a walking track, new playground, outdoor exercise facilities and additional amenities. Construction is expected to be completed by 2021.

IF THEY COME, WE CAN BUILD IT

There has been a noticeable improvement in sentiment these past few months. One of the interesting shifts in thinking among the Newcastle business community is that, whereas we have been focused on building infrastructure and creating incentives to attract companies to set up in our city, the time has come to focus on attracting talent.

Essentially, if we are able to create a level of optimism that top talent in technology, engineering, construction or any other industry will find good jobs with great businesses locally, we can build a talent pool that will entice new ventures to set up shop in Newcastle.

We all agree that Newcastle is a great place to live. The lifestyle, beaches, convenience and opportunities are clear to anyone who lives here. In conjunction with promoting our city as a great lifestyle choice, we will tie that into Newcastle's obvious benefits as a career choice.

When you consider the advances we are making in clean technology, with companies like Diffuse Energy, Star Scientific and Evergen grabbing headlines nationally, there is a lot of positive media about the contribution Newcastle is making to a sustainable future in Australia. Add to that the need for software developers, mechatronic engineers, IoT experts, scientists, data analysts and data engineers and you have a very small industry sector creating a disproportionate demand for the best brains we have to offer. That is just one sector that is world class in Newcastle.

It is an exciting and tumultuous period we are experiencing, an opportunity to make a bold statement about who we are, what we do, and why our commercial enterprise, top class technology, smart city program and drive toward a circular economy are indisputable reasons to choose Newcastle as the place to build your career and live a fantastic lifestyle.



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LAKE MAC BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Ampcontrol has taken home the Excellence in Innovation award at the 2020 Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards for their work producing ventilator prototypes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The local electrical engineering company joined a spectacular line up of Lake Mac businesses at this year's virtual awards ceremony and celebrated with the win in the innovation category.

Ampcontrol has had a massive year. To go along with this award, the company has also been recognised as the Mining Supplier of the Year at the NSW Mining Industry & Suppliers Awards 2020. It was however their work on an emergency hospital ventilator prototype, which was unveiled in May this year that earned them this award.

What was remarkable about their ventilator production was that the team – who normally specialised in resources, infrastructure and energy – were able to design and deliver a fully functional emergency ventilator prototype to the John Hunter Hospital for clinical testing in just 18 days.

Lake Macquarie Mayor, Cr Kay Fraser congratulated Ampcontrol and all 13 category winners and finalists who have excelled this year, despite the impacts of COVID-19.

"Never before has our businesses community had to adjust so rapidly to change because of COVID-19 restrictions. It has been really difficult for many businesses across our city, but these awards have been a chance to celebrate the successes and resilience shown by our local businesses," Cr Fraser said.

"We have an amazing business community in Lake Mac epitomised by organisations like Ampcontrol, so it has been wonderful to be able to provide some positive recognition and congratulate them on their achievements this year.

I congratulate all our finalists and award winners and I encourage our community to get behind local business and show your support where you can."

The Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards saw 44 finalists across the 13 categories tune into a live virtual awards presentation hosted by NBN newsreader and journalist Natasha Beyersdorf at the Belmont 16s.

Dantia CEO Peter Francis said that it was great to see a strong field of entries again this year who have contributed to the City and its economy.

"The quality of entries this year was outstanding again, with a range of entries received across many industries. Lake Macquarie has a depth of talent and innovation across our local businesses and it's great that we can celebrate our strengths and highlight some really amazing businesses," said Mr Francis.

Winners from tonight's virtual awards ceremony will progress to the Hunter Business Awards later this year.

Hunter Business Chamber CEO Bob Hawes said he was thrilled with the support that Council has shown to local businesses by continuing with the Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards.

"Receiving an industry award is a fantastic accolade and an invaluable way to promote and grow a business. Congratulations to all of the winners and good luck to them at the Hunter Business Awards, which will take place in November this year," Mr Hawes said.



LAKE MACQUARIE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2020 WINNERS

Outstanding Young Employee

Daniel Ebbin – ITEC Group Australia

Outstanding Young Entrepreneur

Jack Antcliff – Oasis Media

Outstanding Business Leader

Joseph Lorrinan – Evergreen Energy Consultants

Outstanding Employer of Choice

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Excellence in Business

Safearth

Excellence in Small Business

Maxi-Jazz Dance Studio

Excellence in Micro Business

JetBuzz

Excellence in Sustainability

Allambi Care

Excellence in Retail, Hospitality and Tourism

CoastXP

Excellence in Innovation

Ampcontrol

Contribution to the City

Graffiti Dan

Outstanding COVID-19 Business Adaption

Charlestown Bowling Club

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE WINNER LOOKING TO EXPAND FURTHER

Certified Property Law Specialists KENT Conveyancing were a proud winner of the Employer of Choice award at the 2020 Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards.

Founder Michelle Kent said “We are honoured to be recognised for the workplace and team culture we have created at KENT Conveyancing. We are passionate about providing education, training and support to all of our staff.”

Among a range of employee focussed measures, KENT Conveyancing do group training as gym or corporate training. Staff are also treated to additional benefits such as hair treatments for work that goes beyond expectations.

The business is also very focussed on the skill growth of their staff with all employees currently undertaking some form of education or training.

Established in 2006, KENT Conveyancing has built a strong reputation for their level of customer service and their ability to provide legal advice 24/7 on any property law related matter.

This has resulted in steady growth of the businesses.

“We are looking to expand further,” said Michelle, “and would love experienced conveyancers and licences conveyancers to join our growing team.”



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**Lake Macquarie
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A STRONGER VOICE FOR HUNTER VALLEY WINE COUNTRY

On 16 September in a move that will see potential unlocked for local tourism operators in Australia's most visited wine region, Cessnock City Council (CCC) approved the formation of a Joint Tourism Services Agreement between the Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and the Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association (HVWTA).

At a Special General Meeting of the member-run Hunter Valley Wine & Tourism Association seen the Agreement formalised in late October, creating a powerful single brand for Hunter Valley Wine Country fulfilling both destination marketing and delivering best practise in-destination tourism services.

In response to member feedback received earlier in the year the HVWTA sought to streamline services and gain greater resource and asset efficiencies as well as access to funding, by forming a working alliance with Council.

"Building on the momentum of The Alliance, we set out to create one tourism service representing the interests of operators in Hunter Valley Wine Country, delivering a range of economic benefits to members, while creating a single unified entity to promote, market and advocate on behalf of wine country. The model will also unlock significant potential funding streams to support a sustainable and highly-competitive tourism brand, capable of advocating across all levels of government," explained Christina Tulloch, President of the HVWTA.

A major part of bringing together the two organisations is the creation of a new funding model to identify cost savings, increase income from the visitor economy, improve access to grant funding, and most importantly implementing a fee structure that equitably and fairly levies membership fees from all those who either directly or indirectly rely on the success of the Hunter Valley Wine Country brand to sustain their business.

HISTORIC MOU TO PROVIDE CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE AGED CARE FACILITY FOR COMMUNITY

Two major local Aboriginal community-controlled organisations have committed to work together to provide a culturally safe Aged Care facility for their elderly community into the future.

On 15 October, Awabakal Ltd and Biraban Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) signed an historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will pave the way forward to explore common economic, social, and cultural goals for the Aboriginal community of the Hunter region.

Biraban LALC will provide the land for the aged care facility and Awabakal will provide the medical care and services to the growing Indigenous community.

Biraban LALC Chair Mr Edward Smith said the partnership is significant.

"This MoU will officially bring together an Aboriginal landowner in Biraban Local Aboriginal Land Council and a strong Aboriginal service provider in Awabakal Ltd. Together, we can ensure that our community and Elders are cared for in a culturally safe environment."

Awabakal Ltd Deputy Chair Raymond Smith said the MoU is a positive step forward.

"As the leading provider of medical services for our people, Awabakal is excited to partner with Biraban in developing a unique facility for our Elders and community. And as we begin to scope the development's potential, we'll also explore partnerships and opportunities with other Indigenous organisations."



SLR ACQUIRES KDC

SLR has acquired KDC, a planning and development consultancy headquartered in Newcastle.

The integration of the KDC team will build upon SLR's industry leading environmental planning, management and approvals capabilities. By providing additional expertise in development and strategic planning advice, SLR will now offer true end-to-end planning services, particularly to clients in the Built Environment sector.

Led by Managing Director Benjamin Young, the KDC team is client focussed and results driven specialist team, providing statutory planning, environmental impact assessments, development and project management, strategic planning and social planning services. They have strong established relationships with local councils and authorities, in addition to world leading retail and commercial organisations. The 'KDC way' is also perfectly aligned with SLR's 'One Team' culture, which is built around a concerted focus on people and clients.

Neil Penhall, SLR's Chief Executive said "This is a really exciting time for our team in the Asia Pacific region. Not only

will this acquisition provide us with a recognised and established planning presence in the region, but it gives us the ability to help our clients through every stage of their project lifecycle, regardless of the sector."

Neil added "This is SLR's sixth acquisition over the last 18 months. Despite recent challenges associated with Covid-19, this acquisition reflects the confidence that we and our investors, Charterhouse Capital Partners, have in progressing our growth plans and desire to provide world-class solutions and advice to our clients."

Benjamin Young, KDC Managing Director, commented "By joining the SLR team it not only enables the growth and evolution of KDC whereby we are able to maintain our client first approach, but will allow us to better service our clients right across the country. The two businesses share the same values, with a strong emphasis on people, whether that be staff or clients. We are excited to be part of the SLR team and looking forward to the opportunities that this can offer for our existing staff and clients."

NEW DIRECT FLIGHTS BETWEEN CANBERRA AND NEWCASTLE



Newcastle Airport has announced a new direct service between Canberra and Newcastle, commencing 20 November.

The service will be operated by Canberra based airline Link Airways who will fly 34-seater Saab 340B Plus aircraft with a flight time of just 60-minutes to the ACT.

The service will commence with four return services per week, initially with the aim of building the schedule to 11 return services per week in 2021.

Newcastle Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock says the service will offer the region greater choice and flexibility on a route which supports vital government, defence and business connections.

"At a time when we can see some hope on the horizon for the aviation industry, this is great news for both regions," he said.

"Our Airport is surrounded by the largest regional economy in the country with a catchment that has a high propensity to travel. The ACT is also on a strong growth trajectory, so it's not

surprising that we now have two airlines servicing this route as we do to other major capitals."

"We look forward to working with Link Airways and all of our partner airlines to re-build connections between our region and the rest of the country in the coming weeks and months."

CEO of Link Airways Andrew Major said the airline is very proud to be able to offer these new services which will greatly enhance connectivity between Canberra and Newcastle.

