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From the Editor



The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be stronger than many feared in mid-2020 with the latest growth and labour force figures indicating robust growth, albeit patchy. These official figures also do not yet include the ending of Government measures such as JobKeeper and JobSeeker supplement.

The recovery continues to highlight a number of aspects of the Australia economy, including our reliance on other countries. The global economy provides a number of benefits when working well, with countries being able to source and sell their goods and services from a wide range of potential suppliers. But it also has highlighted how reliant Australia has become on foreign countries and global politics.

We are all too familiar with trade decisions by China to try to punish Australia or try to force us to become more compliant. COVID affected countries have also become more inward thinking, with global issues and customers becoming relatively

less important. Entire global supply chains have been disrupted.

Australia's growth has also been hindered by the lack of overseas sources of labour – in terms of both skilled and unskilled labour.

Australia has a long history of seeking to fill gaps in labour from the global market, but this has been largely cut off due to COVID.

The result is that unemployment remains well over 5% yet many employers are facing severe labour shortages, from businesses not being able to meet demand due to the lack of available skilled labour to farmers having produce rot on the ground due to the inability to find pickers for their crop.

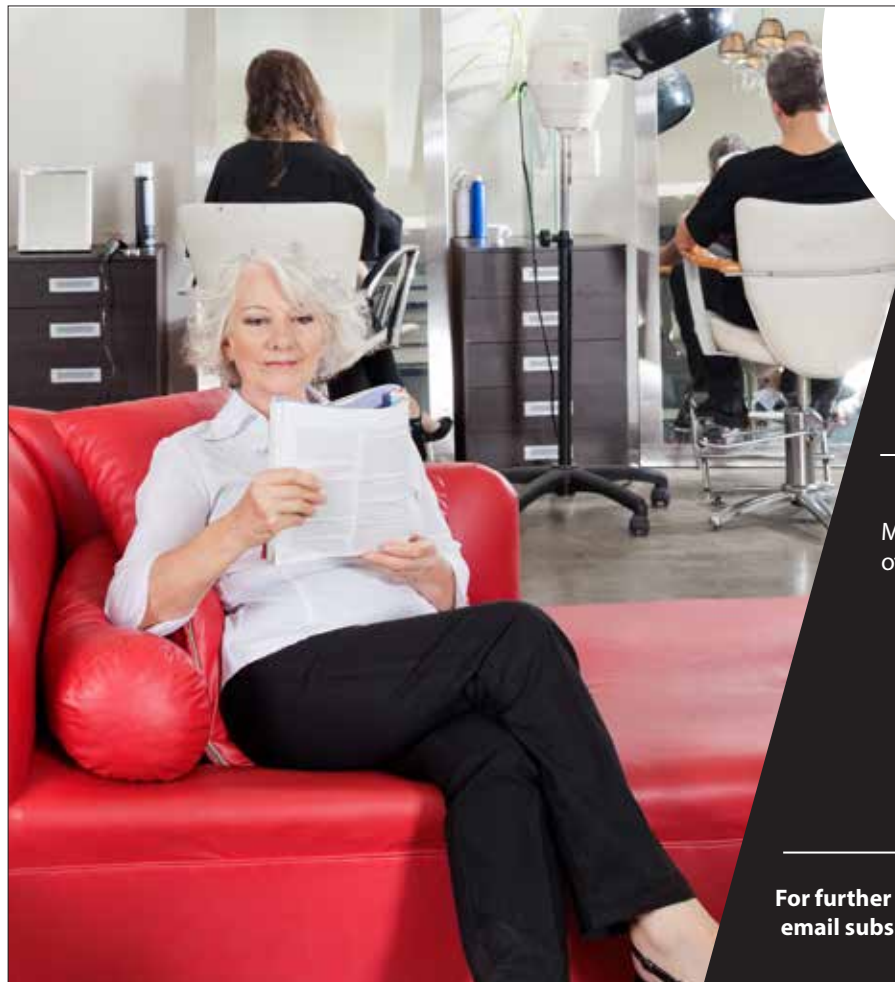
It also should make us consider what would happen if there are future disruptions.

For example, we all hope there will not be a major war affecting Australia and hopefully the chances remain low, but they are clearly increasing. What would Australia do if sea and air freight was severely impacted by hostilities? What would be the impacts to our exports and supply chains?

Just as prudent business managers consider possible threats to their business, we should also consider the wider picture of possible threats to the country.

The COVID pandemic has certainly been a major global crises and has been a very difficult time for many of us, but hopefully it has also made us think of some of the broader issues and may help to create stronger and more resilient to face future challenges.

Garry Hardie
Editor & Publisher



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European delegates get sneak peek at world's first domestic hydrogen battery

as part of an NSW Government-led trade mission.

A collaborative partnership between Ampcontrol and Australian start-up LAVO has successfully produced a domestic hydrogen battery that pioneers the next generation of green energy storage for commercial and residential use.

NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro said, "Ampcontrol is leading the way in green energy storage systems, supporting LAVO's world-leading hydrogen hybrid battery, and what's most exciting about it is that it's developed right here in regional NSW."