"We receive numerous approaches from parties that travel regularly between Canberra and Newcastle seeking additional capacity and a larger range of fares on the route. The Saab 340B Plus aircraft with full inflight cabin service will significantly enhance the offering."

The schedule allows for weekend stays in addition to the opportunity to spend a full business day at their destination and return home that same afternoon.



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ANOTHER ACCREDITED SPECIALISTS FOR MORAY & AGNEW

Joan Williams, Senior Associate at Moray & Agnew in Newcastle, has been awarded Specialist Accreditation in Personal Injury Law from the Law Society of New South Wales.



Specialist accreditation is a structured peer-to-peer assessment process enabling legal practitioners to be recognised for their expertise. Each year the Law Society runs the accreditation program for a select number of areas of law.

Joan's expertise focuses on public liability, product liability and professional indemnity claims arising from diverse circumstances, ranging from 'slip and falls', through to injuries on worksites involving multiple defendants and complex questions of indemnity and dual insurance, and injury and damage from defective products and professional practices. Her broad experience includes working for a time with the Australian Federal Police's legal team in Canberra.

Sean O'Sullivan, Managing Partner (Newcastle), said, "We're very proud of Joan's achievement, which is testament to her exceptional skills, talent and hard work. The Law Society's specialist accreditation program consists of meticulous assessments on both legal knowledge and its application in practice. Joan joins her colleagues Kim Ebbeck, Alwyn Gillis, Matt Huckerby, Mark Malley, Cathy Pares and Erin Woodward to achieve accreditation in this specialist area. In fact, Moray & Agnew's Newcastle office boasts over 30% of all personal injury Accredited Specialists in the Newcastle region."

STUDENTS' BAND TOGETHER TO ARCHITECT A FUTURE FOR KOALAS

A group of more than 20 University of Newcastle Architecture students have contributed their design skills to a project aimed at helping the endangered koala species.

As part of a hands-on two-week intensive elective, students were tasked with designing a perimeter fence and entry for a new Koala Breeding, Rehabilitation Education & Tourism Precinct to be built in Cowarra State Forest.

A prototype of their timber design and a virtual reality experience will be presented to a panel of guest critics today, including the project client, Forestry Corporation NSW (FCNSW). The architectural design includes fencing, entry feature walls, Indigenous art and signage into the precinct.

To gain a holistic understanding of the challenges koalas face and their habitat, the students visited Port Macquarie Koala Hospital, participated in a koala tracking expedition where they spotted 'Shazza' and her joey, and witnessed an Aboriginal Cultural Burn.

Multi-award-winning architect, Professor Ken McBryde of the University of Newcastle, is leading the course.



AUSTRALIA'S FIRST LITHIUM-ION BATTERY MANUFACTURING FACILITY TO BE BUILT IN TOMAGO



On 13 October Energy Renaissance, Australia's first lithium-ion battery manufacturer, announced that it will build Renaissance One, a new \$28 million battery manufacturing facility in Tomago.

The company produces batteries that are safe, affordable and optimised to perform in hot climates. Energy Renaissance's batteries can be used to power infrastructure, buildings, businesses and homes.

"We have settled on Tomago as the site of our first plant. Construction will commence and the plant is scheduled for completion in 2021," said Mark Chilcote, Managing Director of Energy Renaissance.

He said that the 4,000 sqm purpose-built facility will be constructed by local property developer ATB Morton and have an initial battery production capacity of 66 MWh per annum, with plans to scale its Australian operation to 5.3 GWh of energy storage per annum with an additional investment of more than \$200 million.

"Over 1,700 direct jobs will be created during the construction and operational phase and another 6,500 indirect jobs will be generated for the benefit of the Hunter.

"The Hunter region has all the right skills, natural resources, expertise and an abundance in solar energy for us to develop a successful battery

manufacturing business in Australia," Chilcote said.

It's expected that more than half of the batteries produced at Renaissance One will be exported through the Port of Newcastle.

The Federal Government provided a co-funded grant of \$246,625 through the Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre to Energy Renaissance. This has been used to accelerate research and development as it starts to manufacture batteries locally.

Patron Senator for the Hunter Region Hollie Hughes congratulated Energy Renaissance on its investment in the Hunter during a ground-breaking ceremony at the Tomago site.

"Energy Renaissance will make clean and affordable energy more accessible and create greater energy security for Australia and our neighbouring countries.

"Once Renaissance One is operating at capacity, it will be able to provide - in the space of a year - enough batteries to power every public school, hospital, fire station, SES unit and new homes built in Australia.

"That's reassuring because Australia will be able to rely on its own source of renewable energy in the very near future," Senator Hughes said.

Mark Chilcote said that building Renaissance One at Tomago will provide significant competitive advantages to Energy Renaissance.

"Access to the Port of Newcastle will allow us to ship our batteries to Southeast Asia while working with highly-skilled talent from CSIRO's Energy Centre and graduates from the University of Newcastle."

Dr Jens Goennemann, Managing Director of AMGC said, "With its new site, Energy Renaissance will leverage Australia's abundance of natural resources by adding value to raw materials, building onshore capability, and exporting into global markets. This in-turn will generate significant local manufacturing jobs and boost prosperity for the nation while giving Australia a significant foothold in the growing energy storage sector."

2021 HUNTER INVESTMENT PROSPECTUS

NOW SEEKING SUPPORT

We are currently seeking support for the 2021 edition of the **Hunter Business Investment Prospectus**, the annual publication that promotes the Hunter Region as a smart business, investment and lifestyle choice.

Produced as a high-quality book and available on the internet, the **Hunter Investment Prospectus** is a powerful marketing tool for our Region.

SUPPORT THE HUNTER WHILE ALSO PROMOTING YOUR ORGANISATION

Production of this important project is only made possible through supporters. It also provides them with a valuable marketing tool to promote their organisation's products and services, as well as highlighting their active support for the Region.

We hope you will consider supporting the 2021 Hunter Investment Prospectus to help grow the Hunter and your organisation.

For further information please contact Hunter Business Publications Pty Ltd on (02) 4062 8133 or email garry@HBRmag.com.au

Have you read the 2020 edition of the Hunter Investment Prospectus?

The 2020 edition can be read online at <http://www.hunterinvest.com.au>

A wide range of organisations supported the 2020 edition.

Contact us to find out how you can join this impressive list for the 2021 edition.



NEWCASTLE CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE GOING AHEAD

Nationwide domestic and family violence support charity and Australian Charity of the Year 2018, Friends with Dignity is helping to create a brighter Christmas for survivors of domestic and family violence amidst the COVID pandemic by pushing ahead with their annual Christmas Toy Drive.

The annual Friends with Dignity Christmas Drive is in its fifth consecutive year, and was born after the not-for-profit organisation realised a need to provide some happiness and a sense of normality to individuals and families in refuge at what is supposed to be a wonderful time of the year.

Friends with Dignity is calling out to the public to donate new and unwrapped gifts for men, women and children. All gifts are welcome from fishing rods and rugby balls, to magazines and make-up.

Each refuge and agency that registers for the Toy Drive provides a general breakdown of ages and gender of the children and adults.

"We try and provide a larger toy, a smaller toy and a book for each child, depending on the amount of the donations we receive," said Friends With Dignity National Community Engagements Manager, Rosemary Macchiavelli.

"Plus also something for the Mum and/or Dad, to put a smile on their faces, too.

"For this reason we ask that all gifts are to be unwrapped. We also accept and appreciate gift cards and vouchers.

"Wrapping paper, gift bags, sticky tape and scissors are also accepted to allow the parent to choose an appropriate gift for their child and provide them the dignity of wrapping the present on Christmas Eve."

Members of the community are also encouraged to host a workplace drive to collect toys and gifts with colleagues and can email community@friendswithdignity.org.au for more information and to register.

All gifts and donations are to be dropped off to one of the registered locations by no later than the 7 December to allow time to distribute to all the agencies and services.

All donors are reminded to take the necessary precautions to ensure COVID safety.

For a full list of drop-off locations, please visit www.friendswithdignity.org.au/christmastoydrive or email community@friendswithdignity.org.au.

NSW GOVERNMENT FUNDS \$18.9 MILLION WATER SECURITY PROJECT FOR MUSWELLBROOK

Michael Johnsen MP, Member for Upper Hunter has announced that Muswellbrook Shire and the broader Upper Hunter region is set to benefit from a new water pipeline that will allow local businesses to expand their operations, open the door to new agribusiness investment opportunities and create hundreds of local jobs, thanks to NSW Government funding.

Mr Johnsen said \$18.9 million from the Growing Local Economies fund for the construction of the 11 km Upper Hunter Water Security Project pipeline that will supply water from Denman to Hollydeen, and a further 6.5 km pipeline connecting Hollydeen to Sandy Hollow.

"The pipeline has the potential to service proposed developments in the region, such as the Yarraman Abattoir and Feedlot, and still have plenty of capacity available for future commercial and industrial developments," Mr Johnsen said.

"Building this pipeline will deliver water security for prospective businesses and provide even more reason to invest in Muswellbrook Shire and the broader Upper Hunter region."

"The new pipeline will also deliver a secure water supply to local communities, boosting resilience to future droughts and helping strengthen agricultural employers based locally and in the western area of Muswellbrook Shire."

Muswellbrook Shire Councillor and Spokesperson for Community Engagement Steve Reynolds welcomed this news and commended the State Government for delivering this funding.

"This is great news for our Shire, delivering a vital resource to our ratepayers and wider rural area, and this pipeline will not only enhance the liveability, but also opens the door for industry and tourism," Clr Reynolds said.

"In this current economic climate to receive the support of the State Government to this amount, sends a strong message that rural and regional NSW is being heard, and I would like to congratulate our Council staff on the behalf of the community for seeing this through."

NTL CONNECTS TO LORD HOWE ISLAND

The Hunter Region and Northern NSW will have easier access to World Heritage site Lord Howe Island from 14 November, thanks to a new agreement between Newcastle Airport and Port Macquarie based airline, Eastern Air Services.

Eastern will operate direct service from Newcastle Airport to Lord Howe Island on a 10-seat Beechcraft B200 aircraft providing the region with an ideal opportunity to experience an 'overseas' holiday whilst staying within the jurisdiction of NSW.

Newcastle Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock said he was buoyed by the growing optimism in the aviation industry and excited about the ability of the airport to help connect its region with one of the most beautiful places on earth.

"With domestic borders starting to open, I think we'll see strong demand for leisure travel within Australia in the coming weeks," he said.

"We know our customers are keen to fly and with international travel still some way off, we feel the people of our region deserve a range of exciting and unique holiday options. The eco-tourism experience at this World Heritage island certainly fits that category."

"Importantly, an opportunity also exists for our region to provide direct support to Lord Howe Island residents, acting as the key service centre for the Island providing medical, retail, and other services to the population," said Dr Cock.

CEO of Eastern Air Services Christian Corse said he was very excited about the new opportunity.

"Lord Howe Island is incredibly popular with the people of the Central Coast, Hunter and Mid North Coast, so we expect this service to grow quickly," he said.

With a flight time of just under 2-hours, the schedule will commence on 14 November with one service a week, initially, on a Saturday.

Frequency will increase with demand over the peak summer months and as awareness of the service increases. People can book now on the Eastern Air Services website or via their local travel agent.

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RESOURCE RECOVERY CENTRE DIVERTS OVER 3,100 TONNES OF WASTE IN FIRST YEAR

In the first year of operation the Resource Recovery Centre (RRC) at Summerhill Waste Management Centre has recycled the weight equivalent of 74 semi-trailers of waste destined for landfill, whilst generating income for the City.

Opened in September 2019, the \$6 million RRC provides over 2,000 sqm of undercover sorting area. Staff sort recoverable items such as metals, cardboard, soft plastics, clean wood and electrical goods from loads of mixed waste, where previously this material would have been disposed of directly to landfill.

Prior to the RRC, the Small Vehicle Recovery Centre was only able to accept 10-12,000 tonnes of waste per annum, due to size and equipment restrictions, and only 3% of this was able to be recycled. Since commencing operations, City of Newcastle has recovered and diverted 3,100 tonnes of recyclables from landfill, which is a substantial increase to 16% materials recycled.

So far, this initiative has saved over \$450,000 in waste levy fees to the Environment Protection Authority by recovering items for recycling, rather than disposal to landfill and has generated in excess of \$250,000 income from sale of those resources.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nemes said there has been a significant financial benefit for the City.

"The Resource Recovery Centre is a real win for ratepayers. The initial build was partly funded by the NSW Government and the fully operational facility now pays for itself, with the savings from waste levy fees and revenue from the sale of goods outweighing the operational costs to run the facility.

"It's an ongoing investment for the City of Newcastle. As the City develops its strategic vision for Summerhill, the model for this facility represents a blueprint for future facilities to be developed on the site focusing on diverting additional waste from landfill."



Lord Mayor Nuatali Nemes and Deputy Lord Mayor Declan Clausen celebrate the Resource Recovery Centre's first birthday with the centre's staff.

Manager Waste Services Troy Uren said the venture benefits both the environment and the community.

"Not only are we keeping recyclable material out of landfill, the City is contributing to a circular economy by selling waste materials to be repurposed and delivering positive economic, environmental and social outcomes for the Newcastle community.

"Newcastle residents have embraced the RRC, where they can bring sorted materials for free to be recycled. Scrap metal, cardboard, soft plastic and e-waste can all be dropped off at no cost, as well as problem household waste such as paint, gas bottles and batteries.

"We're continuing our commitment to the environment by constructing an organics recycling facility, due to start processing our garden waste on site in 2022, with an aim to incorporate food waste by 2026 and divert 900,000 tonnes of food and green waste from landfill over 25 years."



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Let's Talk with...



BARLEY WARD-THOMAS

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

My title is Stud Manager at Darley Aberdeen. I am responsible for the day to day operations on the stud. These responsibilities include: people, horses, farm, vehicles and garden. I am responsible for the implementation of the annual operating and capital budget. I also have a role in the general bloodstock decisions and the mating decision.

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

My first job was actually selling hosiery in a department store in London. Prior to starting there I thought it was part of the garden department. After that I started work in Ireland at Coolmore stud. I was what they referred to as a student there for 3 years. This was a less formal job, more on the training side. Primarily I learnt about hard work and became very familiar with a pitchfork. I was lucky enough to be seconded by Coolmore to work in France, America and NZ during this time. I moved on to manage a small stud in England for a season. I was only 23 and really felt that the career progression in England was slow. I was advised that Australia was the best place to go. I started work with Arrowfield in 1988 before going on to Wakefield, then Torryburn. I was lucky enough to then work for Lex Tall who was setting up a broodmare farm and business from scratch. Designing, building, staffing – every conceivable component of the business. It was certainly a very challenging role but one that taught me the most in terms of managing a very varied enterprise and more understanding priority in terms of what was important. It was also certainly a position with great rewards. I moved onto Darley 6 years later and in 2009 started my current role with them. I believe I am in the best job.

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

I am married with three children so family life keeps us very busy. My eldest daughter is in Sydney and the two boys are at home so despite COVID the kids sport etc takes us all over the state. My great passion outside my family is fly fishing. I am lucky enough to have some great mates and we travel most years to New Zealand to fish. I am an avid reader and will watch basically any sport with a ball or a race.

4. Where do you find inspiration?

I work in an amazing environment with great people and fantastic stock. The understanding that I am incredibly fortunate is a great motivator. Godolphin is a company that is always looking to improve and actively promotes this with the people that work here. This is both an inspiration and a motivator. I don't think I have an individual who inspires me – more the ethos around success and leadership comes with a responsibility towards others.

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

'Don't make a big decision when you are tired' was advice my father gave me when I was about 20. It is very sound and something I would pass on. 'Walk a mile in their shoes' is another that I really like. An old boss said 'nothing good happens after midnight' – but that is hard to live by.

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

I love living in the Hunter. It has been my home for 30 + years and has evolved enormously over that time. We obviously need to plan to diversify the region as it is incredibly reliant on one industry. The community, environment, education and employment needs to be planned so that we have a place for young people to grow up feeling that this is where they want to stay.

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

Cottage Scone

8. Are you reading anything at the moment?

Anarchy by Dalrymple

9. Do you have a favourite sport or team?

Knights

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

Get busy living or get busy dying

PREPARING FOR THE IMPACT OF STORM SEASON CAN SAVE TIME AND MONEY

Steve Dick

Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle

Whether you're a property owner or tenant, storms and other natural disaster are frequent occurrences that can cost tenants and landlords tens of thousands of dollars in damage.

Recent research by small business lender OnDeck, for example, found that almost half (46%) had been affected by climate and weather events.

At Raine & Horne Commercial, climate events significantly impact us, as during these times our property managers must react to the problems our tenants are experiencing.

So, as a tenant, what should you do when affected by a natural disaster (2020 has had its share)? Of course, we have little control over the elements, although there are some steps you can take to help address the situation:

1. Act with caution and do not place your staff or yourself in danger.
2. Take steps to mitigate damage.
3. Report the damage to your property manager, strata manager and insurer
4. Ensure you document the situation with photographs and videos
5. Seek a method of prevention from the responsible people
6. Try to act with urgency and not emotion

Of course, these disasters come in many forms, wind, fire, hail, earthquake, flooding, and rain however the insidiousness of water is probably the most frequent problem faced as it infiltrates through the smallest gaps.

Our property managers at Raine and Horne are here to assist our owners and tenants when problems occur, but they cannot physically fix the problem. Buildings are what they are, a place of shelter from the elements. We find the very new buildings and the very old are probably the most susceptible to the effects of heavy rain.

Our office is not immune to the same issues. Last year, we lost a \$45,000 printer and stock when a ceiling collapsed due to an overflowing gutter. The financial loss was severe enough. However, the disruption to our office productivity was substantial.

All this damage and disruption was avoidable with regular property maintenance. The valuable lesson we learned and passed onto our landlords was to make sure gutters and drainage are checked and cleaned routinely. Prevention will mitigate or cure most of these issues.

In summary, when it comes to climate-proofing a property,

- understand the maintenance required
- be sure to know and understand your lease and who is responsible for drainage whether it is the tenant or landlord.
- Then make sure the drainage is maintained to give yourself a fighting chance when the next deluge strikes.

Finally, be kind to your property manager. They are probably coping it from all quarters on extreme weather days.

If you're considering investing, buying or leasing commercial space in the Hunter region, contact Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle on (02) 4915 3000.



Steve Dick is a Director of Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle.

HUNTER'S NEWEST DISPLAY VILLAGE OPEN IN HUNTLEE



The newest Display Home Village in the Hunter is open at Huntlee. COVID meant plans for Huntlee's second Display Village had to be altered and timetables adjusted, but it is now in full swing.

The village boasts the latest designs from eleven of the state's leading builders, with 15 homes already open and another three designs nearing completion.

Commenting on Display Village 2.0, Huntlee Sales Director, Robert Crane said he was delighted with the mix of builders and designs on offer.

"We've handpicked our builder partners to ensure there is something to suit the lifestyle, life stage and budget of all of our buyers," said Rob.

"Huntlee is the first new town to be built in the Hunter in well over 50 years and, as a fully master-planned community, it's attracting people of all ages and stages in life.

"In the new display village, we have designs suited to first homebuyers, upsizers, empty nesters and everything in between. The Huntlee land sales offering includes lot sizes ranging from our smaller cottage lots right up to acreages, and the homes on display complement this. Our builder partners have carefully selected display homes idyllically suited to the Huntlee market and can work with you to customise your dream home to suit your perfect lot."

In the new year, Rob and his sales team will be relocating from the current Huntlee Land Sales Centre at No. 1 Triton Boulevard to a custom-built home of their own at the entrance to the new display village.

"It just makes sense for us to be in the middle of the action," said Rob.

"Prospective homebuyers can walk through the 18 fabulous homes, chat to the onsite builder reps about their wants, needs and aspirations and then, once they have their perfect home design pinned down, come and talk to us and we can ensure they choose a site which is sized and orientated to suit their design.

"Huntlee is unique in its capability of constantly bringing new lots onto the market to match buyer demand. On completion, Huntlee will comprise 7500 lots and be home to approximately 20,000 residents, comparable in size to a town like Singleton. Because we own all the land and have master-planned every aspect of the development, we can be highly adaptive to market demands and modify releases to suit the needs of our buyers."

DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS DISCOUNT TO DRIVE MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN LAKE MAC

Lake Macquarie City Council is proposing to support the development of more affordable housing across the City by introducing an 85% discount on development contributions.

The proposal would see a discount applied on development contributions for specific types of social and affordable rental housing, including in-fill housing, boarding houses, supportive accommodation and residential flat buildings.

Lake Macquarie Mayor Cr Kay Fraser has backed the proposal that will take a positive step towards providing much-needed housing options for those in our community that need it most.

"Around 13% of households across our City need some type of social and affordable housing. Initiatives such as this can go a long way to helping our most disadvantaged residents have an affordable roof over their heads," Cr Fraser said.

"We know we need more social and affordable housing across Lake Macquarie City and around NSW, and I hope that with this discount it encourages more developers to build this kind of housing."

As part of the proposal, social and affordable rental housing developments would still be levied a 15% contribution, which strikes a balance between encouraging developers to build this type of housing and ensuring that local facilities, like cycleways, parks and playgrounds can still be provided.