Welcoming the delegation to Ampcontrol, Managing Director & CEO Rod Henderson said it was fantastic to showcase the region's innovation, technology and world-class manufacturing capability to key global decision-makers.

"We have such highly skilled expertise, world-class educational facilities and ground-breaking research and development in the Hunter. We encourage global businesses to come here and work with us, invest in our cutting-edge technology and energy solutions, such as LAVO, and partner with the many incredible innovators we have in the Hunter," added Mr Henderson.

"While coal mining will be here for years to come, the NSW Government is supporting development and investment in new technologies to help diversify local economies and power the state down the track," said Mr Barilaro.

Ampcontrol has unveiled the world's first domestic hydrogen battery capable of storing enough electricity to power the average Australian home for two days before European ambassadors visiting the Hunter Region

On display for the first time following successful prototype testing, the LAVO hydrogen battery technology consists of an electrolysis system, fuel cell power, and hydrogen storage array packed into one cabinet. The integrated hybrid system combines hydrogen and rooftop solar to deliver sustainable, reliable and renewable green energy to homes and businesses.

"I'm delighted to see the inspiring work being carried out by Ampcontrol in the renewable energy space on show," added Mr Barilaro.

In addition to the LAVO hydrogen battery, the delegation of 14 ambassadors from Europe and the European Union also viewed other innovative products developed and manufactured by Ampcontrol during a tour of the Tomago NSW operations, including a stand-alone power system and an off-grid water security solution, both designed to make a meaningful improvement to the lives of people living in regional and remote communities.

Regional NSW European Ambassador Trade Mission to the Hunter Visiting Ampcontrol for sneak peek at LAVO, world's first domestic hydrogen battery for businesses & homes



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Bold objectives for Honeysuckle transformation

Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation releasing the Honeysuckle Ideas community engagement Outcomes Report on 7 April.

Undertaken from September to November 2020, the engagement focused on the future use and function of the final three hectares in Honeysuckle, with an emphasis on Social, Economic and Environmental outcomes.

Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC) Chief Operating Officer Valentina Misevska was pleased with the community's engagement and excited about the high aspirations for the precinct.

"What we heard is that people truly want something special," Ms Misevska said.

"The engagement program was about understanding what the community wanted to see transpire in Honeysuckle, and to use the themes that emerged to create project objectives for the future transformation of the precinct.

"People told us they want to see something iconic, where design and excellence mark Honeysuckle and the emerging CBD as a landmark gateway that connects the renowned Hunter Region to the global market.

"This really aligns with what we want to achieve – to create great places where people choose to visit, play and work in an ever vibrant and dynamic destination," Ms Misevska said.

HCCDC's engagement program included two phases, the first to gather community ideas against the three pillars – social, economic and environmental – and the second, to discuss the themes that emerged through the ideas to then create new project objectives.

Community ideas have emerged as bold and ambitious project objectives for the future transformation of Honeysuckle lands, with the

"Creating a magnetic mixed-use destination; creating a great place that is connected; respecting and acknowledging heritage and culture; being people focused and accessible; and demonstrating excellence in design and sustainability are the basis of our five objectives," Ms Misevska said.

The Honeysuckle Ideas Outcomes Report is now available. The report outlines the engagement process and explains how the diverse feedback received was translated from specific ideas and feedback into themes before becoming project objectives.

Smart mall lights up heart of Charlestown

Pearson Street Mall in Charlestown has reopened to the public following a \$2.8 million transformation.

An illuminated and interactive furniture

experience designed by local creative and education company, Codewise, is one of the Charlestown CREATE creative treatments that adds to the visitor experience of the revamped mall. The interactive furniture, blending gamification with digital technologies, aims to empower and excite children about digital technologies and innovation.

Lake Macquarie Mayor Cr Fraser said the new public art installations and the refurbishment works will help to create a more vibrant public space in the heart of Charlestown.

"The revitalisation works have delivered safer, pedestrian-friendly access through the mall, new landscaping, new mature trees and exciting smart technology used for lighting and street furniture," Cr Fraser said.

The Charlestown CREATE design features of the Pearson Street Mall upgrade bring digital technology, soundscapes, projections and creative lighting to engage visitors to the mall.

Charlestown CREATE is funded by the NSW Government through the Stronger Country Communities Fund and Lake Macquarie City Council.

University of Newcastle named the leading university partner for a better world

The University of Newcastle, Australia has been named #1 in the world for partnering for a

more sustainable future in the 2021 Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings.

THE Impact Rankings assess universities against the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), which act as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The overall ranking is determined by each university's performance against SDG 17 plus their three best scoring goals.

With an overall impact ranking of 12th in the world (up 33 places from 2020), the University of Newcastle has been recognised for its strategic commitment to a world that is equitable, sustainable and prosperous for all.

The University of Newcastle was ranked the number one in the world in SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals. SDG 17 is arguably the most competitive ranking as it is the only compulsory goal for assessment, recognising that a sustainable future can only be realised with shared vision, strong partnerships and cooperation. Under SDG17, THE looks for evidence that the University contributes to national government SDG policy development, and collaborates across sectors, with NGOs, and internationally to tackle SDGs.

The University's overall impact ranking was also made up of SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy (#3 in the world); SDG 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing (#12 in the world); and SDG 15 – Life on Land (#17 in the world).

Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Excellence, Professor Jennifer Milam, said the impact results are validation the University of



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Newcastle is living its values and succeeding in its commitment to both local and global communities.

The University's partnerships for a better world include partnership with the City of Newcastle, which led to the naming of Newcastle as a United Nations City in 2015 and the establishment of CIFAL Newcastle, a United Nations International Training Centre for Authorities and Leaders at the University of Newcastle, which is affiliated to the United Nations through its parent body UNITAR.

Other partnerships committed to the pursuit of UN SDGs include with Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources (NIER), the Hunter SDG taskforce, the NSW Energy and Resources Knowledge Hub, the World Technologies University Network, the Pacific Node research program and CIFAL Newcastle – to name just a few.

A total of 1,115 global universities participated in the 2021 THE Impact Rankings. Australian universities performed very strongly demonstrating a sector wide commitment to a sustainable and equitable future.

What's On website to help drive awareness of Newcastle's event economy

A new website capturing events happening across Newcastle has been launched by City of Newcastle to help locals and visitors make the

most of the city's entertainment options.

Inspired by popular 'What's On' websites in Melbourne and Sydney, What's ON Newcastle is now the official home of all events across the city, providing an easy to use one-stop-shop

for locals and visitors with functionality to search for events according to category, date, accessibility, venue or geographic location.

Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nemes said the website is one of the priority initiatives under City of Newcastle's Destination Management Plan to create a more vibrant city that supports the arts and cultural sectors.

"Newcastle is an events city, and whether it's live music, theatre, sports or cinema, there's always something to do, no matter your interests," Cr Nemes said.

"City of Newcastle's Events Strategy has seen Newcastle continue to grow jobs and expand our visitor economy during the last six years.

"From 2015-2019, Newcastle's visitor economy moved ahead in leaps and bounds, with a 62% increase in domestic day-trippers and a 16% increase in international travellers, while the value of the tourism economy expanded significantly to be worth \$1.127 billion in the 12 months to March 2019."

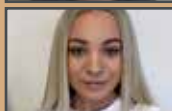
City of Newcastle has also awarded the second round of the \$20,000 Live Music Grants program, providing incentives of up to \$500 per event to encourage 11 Newcastle venues to host live acts during April as part of a commitment to delivering the Live Music Strategy.

Thirty live music events funded by the program are taking place between 9 and 20 April to coincide with other significant events across the city, including the World Surf League's Rip Curl Newcastle Cup, Newcastle SailFest Regatta, Newcastle Seafood Festival, Women's Rugby 7s, New Run and Newcastle Food Month.

The website is whatson.newcastle.nsw.gov.au and visitors can also subscribe to the regular What's ON Newcastle newsletter to receive updates.



Sam has joined the Alliance team as our business graduate having recently graduated Newcastle University with a Bachelor of Business. His position will focus on marketing, finance and business improvement.



Paris joined the Alliance team in Newcastle Head Office over a year ago and has been recently promoted into managing our WA workforce. She has relocated to Perth to take on this dynamic role and is thriving.

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Newcastle Permanent recognised on global stage

Newcastle Permanent has climbed higher on the Forbes annual ranking of 'World's Best Banks,' named as the top Australian-owned financial institution and second overall in Australia by

over 43,000 customers surveyed globally.

Newcastle Permanent CEO, Bernadette Inglis, welcomed the result, saying it shows the Hunter-led organisation has continued to focus on delivering the best banking services for customers and communities across its regional NSW footprint despite the challenges of the last year.

"This is an incredible testament to the commitment of our people at Newcastle Permanent over the last 12 months through fires, floods and a pandemic to support our customers and our local communities."

"Newcastle Permanent is honoured to have been named in the Forbes World's Best Banks in Australia and to also be the top customer-owned mutual bank in the country," Ms Inglis said.

At 118 years old, Newcastle Permanent supports over a quarter of a million customers across regional and rural NSW, Sydney, interstate and overseas.

"Our own customer satisfaction surveys regularly indicate our customers are highly satisfied with our service, however to be recognised so positively through this international award program alongside other major and mutual banks is quite a remarkable achievement for both Newcastle Permanent and for the Hunter region," said CEO Bernadette Inglis.

The Forbes 'World's Best Banks' survey placing recognises Newcastle Permanent's performance in the eyes of customers against a range of considerations, including general satisfaction, trust, fees, digital services and financial advice.

"Over the last year in particular we have adapted our business

operations to support our customers, moved swiftly to offer assistance packages and made banking with us easier through the introduction of new technologies and practices such as digital verification of identity which has made applying for our market-competitive Newcastle Permanent home loans even easier, regardless of where you live."

"Like many organisations, the needs of our customers have changed over the last year. At Newcastle Permanent we're continually striving to introduce the banking services and innovative new technologies our customers want today, and will need tomorrow, so that we can reach our goal of becoming Australia's favourite banking experience," Ms Inglis said.