The introduction of the development contributions discount aligns with the Lake Macquarie City Housing Strategy, which identified that some people are waiting between 5 and 10 years for affordable accommodation.



ESTABLISHED TENANT WITH SOLID RETURN



Starr Partners Maitland are pleased to introduce this exceptional investment opportunity.

The tenant has been in occupation since 2009 and has a longstanding relationship with the community through its many sporting programs.

- Returning \$162,000 per annum net
- Clear span building
- Build area: 1791 m2 approx.
- 40 onsite car spaces
- Zoning: B5 Business Development
- Liquor licence
- Male and female amenities
- Separate offices and canteen
- Leased until 29/11/2023 with a 5 year option to renew

For further Information please call

Matthew Higgins 0403 706 042

EXCEPTIONAL INVESTMENT WITH UPSIDE



Starr Partners Maitland are pleased to present to the market one of the best investment/redevelopment opportunities we have seen for a while.

This landmark property offers up plenty of options, including leasing the ground floor which includes an impressive fitout, refurbishment of the first floor into office space or redevelopment into apartments. With 18 onsite carspaces you will be ahead of the rest.

- Prime main street location
- 20 metre frontage*
- A grade ground floor fitout
- Ground Floor 550m²*
- First Floor 550m²*
- 18 onsite carspaces
- Site area 1496m²*

For further Information please call

James Rodrick 0400 092 414

Matthew Higgins 0403 706 042

ICONIC PROPERTY IN PRIME MAITLAND CBD LOCATION



435 High Street is a prime mixed use property with potential upside.

Located in the heart of Maitland's 'The Levee' precinct, offering dual income on ground level and a third income stream available from the first floor vacancy. The property benefits tremendously from its rear lane access and off street parking. This is a rare opportunity to purchase a high calibre income producing property.

- Zoned B4 Mixed Use
- Prime city centre location
- Current net income \$63,500
- Building area 550m²*
- Site area 540m²*
- Redevelopment opportunity
- Triple income streams available
- Great street presence
- Excellent frontage
- 2 off street car spaces

Contact our team today to book an inspection!

For further information please call

Matthew Higgins 0403 706 042

Andrew Cant 0414 648 881

P: 4933 6299 W: starrpartners.com.au

Raine & Horne Commercial

FOR LEASE

NEWCASTLE



480 Hunter Street (Level 1)

This small office is full of features and diagonally across from the Newcastle Uni – it can be leased as a whole or as (2) separate suites.

Lease from: \$26,000pa + OGs + GST

STEVE DICK 0425 302 771

FOR SALE

NEWCASTLE WEST



710 Hunter Street (Suite 3)

Modern partitioned office suite (168m²) located on ground floor of the Riverwalk commercial development. Air-conditioned, acoustic tile grid ceiling and carpeted. Comes with (4) car parks. Ideal for owner-occupier.

Sale: On-line Auction

ALAN TONKS 0474 744 422

FOR SALE

NEWCASTLE



239 King Street

Vacant ground floor office 355m² (approx) in commanding position close to some of the city's major landmark buildings. Ducted air-con, freshly painted, comes with (2) car parks. Close to public transport and parking station.

Sale: On-line Auction

JASON MORRIS 0425 302 778

FOR SALE

RUTHERFORD



15- 19 Hinkler Avenue

Industrial investment currently leased to a strong tenant and returning an 8% yield. Main features being: Net Income \$615,000pa, (4) year lease with (3) x (4) year options and a min. of 3% annual rent increase.

Sale: \$7,700,000 (Sold as a going concern).

PAUL TILDEN 0425 302 772

FOR LEASE

KURRI KURRI



178 Lang Street (Shop 9)

Situated in a prime position in the Kingsway Plaza close to Priceline Pharmacy and IGA Liquor, this shop offers exceptional exposure to foot traffic and easy access from car parking.

Lease: \$14,000pa + GST (Gross)

TOBY GREAVES 0425 302 773

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INFORMATION: YOUR KEY TO BUSINESS FINANCE

Andrew Beattie
PKF Newcastle

A business owner needs more than just information...they need the RIGHT information.

So many business owners aren't getting what they need, presented in the right way.

Before determining WHAT information you need, it's critical to understand WHY you need it. Fundamentally; what are your goals, both for your business and your life? Not just retirement – but in the years from now until then. Once you can articulate these, the information you need to achieve them should become clearer.

Some information must be compiled for statutory reporting, but an annual tax return and set of financial statements won't give you what you need to run your business – especially months after year end. Neither will management reporting if it only shows actual results and isn't received in a timely fashion.

Operationally, strategically; you need to make decisions, obtain funding and insurance, manage cashflow – you need contextual, relevant and current data to use with your team and advisers, focusing on the past only in-so-much as it can be used to impact the future.

We've taken on clients who rarely heard from their previous accountant unless it was time to sign something; or worse still, given regular reporting packs they weren't sure what to do with.

Good reporting utilises a three-way budget (profit and loss statement, balance sheet and cash flow statement), comparing actuals to budget and prior periods, giving relativity and identifying trends. It's good to understand why the numbers are what they are, but more important to understand how to change them going forward.



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This is even more important when it comes to financing; the Royal Commission into banking has recommended “no additional statutory obligations should be imposed with respect to the making of loans” to small to medium enterprises (SMEs).

And yet, it seems harder to source funding; more hoops to jump through, lower loan-to-value ratios (LVR), difficulty with interest-only debt, personal guarantees required. The Financial Review anecdotally confirmed what “appears to be an unintended consequence”, with businesses “blaming the royal commission for causing nervous banks to slow lending.”

And so, more than ever, information presented to lenders needs to tell a story and make a case in order to get the result. Very simplistically, lenders want to know:

- Who are we lending to?
- What are the funds being used for?
- How and when are we getting our money back (repayments/ security)?
- and numbers in isolation can't address those points.

There is no one-size-fits-all answer to business reporting, but there is a 'critical minimum' every business owner should be looking at. We'd suggest this includes:

- Management reporting – most relevant within two weeks of month end;
- Three-way budget and ideally a Funds Flow / Source &
- Application of Funds – to show you where the money's gone;
- Covenant monitoring; and

- KPI reporting, with someone holding you and your team accountable, exploring how to make practical changes where required.

The majority of accountants provide compliance services the statutory bodies require – but we believe true advisory means taking business owners where they want to go, rather than just reporting on where they've been. We work with many business owners to generate the information they require to make better decisions and maximise their potential. This service is scalable depending on the needs of the business owner and what's more, with modern technology this is very cost effective.

They say, “there are a million ways for a business to fail”. A lack of timely, pertinent and accurate information should absolutely not be one of them.

For more information please contact Andrew on (02) 4962 2688 or email abeattie@pkf.com.au



Andrew Beattie works as PKF's Business Advisory and Corporate Finance teams, and is primarily based in our Newcastle office. He has an extensive background in accounting, business advisory and the banking sector. For more than nine years, Andrew's professional career has focused on the public practice accounting sector, but also incorporates four years with a major banking institution as a Senior Relationship Manager.

INVOICE FINANCE AND THE BENEFITS FOR SMES

Ian Barry
Grow Capital

For many small and mid-sized companies, 30, 60 and sometimes 90 day payment terms to customers can create a financial challenge. A recent small business survey conducted by Xero found that in any given month, about half of Australian small businesses are cash flow negative, with more money leaving the business than flowing into it.

Most small to medium businesses can't afford to wait 30 to 60 days from the date of invoicing to get paid. They need funds to pay for their suppliers, staff and other ongoing business expenses.

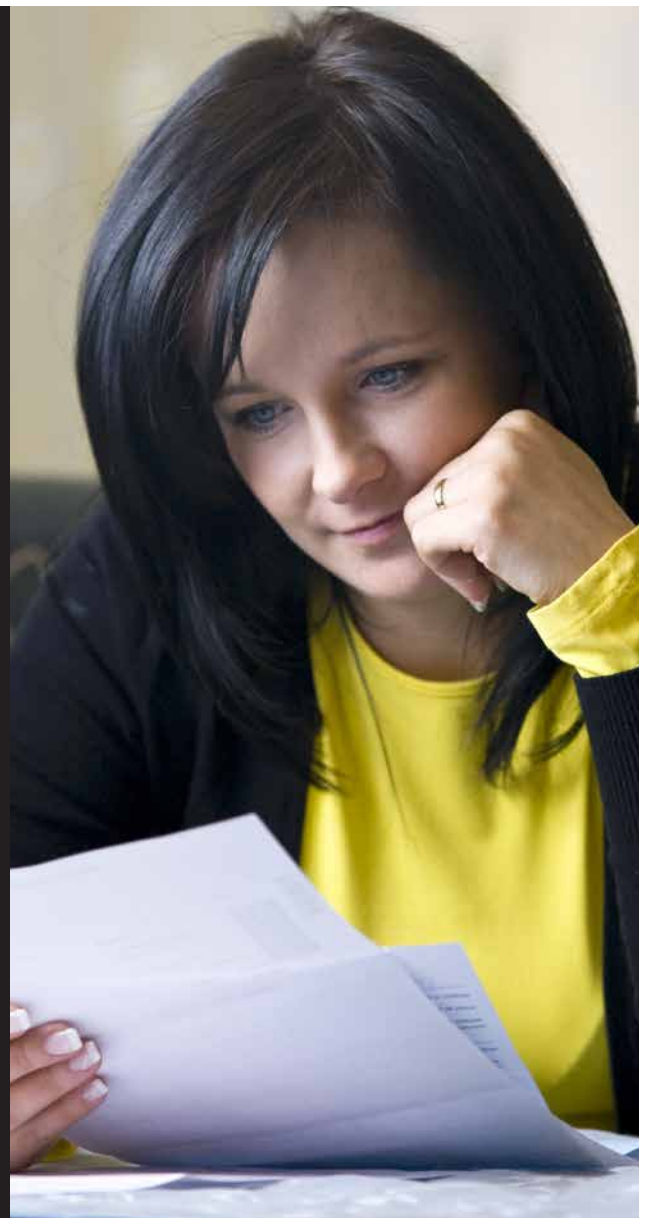
A simple solution to overcome a short term cashflow issue is Invoice finance also known as debtor finance.

This allows you to access funding using your accounts receivable ledger as collateral. These funds can accessed for any business-related expenses – from buying new equipment to paying operating costs or unexpected bills.

Invoice Finance is a cost effective way to unlock these funds and is accessible to just about any B2B service, from start-ups to multimillion dollar companies. There's no need to worry about extra debt or ongoing bank commitments. It increases cashflow, without interfering with any existing business borrowings.