Newcastle – Cairns direct flights to commence

On 22 April Jetstar launched the sale of fares for direct flights from Newcastle Airport to Cairns. The

service, which commences on 23 June and will initially run until 4 October, is the latest in a series of new connections Newcastle Airport has announced in recent months.

Newcastle Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock said it was a fantastic result for the community at a time when confidence in travel was growing quickly.

"The direct connections and a flight time of only 2 hours 45 minutes, effectively makes tropical Queensland much closer. Less time waiting for connections or driving to Sydney means more time enjoying your holiday."

"We also expect to see thousands of people from tropical Queensland come down to our part of the world and enjoy all that our region has to offer."

Jetstar Group CEO Gareth Evans said this was the latest new route to launch, as Jetstar continues to expand its domestic network, in response to increased travel demand.

Top Australian-owned banking institution. Not bad.



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"The demand for leisure travel in Australia continues to be really strong, and Jetstar is in a great position to be able to add more flights to connect more destinations across the country.

"We're expecting to see great demand between Cairns and Newcastle, which will boost local jobs and support local tourism economies."

Flights will operate three days a week, on a Monday, Wednesday and Saturday, with an initial 15-week season on offer.

Expectations are that the season will be extended or flight frequency increased if demand for the service is strong.

Molycop moves deeper into circular economy with recycling plant acquisition

Newcastle-based Australia mining consumables business Molycop is pleased to announce the purchase of national waste management and recycling

business, JLW Services.

JLW Services specialises in waste management and recyclable materials recovery from hard-to-dispose-of products, including mattresses and tyres. Its logistics and sustainable waste management solution services industries, governments and communities across Australia.

The business includes mobile shredding equipment, enabling it to travel and shred onsite, and a fleet of trucks to collect and transport material to its processing facility in Cootamundra, NSW, where recyclable components are extracted for reuse.

Michael Parker, President of Molycop Australia says: "Over recent years, Molycop has been a key customer of JLW Services, using the scrap steel from mattress wire and tyres as inputs into our steelmaking process in Newcastle, NSW.

"The strategic rationale behind purchasing this business is to enable

Molycop to move deeper into the circular economy, cementing our position at the forefront of recycling, decarbonising our industry and promoting sustainable manufacturing.

"As well as increasing our ferrous scrap and recycled carbon capabilities - essential raw materials in the electric arc furnace steelmaking process - this purchase allows Molycop to provide responsible waste and recycling services for challenging waste streams for our customers, and the community more broadly."

JLW Services will be rebranded as Molycop 360 and founder Jamie Walmsley joins Molycop post-sale in the role of General Manager. The business' 25 employees will also join the Molycop team.

Jamie Walmsley says: "After founding the business in 2014 with my wife, Leah, it's incredibly satisfying to see it bought by one of our most valued clients. Molycop is at the forefront of sustainable manufacturing in Australia and understands both the business and environmental case for building a strong circular economy.

"I look forward to becoming part of the Molycop Australia team, as we seek to double the recycling plant's revenue over next few years."

Hunter Business Chamber becomes Business Hunter

Business Hunter, is the new name and brand for what used to be the Hunter Business Chamber and was officially launched on the 31st March at a function at

Newcastle's Great Northern Hotel attended by 150 members and VIPs.

It was a fitting return to the Great Northern, where the first meeting of the organisation – then known as the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce – was held in 1886.

More than 135 years later, they are still the voice of business in the Hunter, with the aims of helping to grow businesses, connecting businesses with potential customers, clients and collaborators, and representing the interests of the region's business community to government and decision-makers.



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TAFE NSW mining apprentices announced

apprentices launch their careers.

Now in its 16th consecutive year, the 18 week program provides apprentices with training in light automotive technology, mechanical engineering, metal fabrication and electrotechnology trades.

Mining is part of the heritage and heart of the Hunter. In the last financial year, the 28 participating mining companies directly injected \$6.2 billion into the Hunter economy, supporting more than 13,000 Hunter mining jobs and 3400 local supplier businesses.

The Mining and Energy Skills Program's effectiveness is due to a close collaboration with some of the Hunter's biggest companies, including AGL Macquarie, Bengalla, BHP Mount Arthur, Hitachi Construction Machinery Australia, Port Waratah Coal Services, MIGAS and Programmed Skilled Workforce.

In addition to equipping students with trade skills to be job ready, the program equips students with the skills to thrive in their career, by training in mental health awareness, drug and alcohol safety, fatigue management, road safety, hearing conservation and finance management.

TAFE NSW Teacher of Electrotechnology, Industry and Resources Darren Ward said the value of custom training tailored to industry partners' needs is evident through the continued support the program enjoys and the contribution our partners have made to its evolution over the years.

"Some of these organisation's have partnered with the program since it's conception in 2006, which is testament to the outcomes it has achieved and the calibre of the apprentices whom have gone on to advance their skills in the energy and resources sector and excel."

"We are thrilled the program continues to attract both male and female apprentices with 10 of our 24 apprentices being female"

The award-winning Mining and Energy Skills Program at TAFE NSW Muswellbrook is helping 24 new Hunter based



Federal Government and HunterNet launch 'defence ready' pilot

to deliver a ground-breaking program aimed at helping local businesses win Defence contracts.

The \$430,000 Defence Ready Pilot, to be offered to businesses free of charge, will provide vital information and education to help companies become 'defence ready'.

Minister for Defence Industry Melissa Price said HunterNet would partner with Defence's Centre for Defence Industry Capability (CDIC) – considered the shopfront for Defence work – to deliver the program.

Minister Price said the pilot would assist businesses who are new to working with Defence, as well as those wanting to improve their business practices to become more competitive when bidding for Defence work.

The Federal Government is teaming up with Newcastle-based defence industry association HunterNet

"Regional businesses like those in the Hunter provide crucial support to Defence," Minister Price said.

"They are supporting Australia's security and ensuring our nation can achieve a robust, sovereign defence industry."

"The Defence Ready Pilot is all about helping more local businesses win Defence work."

"It will provide free online workshops to Hunter region businesses to help them understand what it takes to work with Defence, and how to navigate the defence industry landscape."

The workshops will cover a range of topics, including tendering, cyber security requirements, export controls and business continuity.

Through targeted partnerships like the Defence Ready Pilot, Defence is able to engage with a broader group of businesses who are able to support the defence industry supply chain.

Senator for New South Wales Hollie Hughes welcomed the initiative, describing it as a major boost for small and medium businesses in the region.

"I would encourage any interested Hunter region business to get involved in this fantastic initiative," Senator Hughes said.

The Defence Ready Pilot will be conducted by CDIC and HunterNet over the next 14 months.

Businesses within the Hunter region can register their interest in the Defence Ready Pilot at www.hunterdefence.org.au.

Newcastle small businesses encouraged to apply for collective growth grant

Small businesses across the Hunter are invited to apply for the 'Collective Growth Grant' – a \$40,000 grant to help entrepreneurs and small business owners launch or grow.

Commissioned by local commercial real estate agency, Commercial Collective and sponsored by local asset and maintenance organisation, RTC Group, the \$40,000 grant will be shared between four Hunter businesses. Business owners will be awarded \$10,000 each and can spend the money how they wish.

To apply for the grant, business owners need to submit a 60 second pitch video on their business idea and how they plan to spend the \$10,000. Submissions will be judged by Commercial Collective and RTC Group teams.

Commercial Collective General Manager, Dane Crawford said the grant aims to provide a financial boost to entrepreneurs and small business owners across the Hunter.

"This initiative is giving Hunter businesses with clever ideas the opportunity to develop them further, or even just get started," Mr Crawford said.

"At Commercial Collective & RTC Group we believe in growing tomorrow's Newcastle – a Newcastle fuelled by up and coming entrepreneurs and small business."

"The region is experiencing exciting growth, especially in the commercial real estate space. This initiative is an opportunity to not only give back but to help continue the momentum."

RTC Group's Founding Director, Richard Claut said the businesses involvement in the grant is about providing further encouragement to business owners that need a boost.

"RTC Group grew from humble beginnings, starting with nothing but hope and sheer determination," Mr Claut said.

"I hope these grants encourage young leaders and businesses to step outside their comfort zones, dream big, plan smart and work consistently hard delivering the appropriate actions."

"Both Dane and I including our valued partners were motivated to develop this initiative to deliver the support we wish we had at the start of our journeys in business."

The Collective Growth Grant opened on Monday 3 May and will close on Monday 14 June 2021.

More information on the grant and to apply please visit www.commercialcollective.com.au/collectivegrowthgrant

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Hunter Manufacturing Awards open for 2021

The Launch of the 2021 awards program was held on 5 May on the premises of the 2019 Manufacturer of the Year – Chamberlain Group, to align with activities as part of the Hunter Innovation Festival. The 13 Award categories are:

- 1. Collaboration Partnership Award** – sponsored by BAE Systems
- 2. Excellence in Innovation Award** – sponsored by TAFE NSW
- 3. Excellence in Manufacturing Capability** – sponsored by McLanahan
- 4. Excellence in Sustainable Operations** – sponsored by Nupress Group
- 5. Excellence in Marketing** – sponsored by The Measured Marketer
- 6. Outstanding Start-Up Award** – sponsored by Molycop
- 7. Excellence in Building Workforce Capability for the Future** – sponsored by Monica Clare Recruitment
- 8. Rising Star Award** – sponsored by Whitely Corporation
- 9. Manufacturing Leader Award** – sponsored by R&R Murphy
- 10. Excellence in Product Design Award** - sponsored by BISCIT
- 11. Excellence in Export and Global Chains** – partnered by NSW Government
- 12. Manufacturer of the Year – More than 50 Employees** – sponsored by Major Sponsor, Downer
- 13. Manufacturer of the Year Less Than 50 Employees** – sponsored by Sirron Holdings Group

Helloworld Business Travel Newcastle will once again sponsor the Incentive Prize which is a trip for two people to a city of their choice in Australia or New Zealand. The prize is drawn randomly and gives all finalists the opportunity to win. The Manufacturer of the Year winner will receive a trip for one person from their company to travel overseas to attend an event, or other similar occasion, where the company will benefit in obtaining entry to more business opportunities that are important to their company.