Invoice Finance is not expensive. It still does have a cost that should be considered as just another part of the production chain. Here are three easy ways to include the cost for invoice finance into your services to overcome the cost to you:

1. Create incentive for your customer by providing a discount to early payment. Include an additional cost in production to allow for long invoice payment terms. If the customer pays early, you can pass back the extra cost added as incentive to pay early.



2. There are facilities that allow you to draw only the amount you need for the cost of production. Factor the finance cost into the cost of production when quoting. The cost of the credit is then seamlessly passed on to the customer.
3. Knowing you will be paid early allows you to make payments on your terms. Paying your suppliers early allows you to negotiate a better price of goods or services from them. This can reduce your production costs while maintaining an agreed cost to your customer.

Using all three of these scenarios together can create a powerful tool for your overall bottom line.

Credit cards are a popular option for meeting short-term needs or making a large once-off purchase, however they're a high-interest option compared with most other working capital finance options. If you use your credit card for a funding boost, ensure that you'll be able to make payment when it's due – fees for a missed or late payment are particularly high, which will further erode your cash reserves.

Invoice finance is a more streamlined way to manage your balance sheet, with all your expenses sitting in the same ledger.

How Invoice Finance works

1. The client completes work for their customer.
2. The client issues the invoice to the customer and submits a copy to their invoice finance provider.
3. The finance provider makes up to 90% of the value of the invoice available to draw, within the agreed time.
4. The finance provider collects the invoice and makes the remaining balance, less fees, available to the client for drawdown.

Key benefits of invoice finance:

- No need for a bank overdraft.
- Affordable rates.
- Easy to access.
- Only access the amount you need.
- Accessible for start-ups.
- Streamline balance sheets.
- Flexibility
- Boosts cashflow without seeking a loan.
- Service large companies with long invoice terms.
- Property is generally not required as security for an Invoice Finance facility.
- You may be able to remove the family home from securing your business debt.

With current events and understanding how many companies are cashflow negative, Invoice Finance can separate your business from the others to allow you to grow with a healthy cashflow.

For information please contact Ian Barry on (02) 8310 5922 or email ianb@grow-capital.com.au



Ian Barry returned to Newcastle 18 months ago to represent Grow Capital as a senior businessfinance broker. Ian has successfully owned businesses in hospitality abroad, and contributed to publications and advertising in Australia.

➤ From untapped potential

➤ To unlocked opportunity.

From paying wages to buying stock and importing goods, we help you access the cash tied up in your business, turning hidden assets in to opportunities.

THREE TIPS ON HOW TO RAISE CAPITAL FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Jason Bartlett
DFK Crosbie

Raising capital is an essential process when aiming to grow or finance your business with new ideas. While it certainly isn't easy to do, there are a few tips you can keep in mind.

1. Build a strong company identity

In order to attract general interest from potential investors and partners, it is recommended you form an impressionable and cohesive company or brand identity. Try to develop an identity that is not only an accurate reflection of your company's goals and values but also memorable when you explain it to others. Make sure that your business identity highlights an aspect of your business as unique from others in the industry, whether that be an entirely new type of product, an innovative production method, or even your staff culture. By having an unforgettable company identity, it is much easier to sell your business ideas to potential investors and have them trust in your goals and abilities as well. Your confidence in your business and its identity will naturally translate during your marketing pitches and convince your potential investors and partners to also believe in your abilities. By making sure your business goals and identity align with each other, it becomes much easier for you and all those involved in your business to grow confident in it and invest your resources into it.

2. Research and approach the right investors

When it comes to financial matters, the more options the better. While you may have a clear idea of what you want from an investor, they may not have the same opinions on

you and your business. It is important to consider doing background research on your investors, be aware of your own business position and evaluate whether or not you can meet an investor's expectations and the positive two-way relationship you can build together. The easiest way to find the right investor for you is to widen your scope of potential investors by networking with not only business-savvy people but also those you are familiar with, such as friends, colleagues and even family. Companies that operate purely in your niche industry are also good potential investors to consider. Keep in mind that the right investors are those who can accommodate for your funding needs in both form (some methods of funding are riskier than others) and monetary amount.

3. Organise a pitch

When trying to raise capital for your business, always have a pitch ready to make to any potential investor you come across. Just like your company identity, your pitch should be unique in order for you to stand out amongst your competition. To prepare an impressive marketing pitch, here are some quick tips:

- Structure your pitch as if it is a story to engage your audience.
- Incorporate as many visual components as you can.
- Keep your pitch short and to the punch.
- Make sure that after your pitch, your audience remembers your idea/business.

**For further information contact DFK Crosbie on
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MANUFACTURING: THE HUNTER REGION'S EVOLUTION

Trevor Stuart
Australian Industry Group

Manufacturing in Australia has been a policy punching bag for a while now. Invariably, we hear the same message. 'Public-private partnerships in manufacturing could create jobs in Australia'; 'More R&D is needed to drive growth in manufacturing'; 'manufacturers need to innovate more' etc... etc... These messages have been the same for more than 10 years so what does this all mean for the Hunter Region?

Manufacturers in the region primarily supply products to the mining, defence, aerospace, construction, chemical processing and energy generation markets. The region, and our manufacturers are therefore, for the time being, reliant on the resilience of these sectors. Buried deep within the DNA of our region lies a small number of other areas of expertise. We have significant and increasing capability associated with industrial design, precision machining, engineering design and data integrated manufacturing and are now on the brink of re-defining who we are as an industrial region.

The federal government has identified six sectors where our nation has comparative advantage:

- 'Resources Technology & Critical Minerals Processing' fits perfectly into the Hunter's sweet spot. We have generations of experience in developing smart solutions for resource extraction, energy production and distribution infrastructure.
- 'Food and Beverage' manufacturing is a key sector on the Central Coast.
- 'Recycling & Clean Energy' is an area of interest for the University of Newcastle and indeed the announcement of the Energy Renaissance battery manufacturing facility to be established at Tomago, along the technology developed by MGA Thermal bodes well for the future.
- 'Defence' related manufacturing has grown across the region over the last 10 years and will further expand with the establishment of the Astra Aerolab precinct at Williamtown. We have massive capability and significant underutilised capacity in defence manufacturing.
- 'Space' is a natural extension of our Defence capabilities although not an area of focus for the region up to now
- 'Medical Products' is a previously hidden capability or the region. Ai Group and RDA Hunter have established a medical technology focussed network group designed to explore and expose opportunity for business in the region.

The federal government has committed significant funds to the development of manufacturing capability through the 2020 budget. If ever there was a time for fiscal stimulus it is now. Ai Group particularly welcomes the support the Government is providing to skills development and employment with its backing of 100,000 new apprenticeships and traineeships and the subsidy for employment of previously unemployed people aged under 35. These are measures targeted to younger Australians that we know from experience are among the most at risk in the wake of an economic downturn. The tax-loss carry back measure, the instant asset write-off scheme and the inclusion of second-hand assets within the scheme (with conditions) are all focussed on stimulating investment and driving productivity growth with the development of capability for the long term.

The NSW government has also jumped on board. The 'Regional Job Creation Fund' is designed to support projects which result

in the creation of five jobs or more. Projects must be completed by June 2022 and, for the Hunter Region (excluding Newcastle and Lake Macquarie) projects must be aligned with the 'engine industries' of Agriculture, Mining and Manufacturing.

Manufacturing is a key driver of the economic health of the Hunter Region. Business owners and managers have never had a better time to stop, think and plan. The future may lie in manufacturing products and delivering services for sectors of domestic or international markets not previously considered. I encourage businesses of the region to seize this opportunity and I would be happy to hear from any business who wants to learn more about these opportunities.

For further information contact Trevor Stuart on 02) 4925 8300, email trevor.stuart@aigroup.com.au or visit www.aigroup.com.au



Trevor Stuart is the Regional Manager for the Australian Industry Group (Ai Group) and represents the interests of members located across the Hunter Region, Central Coast and Northern

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UNMANNED MARITIME SYSTEMS SUPPORT CENTRE OPENS

On 15 October Senator Hollie Hughes, the Patron Senator for the Hunter Region, officially opened BlueZone's Unmanned Maritime Systems Support Centre.

BlueZone Group is one of the thousands of SMEs around Australia that support the acquisition and sustainment of capability for the ADF.

"The addition of the Unmanned Maritime Systems Support Centre (UMSSC) will only strengthen this already impressive operation and allow it to continue to service a range of unmanned underwater and unmanned surface vehicles for our Army and Navy - while further developing new technology for the Wave Glider," Senator Hughes said.

Since 2000, BlueZone has provided a truly sovereign defence industrial base for the support of unmanned underwater vehicles and unmanned surface vehicles operated by Navy and Army. The aims of the ADF to operationalise unmanned maritime systems can be supported by industry partners like BlueZone with more than 20 years' experience in providing support for a range of existing Navy and Army robotic systems.

"This places BlueZone, a Hunter Region firm, at the absolute centre of defence innovation," Senator Hughes said.

The initiatives outlined in the new Defence Strategic Update 2020 will assist companies like BlueZone Group to innovate and generate new capability solutions for the ADF.

For example, under contract P17-246768 Theatre ASW- Off board DCL using Wave Gliders, BlueZone and

SME partners (Sonartech Atlas and Acacia Systems) will deliver a highly automated and autonomous system which will contribute to the ADF's integrated undersea surveillance system.

"It's incredible to think that this autonomous waveboard powered by waves, solar energy and batteries and fitted with superior technology can be sent to sea for up to 18 months - detecting friendly and unfriendly submarines," Senator Hughes said.

BlueZone Group chief executive officer Elizabeth Karpel said BlueZone had been very pleased to provide long-term support to the ADF. "Our experience and track record are testament to the capability of our people and our strength and stability for more than two decades," said Elizabeth.

"BlueZone provides leading-edge jobs in maritime robotics and unmanned systems for engineers, technicians and support staff from locations in Newcastle, NSW and Bibra Lake, WA."

"Our east and west coast locations are ideal for servicing Navy support requirements on both sides of the country."

Defence has a clear strategy for the future use of robotic and autonomous systems. BlueZone will continue to provide world class products and support to help achieve the Defence strategy. Australian SMEs like BlueZone are fundamental to Australia's defence capability.

Senator Hollie Hughes and BlueZone CEO Elizabeth Karpel formally open the UMS Support Centre



HUNTER MANUFACTURER PUMPING EXPORT SUCCESS

Brain Industries is poised to take more of its Hunter manufacturing know how to the world according to Managing Director Gillian Summers.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the Carrington based industrial engineering firm recently exported four pneumatic pumps to Africa and the Middle East to be used in the oil and gas sector. Brain's self-filling tankers are now operating in a New Zealand mine. A Brain manufactured safety refuge chamber is in operation in an underground mine in Mexico.

Ms Summers said the export success is part of Brain's business and marketing strategy to diversify its business and its markets in changing times.