The Registration and Nomination period opened on 5th May and will close on 13th August. There is no entry fee to enter the HMA and manufacturers in the region of the Hunter, Upper Hunter, Central Coast and Mid North Coast are eligible to enter.

The 2021 Hunter Manufacturing Awards Inc. (HMA) will return to the format of the full celebratory gala event on 15 October, with 13 reinvigorated categories open for application.

Flu tracking system captures COVID-19 impact



One of the largest crowd-sourced public health surveillance systems in the world, known for detecting the spread of influenza, has revealed the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically impacted the 2020 flu season.

Developed by Hunter New England Health and the University of Newcastle, FluTracking started in 2006 with only 400 participants. In 2020 the number of people across Australia and New Zealand providing weekly data peaked at more than 150,000.

The number of influenza cases in 2020 was incredibly low compared to previous years, with COVID containment measures also protecting the population against flu.

Dr Craig Dalton, Hunter New England Public Health Physician and Conjoint Associate Professor with the University of Newcastle and the Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI), and FluTracking founder, said the number of laboratory confirmed flu cases in January 2021 was just 1% of the cases seen in January 2020, prior to COVID-19 social distancing measures becoming part of daily life.

A typical flu season in Australia results in about 60,000 infections nationally in peak months. In 2020 that dropped to less than 200 cases per month in July and August.

"We were shocked to see influenza rates drop week by week as COVID controls were instituted," Dr Dalton said.

"Ask any flu expert and we would say it would not be so easy to stop flu transmission. What 2020 taught us is that physical distancing, hand washing and mask wearing can dramatically reduce the incidence of flu in the community.

"The days of turning up to work with a cold or flu are probably gone forever. Masks may become part of our winter wardrobe.

"It will be interesting to see whether these behavioural changes will continue to keep flu in check this season."



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REGISTRATION AND NOMINATIONS

Opens 5 May 2021

APPLICATION PERIOD

Closes 13 Aug 2021

AWARDS NIGHT

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Hurry! Don't miss the opportunity to be a part of the 2021 Hunter Manufacturing Awards. Visit www.hma.org.au or call **0438 242 899** to find out more.

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Revamped Hunter Valley Wine & Beer Festival



The Hunter Valley Wine Festival is to incorporate beer for the first time, with the newly designed Hunter Valley Wine & Beer Festival scheduled for Saturday 19 June 2021, promising a vintage event with the best of Hunter Valley wines, craft beer, cider, local foods and entertainment.

As part of the redesign of the Festival, a new logo has been introduced, along with changes in format.

Products from over 40 of the Hunter Valley's best wineries and craft beer producers will be available for tasting at the Festival, which is being held at the Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley.

The Festival has been expanded to incorporate beer producers because of the growth in premium craft brewers across the Hunter Valley, including the onsite Sydney Brewery Hunter Valley, which will be offering behind-the-scenes tours and premium beer and cider tastings throughout the day.

The Festival will celebrate the end of the drought, a fine 2021 vintage, and highlight the increasing diversity of wine styles being produced in the Hunter Valley. While the region is best regarded for its Riesling, Semillon, Chardonnay and Shiraz varietals, this year will see a far wider spectrum of local wine varietals on offer for tasting including Verdelho, Albarino, Tempranillo and Sangiovese as well as sparkling and Rosé styles.

Live entertainment will be offered during the day, and a wide selection of food stalls will operate to provide the best of Hunter Valley cuisine.

The Hunter Valley Wine & Beer Festival is a family-friendly event, with children receiving complimentary entry to the Festival, where they will enjoy a variety of activities including a jumping castle, train rides, carousel, petting zoo and face painting.

Once again, the Festival will support the local Rural Fire Service, with fundraising activities on the day.

Hawkes Nest Sewage Treatment Plant set for major upgrade

MidCoast Council has begun working on preliminary plans for a major upgrade to the Hawks Nest Sewage Treatment Plant, appointing a consultant to complete a concept

design which will establish the civil, electrical and mechanical requirements of the project.

Council's Director of Infrastructure and Engineering Services, Rob Scott, said the project had been planned for a number of years and it was now time to move forward with it.

"In its current capacity, the Hawks Nest Sewage Treatment Plant is working hard to process the volume of sewage coming into the plant, especially during peak holiday periods," he said.

"With Hawks Nest's population expected to grow, this project will ensure the plant is equipped to meet the community's wastewater needs well into the future."

The project will see two clarification tanks and a new sludge lagoon constructed at the facility, while the existing aeration tanks will undergo significant modifications to ensure they can process larger volumes of sewage. The ultraviolet disinfection and chemical dosing systems at the plant will also be upgraded.

"Not only will this project ensure the plant can cater for the community's growing needs, it will lead to better environmental outcomes, as the effluent coming out of the plant will ultimately be treated to a higher standard," said Mr Scott.

"Concept design is a vital stage in the project and will allow us to progress to detailed design and then construction, with the project expected to be completed in 2023."