"We continue to supply the mining sector across Australia with pumps, conveyor products, self-filling tankers, conveyor products, stone dusters, pulley lagging and fluid injection injury prevention systems," Ms Summers said.

"The oil and gas sector, tunnelling, agriculture and defence sectors are emerging markets for us, particularly for our pumps to help with materials transfer and spill clean ups," she said.

"This year we have also expanded our product range, including the design, manufacture and servicing of conveyor pulleys as well as game-changing load sensing washers.

To support the strategy, Brain has almost doubled its engineering facility space and invested \$1 million in equipment and systems - including a new stress relieving oven, more lathes and specialised welding tools. Enhanced supplier arrangements and a new marketing strategy are also in place.

Meanwhile, Ms Summers welcomed the Federal government's Budget announcement of the JobMaker Hiring Credit initiative and wage subsidy program as well as the Research and Development (R&D) Tax Incentive reforms. She said it would help the business put on an apprentice or two and support product expansion.

"We have an inventor in our business who loves to develop new products and improve on existing products."

"We invest in research and development and continuous improvement so our products work where others fail."

"COVID-19 has put the spotlight on local manufacturing. At Brain, we know we can compete on product performance and longevity as well as delivering genius solutions to client problems. That applies to the domestic and export markets."

Brain Industries received a Highly Commended for Manufacturer of the Year (< 50 employees) at the 2020 Hunter Manufacturing Awards.

Gillian Summers at the Brain Industries' factory



GROUND-BREAKING TECHNOLOGY AUTOMATING THE NZ ROAD USER CHARGES SYSTEM

Hummingbird Electronics was established in Port Stephens, New South Wales in 2008. The company was acquired by the REDARC Group in 2015 and then in July 2017, relocated to an all new purpose-built Innovation Centre based at the Technology Business Park in Williamstown.

Hummingbird develops market leading Australian made products, with a comprehensive portfolio including audio-visual alarms and alert systems, monitoring and detection systems, inclinometers and tilt switches, GPS trip meters, speedometers, and trailer odometers as well as digital signboards.

Key customers continue to bring great ideas to Hummingbird's team of Electronics Engineers who provide a full-service capability to conceptualise and design advanced electronic products, ultimately delivering new and exciting technologies to the mining, civil construction, industrial and fleet management industries.

The EDR2, Electronic Distance Recorder for example, is the latest technology automating the recharge of RUC (road user charges) licences for which Hummingbird is proud to have been named as a finalist in this year's Hunter Manufacturing Awards (HMA) for the Collaboration Partnership Award. Hummingbird entered the category for their collaboration with Teletrac Navman to deliver the device to the New Zealand market.

The collaboration between Hummingbird and Teletrac Navman began four years ago with the development of the EDR1, a device fitted to the heavy-vehicle's dash to accurately monitor its usage and help customers manage their New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) licence requirements.

For version 2, the challenge given to Hummingbird's engineers was to design a low impact, simple to install device that could fit to the trailer's axle. As such the device needed to be ruggedised to withstand the rigours of transport. It needed to include smart features such as a self-charging internal battery that could harness power from the wheel rotation making it completely self-sufficient with no requirement of external wiring and no interference with the trailer ABS, EBS or other systems.

Released in July 2020 the EDR2 met these challenges. The innovation uses GPS technologies and wheel rotation measurements to track the location of heavy-trailers and measure their distance travelled. Such to the benefit of the heavy vehicle industry, the EDR2 also creates efficiencies by automating the recharge of RUC (road user charges) licences, including calculating off-road rebates for heavy trailers, and tracking their location independently of prime movers. Being mounted on the trailer axle, the device does not interfere with basic maintenance such as changing tyres.

REDARC Group MD, Anthony Kittel said, "We're extremely proud to have designed and manufactured the Electronic Distance Recorder. It was a very technically challenging engineering project due to the harsh conditions experienced in the field and I am very proud of the solution created by this collaborative effort."



EARLY SUCCESSES FOR ELECTRIC HYBRID BOAT

Buoyed by early successes, Steber International's first foray into electric hybrid boats has now entered the stage three development phase.

The electric hybrid is a collaborative effort between Steber's, Ampcontrol and Newcastle University, with funding support from the Federal Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

Stage one involved bench testing at Newcastle University followed by stage two, the recent successful sea trials of the hybrid 22ft on the Manning River at Taree, NSW.

Commenting on the sea trials, General Manager, Alan Steber said: "All involved were delighted with the on-water performance. There was no vibration, extremely good torque and a top speed of 40 kph. "Stage three will involve linking electric and diesel propulsion and also include bollard pull testing at various rpm."

Steber's initial involvement included manufacturing the 22ft fibreglass hull, providing all underwater engineering and trailer transport.

Steber research engineer, Steve Hunt designed special mounting brackets for the electric motor as well as shafting components.

Underwater engineering and rudder design was critical in minimising drag and maximising efficiency.

The vessel can run all day on one battery bank at 8kph with a second battery bank available for short bursts of speed if and when required.

With fast-charging systems on board, batteries can be charged overnight ready for a full day of activities the next day.

"The hybrid vessel will be ideal for use patrolling harbours and inland waterways running on the electric motor, with sustained power for extended bluewater use coming from the diesel engine," Mr Steber said.

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SIRON HOLDINGS AND CAFÉ GURU TEAM UP TO TACKLE DISPOSABLE CUP PROBLEM

Sean Edwards is a well-known name in café circles. As founder of the Café Culture brand, he and his entrepreneurial team have long been thought leaders in all things coffee and café. As keen advocates and campaigners for sustainability through the widespread use of reusable cups since the late 90's, they watched with growing alarm as COVID pandemic restrictions all but forced cafes and customers to stop using them.

Sean became increasingly concerned at the implications of that on sustainability but the difficulty of managing the speedy cleaning and sanitising of the reusable cups was a problem no one seemed able to tackle. Until he got a phone call from Greg Gates, Managing Director of the Sirron Holdings Group.

"I was at a loss as to how to get reusable cups back into cafes," said Mr Edwards.

"When Greg called to talk to me about a new alcohol-free sanitiser solution they had developed, I had an instant feeling he was onto something."

Mr Gates felt an instant alignment with the sustainability values at the heart of the Sirron Group. "When Sean turned the conversation to his concern that we were seeing the death of the reusable cup industry and all that implied for sustainability, we knew we had to help. Moreover, we knew we could help," said Mr Gates.

The two and their teams then set about collaborating on solving the key issues holding the industry back: speed and ease of application and impact of the product on baristas, equipment and the reusable cups themselves.

"For the busy café sector, especially with the increased pressure on takeaway service, we knew that time was of the essence," said Mr Gates.

"We developed a food-grade 'dunking' solution for reusable cups that sanitises in 30 seconds - 1 minute. By the time you've ordered and paid for your coffee, the cup is ready for the barista to make it!"

In Australia, one billion paper coffee cups, along with their plastic lids, are thrown away every year.

There are numerous sources that cite the increasing use of paper coffee cups in Australia and the impact on sustainability of both 'regular' and even recyclable paper cups. Most agree the best solution is the reusable cup.

It seems that Café Culture and The Sirron Group have formed a formidable alliance in this venture and are set to continue to provide solutions to positively change the way cafes operate in the future.

"The Sirron Group is a small business with a big heart," said Mr Gates. "The opportunity to create a product that directly helps the cafes of Australia and their customers towards a more sustainable future makes us proud."

"This is such a simple solution to the problem," said Mr Edwards. "Greg and the Sirron development team at Zexa Chemicals have made it even easier for the reusable cup scene than it was prior to the pandemic."

A simple solution with a simple name, "Café Dunk" will soon be available via distributors across Australia.



BLUEZONE GROUP TO DELIVER AUTONOMOUS ANTI-SUB WARFARE CAPABILITY TO RAN

BlueZone Group and its industry partners have been awarded an Australian Defence Innovation Hub grant to develop a sovereign anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capability to support the Royal Australian Navy's integrated undersea surveillance system.

Under the Phase 3 contract, BlueZone Group, Sonartech Atlas and Acacia Systems will prototype an Australian-developed sonar and combat data processing system installed in a Wave Glider unmanned surface vehicle (USV) that will operate as a peer capability alongside existing traditional platforms. Wave Glider is a product of Boeing's Liquid Robotics subsidiary.

"The program builds on the success of our earlier exploratory work and will apply innovative integration of sonar processors and automated tracking technologies with leading-edge ASW sensors and the latest version of Liquid Robotics' Wave Glider," said Elizabeth Karpel, chief executive officer, BlueZone Group.

"This project aims to provide a fully autonomous persistent surveillance capability which will complement the Australian Defence Force's existing and planned ASW force structure." The system will comprise a Wave Glider equipped with

- KraitArray™ thin line towed array sonar for detection of acoustic data;
- Onboard processing of the data which can be classified and localised using Sonartech Atlas technology;
- Tracking information produced by Acacia Systems algorithms that can be communicated from the USV and contribute to the overall ASW situation awareness.

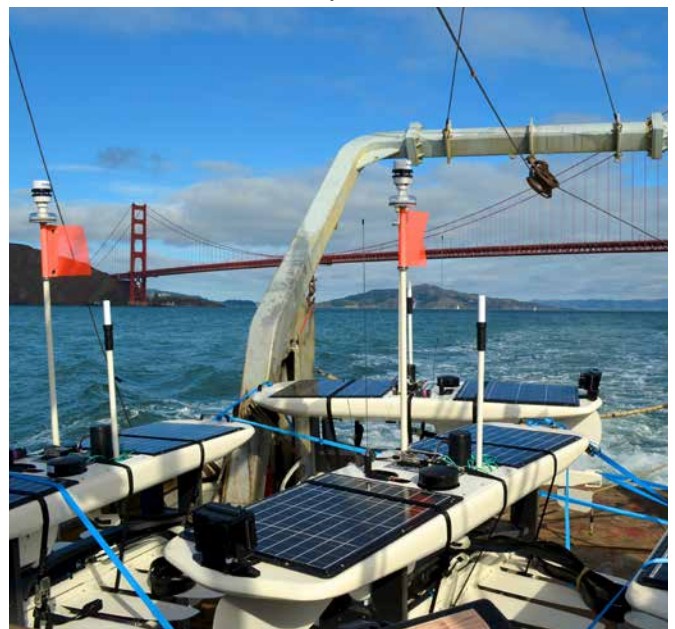
"Using an agile technology development process, BlueZone Group will integrate existing technologies with novel payloads from indigenous SMEs to provide a technology advantage to the ADF," said Darren Burrowes, chief technology officer, BlueZone Group.

Wave Gliders can stay at sea for months at a time, continuously collecting and communicating real-time data while simultaneously supporting a variety of sensor payloads.

"Wave Gliders were selected as the USV development platform based on its proven endurance, innovation and multi-purpose capabilities," said Graham Hine, CEO Liquid Robotics.

The prototype will automate a range of ASW operations including deployment of wide area surveillance systems, sonar processing and tactical track management and reporting procedures, with final trials to be completed in early 2022.

Wave Gliders Depart San Francisco



PM VISITS VARLEY GROUP

On the 15 September, The Hon. Scott Morrison, Prime Minister of Australia, visited the headquarters and operations of the Varley Group in Tomago marking it a historic event.

Hosted by Mr Jeff Phillips, the Chairman and CEO of the Varley Group said it's the first time Varley have ever welcomed a Prime Minister of Australia onsite since it commenced business in 1886. Varley regularly hosts visits by Defence Ministers, Industry Ministers and Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministers to display our engineering and manufacturing capabilities.

During his visit, The Hon. Scott Morrison witnessed first-hand the extensive display of manufacturing and engineering activities undertaken by Varley. Addressing work experience students, Ally Mason and Zac Nicholls and their teacher Shane Lloyd from Hunter River High School, along with Varley engineering and fabrication apprentices Lachlan Forsyths and Jordyn Hamson, the Prime Minister showed us his steady hand at welding with expert Varley boilermaker, Richard Webb.

With a highly skilled and diverse workforce Varley displayed and demonstrated how they provide quality certified products through engineering design, product development, manufacturing, systems integration, qualification testing and through life support. As an Australian owned company Varley showed its significant impact with innovation and manufacturing sustaining local jobs.



MANUFACTURING SURGES INTO EXPANSION IN OCTOBER

The Australian Industry Group Australian Performance of Manufacturing Index (Australian PMI) increased by 9.6 points to 56.3 in October, indicating expanding conditions for the first time since July (readings above 50 points indicate expansion in activity, with higher results indicating a faster rate of expansion).

Australia's manufacturing industries grew solidly in October with production, employment, sales and exports all moving convincingly into growth territory. Once again, the large food & beverages sector led the way with strong contributions from machinery & equipment manufacturers and with support from firmer growth in the textiles, clothing, footwear, paper & printing group. The chemicals sector stabilised in October while the pace of contraction eased in both the metal products and building materials sectors.

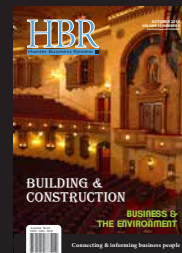
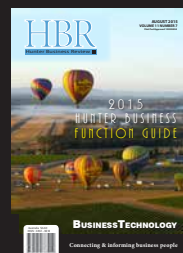
Respondents across all sectors noted a jump in sales and new orders as a result of pent up demand from the initial activity restrictions. The jump into expansion was driven by large improvements in New South Wales, which rose into expansion, and Victoria, which remained in contraction but improved from a deep contraction in September.

Ai Group Chief Executive Innes Willox said "With the quantity of fiscal support easing in October and with the tax cuts only just starting to flow through, the lift in sales and the strong growth of new orders are particularly encouraging signs of improving household and business confidence. The solid national performance was achieved despite another month of contraction in Victoria. With restrictions in Victoria being lifted there are very good prospects of further strength in the closing months of 2020," Mr Willox said.

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EXPANDING DESIGN INTO MANUFACTURING

Design Anthology is a locally based product design company that has grown rapidly since starting business in 2009. The versatile team of seven has delivered over 100 projects across various categories including aeronautics, medical devices, defence, sports equipment, consumer electronics and many more.

This year they won two major awards in the prestigious International Good Design Award for their designs. A Gold Accolade for their work on the Sensor Lab IoT Smart Pole in the Product Design Commercial and Industrial category, in recognition for outstanding design and innovation. A Good Design Award received for Orica's FRAGTrack in the Engineering Design category.

Orica originally commissioned Design Anthology, to create a vision of what their product could be, which involved detail design and prototyping. This then expanded to see Design Anthology also manufacturing the FRAGTrac cameras.

"What's really cool is seeing the successful rollout and execution of such a complex idea through collaboration between a large multinational and a team of startups in Newcastle. It was also exciting to be able to take the design and actually branch into manufacturing of the product at our facility. We've produced over 110 FRAGTrack camera units with more in the pipeline," Managing Director and Founder, Josh Jeffress says.

Design Anthology is now manufacturing a number of products locally for clients, diversifying their business even further by providing clients with a complete end to end development process which is very unique for product design firms.

Their partnership with Applied Visual Simulations, who has a contract with the Australian military to provide simulated training platforms, has seen Design Anthology not only design their Protected Mobility Tactical Trainer (PMTT), a battle truck simulator, but also manufacture the simulators.

"The original build was hard to transport and expensive to manufacture. They asked us to look at the existing solution, to develop and prototype a new product line for a trade show," Jeffress says.

"We designed and built a simulator that emulated the feel of an armoured transport truck. Personnel can undertake military training anywhere in Australia, without having to travel to the field; saving time, money & improving the safety of the crew."

Since they started the project two years ago, Design Anthology have built 18 vehicles, which comprised of hundreds of manufactured parts and assemblies.

Businesses and individuals of all backgrounds have been coming to Design Anthology to develop products, conduct design reviews and prototyping. Now Design Anthology is also able to take those ideas and manufacture them locally in the Hunter.

"We are really passionate about making design and the process of product development understandable to everybody. Being able to also walk through the complexities of manufacturing and being able to provide that service to some of our clients is such a value add and enables us to expand our business and offer a more complete service," Jeffress says.

Design Anthology is proud to be a Hunter business that is helping other business development and manufacture products locally.



designanthology.com

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2020 HUNTER MANUFACTURING AWARDS

Friday evening of 23 October marked the 16th year of the prestigious Hunter Manufacturing Awards Inc. (HMA), recognising and acknowledging manufacturing in the region of the Hunter, Central Coast and mid North Coast.

Chair of HMA, Steven Smith said "This time last year, we had wrapped up the 2019 event and looked forward to reconvening in February to kick off planning for 2020. Little did we know that 2020 would be a year, the likes of which none of us have ever experienced.

"All aspects of our lives have been turned upside down - where we have worked; what work could we do; having to teach children at home; unable to maintain physical contact with family and friends, and so much more.

"And for many of you, the added challenges of trying to maintain manufacturing businesses - not knowing where the whole thing was headed and what changes might be needed to survive - perhaps the biggest tests of your own resilience.

"So, when the HMA board met earlier this year, there was certainly doubt in my mind whether we would be able to hold the awards in 2020.

"Fortunately, I have a group of very committed directors who were resolute that the manufacturers of the hunter deserved recognition for their achievements over the last twelve months.

"2020 saw a lower-key event due to COVID-19 restrictions, but the board of HMA felt that the need to continue to acknowledge and profile the manufacturers in the region, was more important than ever."

Steven thanked all the finalists and sponsors who willingly attended pre-recording sessions over a three-day period so recording of speeches could be conducted, in the scenario a virtual event may have had to be held.

Appreciation and thanks were extended to Downer, major sponsor for the 13th year and it was reiterated that without companies such as Downer, it would be difficult for HMA to continue to provide the recognition our region's manufacturers deserve.



Chair of HMA, Steven Smith

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"Fortunately, I have a group of very committed directors who were resolute that the manufacturers of the Hunter deserved recognition for their achievements over the last twelve months."

NSW Government was also acknowledged and thanked for their partnership of the awards since its inception in 2005 and Mark McLean, Deputy Director – Regional Development, Hunter & Central Coast, Department of Regional NSW was presented with a special award marking the recognition.

2020 saw the introduction of some new categories with a Collaboration Partnership Award and a one-off Manufacturing Pivot Award which was introduced to highlight the efforts, strength and resilience of those companies who re-tooled and adapted to the COVID-19 environment.

Steven Smith said "Some of the award categories have changed. Last year HMA established an updated set of categories that were considered better reflective of the nature of manufacturing these days. And, although our streamlined event has less awards, we are pleased to feature some of the new categories including collaboration partnership, outstanding start-up and manufacturing pivot, which is presented in honour of Rod Murphy. "Tonight is a night for celebration – our chance to celebrate the resilience of our manufacturing sector - to showcase, profile and promote your hard work, diligence and ability to adapt to a changing environment. It is hoped that your efforts will be rewarded and recognised well into the future and you are able to contribute to, and prosper through, the resurgence of the Australian manufacturing sector."



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FINALISTS

Congratulations to the following finalists for the Hunter Manufacturing Awards.

They are all winners in terms of being successful manufacturers in a challenging year and being significant contributors to the local and national economies.

Ampcontrol
BAE Systems Australia
Beltor Engineering
Brain Industries
Bridon Bekaert
Burgtec
Chamberlain
Custom Fluidpower
Design Anthology
HMS Group
Hummingbird / Redarc
Infrabuild Newcastle Rod Mill
Leda Security Products
Molycop
Morgan Engineering
NewieVentures
Robotic Systems
Rotacaster
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Sirron Holdings – Zexa Chemicals Division
Steber International
TS Global
Varley Group
Whiteley Corporation
BAE Systems

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Many thanks to the following sponsors and partners of the Hunter Manufacturing Awards.

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2020 MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR GREATER THAN 50 EMPLOYEES

Sponsored by Downer
Winner: Whiteley Corporation

For a company of its size this company is impressive with regards to its approach to innovation, with all R&D occurring domestically, as well as stakeholder / customer collaboration.

Whiteley also has a strong international reach with its products and customer base.

As a local company it has demonstrated that it has responded rapidly to the challenges associated with COVID-19 and in a way that has assisted the local community i.e. being able to manufacture locally to supply the health care sector when competitors who did not manufacture locally had issues with the supply chain.



Chair of HMA
Steven Smith
with Dr Greg
Whiteley from
Whiteley
Corporation
and Aaron
Stilburn from
Downer

Highly Commended: Burgtec

Located at Lisarow on the Central Coast, Burgtec is an impressive company for its size and market segment. It is strong on innovation and meeting customer needs and is very worthy of a highly commended award.

2020 MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR LESS THAN 50 EMPLOYEES

Sponsored by McLanahan
Winner: Rotacaster

This Australian business competes on the world stage with an innovative product that has been locally designed and manufactured. The submission was well structured and reflects a comprehensive business strategy supported by strong investment in R&D.



HMA Chair
Steven
Smith, Neil
Hunt from
McLanahan
and Peter
McKinnon
from
Rotacaster

Highly Commended: Brain Industries

Brain Industries received highly commended for their excellent submission. Brain Industries have shown a strong resilience, empathy and innovative thinking in the way they operate. They were able to achieve growth even in difficult times and have strong community focus and environmental commitment.