New three-year deal for mining to support Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service

Mining's support for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service will stretch to more than 40 years under a new \$300,000 sponsorship

agreement with the NSW Minerals Council.

The mining industry has been supporting this vital service since at least the mid-1980s and it is valued by thousands in mining communities across Northern NSW.

NSW Minerals Council CEO Stephen Galilee says "We are very proud to continue our long term sponsorship of this important community service, especially after what has been a challenging year for everyone in health and emergency services."

Mining's support includes annual contributions from mining companies, mining supplier businesses and mining-related unions, and thousands of mine workers also make regular donations from their pay.

Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service CEO Richard Jones OAM said the Service was immensely grateful for the support of the NSW Minerals Council.

"This year alone, the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service has undertaken hundreds of flights to assist in emergency situations. Our dedicated team wouldn't be able to carry out this lifesaving work without the support of our valued partners like the NSW Minerals Council," Mr Jones said.

Port Waratah delivers sustainable outcomes

Port Waratah Coal Services has launched its Annual Reporting suite for 2020, which includes the Sustainability Report, Financial Report, Modern Slavery Statement and an

accompanying Sustainability website. The Sustainability Report centres on material issues such as regulation and licensing, air quality, water, noise, communication and engagement.

Port Waratah performed strongly in 2020, marking the ninth year of exporting more than 100 million tonnes of coal.

"We work proactively and collaboratively to build long-term partnerships across the coal chain and focus on remaining as efficient as possible and providing service flexibility to meet our customers' needs," said CEO of Port Waratah, Hennie du Plooy.

"We achieved many significant environmental projects and improvements in key areas such as dust management, potable water consumption, and waste diverted from landfill. There is still work to do to improve our environmental performance and we will continue to strengthen our management approach to eliminate one-off environmental incidents.

"Through our Community Investment and Partnership Programme, we invested \$750,000 in 107 projects, initiatives and programmes that address specific needs and contribute to the sustainability of our community.

"Living our values helped to sustain us through the challenges of an unprecedented year. I believe our commitment to excellence, integrity, caring and progress played a significant role, not only in our adaption to new working conditions and controls during the pandemic, but the introduction of new technologies.

"We saw new technological improvements in 2020, from drone applications for safety and maintenance efficiencies to performance metric business intelligence projects and the installation of new dust monitoring technology," said Mr du Plooy.

Maintaining their reporting to international standards, Port Waratah's 2020 report has been prepared in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) Sustainability Reporting guidelines, meeting the GRI Standards Core option.

The Financial Report provides an overview of Port Waratah's financial performance and disclosures, while the Modern Slavery Statement outlines the intention and actions to eliminate slavery, servitude and debt bondage from PWCS and supply chain.

Let's Talk With.....

LAVINIA HUTCHISON

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

I'm the Managing Director of LivMedia and my ongoing community involvement in the Upper Hunter led to me establish Upper Hunter Women in Business last year.

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

I moved from the UK to Australia in 2002 and my first job in the media industry was in Scone in 2005, I was Personal Assistant to the Publisher of Turf Monthly (Thoroughbred Racing) Magazine and this role gave me insight to all facets of publishing. I then went to work for Rural Press/Fairfax Media for more than seven years managing the Muswellbrook Chronicle and Hunter Valley News. In 2013 I popped across the ditch to New Zealand, working for Travel New Zealand Magazine and then Otago Daily Times and the Queenstown Times. Upon my return, I held the position of General Manager at Newcastle Weekly magazine for more than two years and in 2017 I moved to Far North Queensland, working as the General Sales Manager at Channel 9, Triple M and Hit FM in Mackay. I relocated back to the Upper Hunter in February 2020, just before Covid hit and having been working full-time in my own company since. The majority of my experience has been working in regional communities across multiple industries, in particular the mining sector to support businesses in the supply chain. In the midst of Covid, Lisa Harpley (co-founder) and I established Upper Hunter Women in Business to enable locals across Singleton, Muswellbrook and Scone to connect, communicate and collaborate. We're kicking major goals and recently met with Minister for Regional Women Bronnie Taylor, to discuss ways as to how we can collaborate in providing opportunities and resources to local women in business.

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

I enjoy travel and I'm a fan of regional road trips. I love being able to work on the road and I'm always venturing somewhere new.

4. Where do you find inspiration?

My inspiration comes from my community and the people I meet. Having lived and worked in many communities, I'm fascinated by local stories and understanding people from different walks of life. It's great to see ideas other regional areas are embracing and bringing that valuable insight back to the Upper Hunter.

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

Networking and professional development have been key areas of growth for me. All of the early starts at Chamber breakfasts and late nights at Toastmaster meetings have been instrumental in building a network that allows me to collaborate on many, many amazing projects.

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

Most people wouldn't know that early on in my advertising career, I accidentally called Mark Taylor directly to discuss advertising for Fujitsu (he's their brand ambassador). I had absolutely no idea he was a famous former Australian cricketer!



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

I'd like to see the Upper Hunter become the next major tourism destination. The Upper Hunter Valley really is a hidden gem and with serious investment in infrastructure, we'll be well positioned to take that title.