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MAJOR SPONSOR



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MAJOR WINNER REINVENTING THE WHEEL

Winner of the **Manufacturer of the Year** award for a company with less than 50 employees, Rotacaster is a world leader in omni-wheel development and production, exporting to over 20 countries worldwide, all from their manufacturing plant in Beresfield, Newcastle.

Due to their versatility, Rotacaster's omni-wheel technologies have been used in a broad range of OEM products, from motorised wheelchairs, to motorbike stands, conveyor systems, hospital gurneys; and have been utilised by companies such as Boeing, Woolworths, Coles and Atherton, the OEM who provided Australia's first self-sterilising robot housed at the Royal Hobart Hospital this June.

One of Rotacaster's flagship products is the Rotatruck, an award-winning, ergonomic hand truck which typifies the wide-ranging application of OEM technology that Rotacaster provides.

The Rotatruck, a self supporting hand trolley has been proven not only to substantially reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injuries in manual handling but also provide immediate productivity improvement. In fact, in an 11 month trial for milk crate handling with a major Australian Supermarket chain, they reduced injuries by 88%, and increased productivity by 21% providing an immediate ROI and subsequently rolled them out nationally to over 800 stores.

"This leads to an impressive improvement in productivity and reduction in personal injuries, which in turn, lead to big overall cost savings to the companies who have chosen to use them," a company spokesperson said.

Such is the potential to improve working practices, Rotacaster have sold over 24,000 Rotatrucks worldwide, with substantial orders coming from major retailers such as: Coles, Woolworth's and Rebel Sport.

Rotacaster consider themselves to be the country's leaders in specialised hand trucks with a broad range of trucks designed with specific uses in mind; ranging from everyday FMCG stock cartons, to water bottles, to gas cylinders and milk crates - all of which can be modified and customised to specific customer needs. if needed.

Rotacaster has also diversified into the conveyor sortation automation space. They have developed a wide range of manual, powered and automated transfer solutions which require no pneumatics (electric only) and provide a greater level of flexibility, efficiency and scalability than competing traditional roller, belt and chain-based systems. They also provide a great alternative to manual ball transfer tables.

"These new products are quick, durable, low maintenance, easy to install and can save valuable floor space," the spokesperson said.

Our modular systems typically offer an ease of configuring, installing and/or retrofitting for specific uses or applications. A big advantage over pneumatic systems where you may have to close down a conveyor train and call in an engineer.

Rotacaster's initial exploration into conveyors was supported by the AMGC (Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre) and the company also collaborated with UTS (University of Technology Sydney) on the same project.

"Rotacaster is committed to its goal of introducing omni-wheels as a disruptive technology to existing swivel castors and rollers globally and to maintain its leadership in the development of omni-wheel technology," the spokesperson said.

With the current interest and growth in markets such as automation, robotics, health and safety and an aging population with assisted living and mobility needs, we see a great deal of opportunity ahead for Rotacaster not only in regard to commercial success, but just as importantly, being able to make a positive difference to people's lives.

"We see a bright future in manufacturing automation, where the omni-wheel can serve a multitude of purposes; providing holistic solutions from the beginning through to the end of any manufacturing process, whether it's the use of hand trucks, robots (AMRs/AGVs), conveyor transfer tables or solutions which haven't been created yet."

With so many potential uses and opportunities to improve the design and functionality of existing products and the imagination to create new ones which provide solutions to existing problems, Rotacaster is indeed keeping busy 'reinventing the wheel'.



ROTATRUCK

Easier, Faster, Safer

- Self-supporting ergonomic design.
- Improve productivity and safety.
- Used by Australia's leading wholesalers and retailers.
- Customisable to your needs.
- Stock and beverage
- Gas cylinders
- Kegs and drums
- Milk crates
- Stairclimbers

If you're not using a Rotatruck you're working too hard and too slow!



CONVEYOR TRANSFER SOLUTIONS

Simple, scalable automation

- Automated, powered and manual solutions.
- Load, speed and size scalability.
- Simple integration and retrofitting.
- Customisable to your needs.

360° diversion, redirection, sortation.



2020 RISING STAR AWARD

Sponsored by Whiteley Corporation

Winner: Hugh McRae from Molycop

A work placement whilst doing a Bachelor of Engineering (Chemical) led to a job offer for Hugh as a graduate engineer.

Hugh has recently completed training as a steelmaking shift team leader with Molycop and is now responsible for 29 personnel on a 12-hour shift rotating roster. As a frontline shift team leader, Hugh has demonstrated high levels of personal integrity and resilience, qualities he demonstrated when he was the project leader for the implementation of the manufacturing excellence system. Hugh was also responsible for the implementation of a "sidewall burner system" to the electric arc at Molycop. The system was successfully implemented.

In the words of his nominator "Hugh has gained the respect and trust of his team and shown the ability to harness the knowledge and experience available within his team. In a field of outstanding candidates for the rising star award, Hugh is a worthy recipient."



Molycop's Hugh McRae with Andrew Chapman from BAE Systems

EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

Sponsored by Nupress Group

Winner: Chamberlain Group

Chamberlain has developed and implemented a "sustainability strategy" with goals linked to their successful continuous improvement program. Their 5-year plan has already provided benefits of reduced energy consumption, less waste, and less use of water and paper. All of these focus areas are reflected in KPI trends published monthly to all employees. By training, and embedding sustainability goals into employee performance reviews, Chamberlain have set a strong foundation for ensuring a sustainable future for their business.



Chamberlain Group's Graeme Sheekey with Nupress Group's Murray Clair

Highly Commended: Ash Gesler from BAE Systems

Ash joined BAE Systems at Williamtown in their graduate program where she quickly exceeded the expectations of her role. Her most significant achievement was to project manage the relocation of the Hawk maintenance unit. Due to her admirable personal and professional qualities, Ash was invited to MC the inaugural "Williamtown International Women's Day Symposium" which she handled with grace and candour.

2020



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**Congratulations Hugh McRae!
2020 HMA RISING STAR**


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OUTSTANDING START-UP

Sponsored by Molycop
Winner: Senquip

Senquip exists to simplify remote monitoring and they manufacture a product that has been cleverly and deliberately shaped to a very difficult-to-define market niche. The founders have obviously made some tough decisions to decide what the product is not and have applied a great deal of discipline to evolve the core product that remains. Senquip has already established great customer engagement and good national market penetration, with business systems well integrated with the product, ready to scale globally.



Matt Voigt of
Molycop with
Norman Ballard
from Senquip

Highly Commended was awarded to Safe Gauge

The judges said that Safe Gauge has a fantastic product cleverly identifying what should be an essential market need. The business combines the energy of youth with the wisdom of experienced mentoring and is recently attaining an excellent revenue stream. Safe Gauge is well positioned to by-pass the national market stepping-stone and the opportunity to scale up and operate on the global scene looks very promising.

COLLABORATION PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Sponsored by BAE Systems Australia
Winners: Ampcontrol, Safeearth and NewiVentures

The winners collaborated to develop COVID-19 ICU Ventilators in a very short time frame. The team provided a tremendous example of collaboration to develop such a critical life-saving device. The judges said it was a wonderful project that has been well managed, involving multiple partnerships and key contributors from medical professionals, skilled technicians right through to manufacturing apprentices.

To rapidly produce several prototypes and then collaboratively evaluate them to settle on a final product is collaboration at its best.



Andrew
Chapman
from BAE
Systems, Hugh
Raferty from
NewiVentures,
Steven Palmer
from Safeearth
and Rod
Henderson
from
Ampcontrol

Highly Commended was awarded to Varley Group

The Varley Group has a very well-developed product resulting from significant collaboration and had a submission worthy of commendation. It was another great product from an excellent manufacturer.

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MANUFACTURING PIVOT AWARD

Sponsored by R&R Murphy

Joint Winners: Sirron Holdings – Zexa Chemicals Division and Ampcontrol

Sirron Holdings: Faced with being dependent upon the hospitality industry, the pandemic was set to hit Sirron Holdings hard with significant downturn in their commercial dishwasher products. Sirron Holdings have truly risen to the challenge, within eight days they completely revamped their supply chain and production line.

They have expanded their supporting Zexa cleaning chemical product line originally representing only 8% of their sales, Sirron Holdings was able to grow this chemical product line to the scale of tripling the company's overall turnover. An achievement that is nothing short of incredible.

Ampcontrol: In the world of medical engineering, projects are measured in the order of years. Ampcontrol who had never previously worked in this sector has brought together a group of local companies including Newieventures, Safeearth, Restech and the University of Newcastle to deliver prototype ventilators for NSW Health in only 11 days and commenced clinical trials only one week later. This pace of engineering most probably hasn't been seen since long ago wartime manufacturing efforts.

Highly Commended was awarded to Bridon Bekaert

The judges said it was a very well thought through submission and a very close contender for the award.



Rod Henderson from Ampcontrol, Grant Murphy from R&R Murphy and Greg Gates from Sirron Holdings – Zexa Division

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I asked my daughter if she'd seen my newspaper. She told me that I was a dinosaur and newspapers are old school. She said that people use tablets nowadays and handed me her iPad.

That fly didn't stand a chance.

A woman was taking an afternoon nap. When she woke up, she told her husband, "I just dreamed that you gave me a magnificent pearl necklace. What do you think it means?"

"You'll know tonight," he said.

That evening, the man came home with a small package and gave it to his wife. Delighted, she opened it to find a book entitled "The Meaning of Dreams."

My 85-year-old grandfather was rushed to the hospital with a possible concussion. The doctor asked him a series of questions:

"Do you know where you are?"

"I'm at John Hunter Hospital."

"What city are you in?"

"Newcastle."

"Do you know who I am?"

"Dr. Hamilton."

My grandfather then turned to the nurse and said, "I hope he doesn't ask me any more questions."

"Why?" she asked.

"Because all of those answers were on his badge."

Banks should really do a better job of keeping their ATMs filled. I went to four different ones today and they all said "Insufficient Funds"

My grandad predicted that the Titanic would sink.

He went to great pains to try and alert everyone. Sadly no one would listen. He told people in authority, middle-management and even the every-day punters who bought tickets.

He was silenced from every corner in spite of all the evidence he put forward.

Eventually he was forcibly removed from the cinema.

As my wife and I prepared for our garage sale, I came across a painting. Looking at the back, I discovered that I had written "To my beautiful wife on our fifth anniversary. I love you ... Keith."

Feeling nostalgic about a gift I'd given her 25 years earlier, I showed it to her, thinking we should rehang the picture.

After gazing at my message for a few seconds, she replied, "You know, I think a black marker would cover over all that so that we could sell it."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"No country is ever successful in the long term... without a really strong and vibrant manufacturing industry." - Alan Mulally

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