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

Vines Restaurant at Hollydene Estate, Jerrys Plains.

9. Are you reading anything at the moment?

Grazier magazine.

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

Bridget Jones Diary – "and fannies about with the press releases."



MERRIDY ELPHICK LAWYERS

Nemesia Hood is the latest addition to the Merridy Elphick Lawyers team. She started as a solicitor with the team just this year. Nemesia has worked in Family Law in Newcastle since 2018. She has an interest in social justice, children's rights and the environment. Nemesia has a Social Science Degree from Newcastle University with an emphasis on Welfare and Community Services. She is a proud Chilean who speaks Spanish to impress her work colleagues.



MONICA CLARE RECRUITMENT

Monica Clare Recruitment has welcomed **Nicola McKenzie** to the team. Nicola brings new vision to her role as Recruitment Consultant, having previously worked in tourism for the past six years. After a career-changing 2020, she is bringing her experience in Customer Service, Office Support and Sales to recruitment.



PKF

PKF in Australia has announced the appointment of local Managing Director, **Steve Meyn**, as Chairman. Steve brings a stability to the group since its reincarnation in 2014 when he was an instrumental part of the then Lawler National Alliance executive that joined PKF to reinvigorate the PKF brand across Australia. Despite this appointment, Meyn's heart remains firmly in Newcastle and with his local clients. It is working with them that keeps his finger on the pulse of the business community.



CATHERINE HENRY LAWYERS

Rosemary Listing joins the health law team at Catherine Henry Lawyers. Rosemary brings a wealth of international and Australian experience in medical negligence cases and consumer protection cases. She is completing a PhD, at the Australian National University, focusing on consumer protection, particularly failed and defective medical devices. In addition to medical negligence and product liability cases, Rosemary will assist clients with making complaints about poor healthcare, guardianship matters, and inquests.

LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR PEOPLE!



ALLIANCE LABOUR SOLUTIONS

Sam Barry has joined the Alliance Labour Solutions team as a business graduate having recently graduated Newcastle University with a Bachelor of Business. His position will focus on marketing, finance and business improvement.

We would be pleased to receive information about your new appointments.

Just email around 80 words on the employment plus a high resolution head shot to **editorial@HBRmag.com.au**.

Submissions are **FREE** but subject to editorial control.



Property growth expectations in NSW hits record highs

The quarterly Property Council/ANZ sentiment survey for March 2021 released on 15 April has shown capital growth expectations for the industrial and residential sectors are at record highs in NSW according to Jane Fitzgerald, NSW Executive Director of the Property Council.

Overall property industry sentiment in NSW bounced from 123 points in the December 2020 quarter, to 145 index points in the March 2021 quarter. A score of 100 is considered neutral.

"Importantly, commercial office capital growth expectations are also showing a strong recovery, a positive move for the State's economy," Ms Fitzgerald said.

"Residential capital growth expectations are off the charts – accelerating concerns about housing affordability in NSW, especially for Sydney, with capital growth expectations recording their highest rating of 72, more than double that of last quarter (December 2020 30.1)."

Ms Fitzgerald said industrial property has been the brightest shining star throughout the pandemic, with Australians relying more on goods and services being delivered directly to their homes.

"The survey shows industrial capital growth over the coming 12 months in NSW is sitting at 47.1 on the index, up 11.5 points from the December 2020 quarter," Ms Fitzgerald said.

Ms Fitzgerald said that despite the slow return of office workers to CBDs, the commercial office capital growth expectations index shows a strong recovery, up from -45.2 points in December 2020 to -14.6 in March 2021, a rise of 30.6 points.

"Whilst there is clearly a long way to go, this turnaround in confidence is reassuring.

"Residential housing has risen to a record high rating of 72 in March 2021, more than double the rating of December 2020. This is excellent news for anyone who already owns a home but means that the State government needs a renewed focus on housing

supply if we are to stave off locking the next generation out of home ownership.

"This quarter's survey also shows how concerned the industry is about housing supply and affordability with this now the key issue for NSW state government to address," concluded Ms Fitzgerald.

Industry welcomes expansion of state approval pipeline

The Property Council of Australia has welcomed the NSW Government's decision that the threshold for warehouses and data centres to be assessed as State Significant Development will be lowered from \$50 million to \$30 million.

"Warehousing and logistics serve as the backbone to the NSW economy. This decision means the State will take an expanded role in approving developments which enable our supply chains to function more efficiently and effectively in a time of economic disruption and upheaval," Jane Fitzgerald, the Property Council's NSW Executive Director said.

"When applications for new warehousing enter the planning system, they are often supported by large industrial tenants with immediate needs to expand their capability and this underscores the need for fast and effective approvals.

Ms Fitzgerald said last week's ANZ/Property Council survey showed sentiment in the industrial property sector in NSW was at record levels.

"Industrial and logistics property is a hot commodity right now and it's great to see the NSW Government striking while the iron is hot," Ms Fitzgerald said.

"It is pleasing to see the NSW Government has committed to expanding the number of assessment staff to support their decision to take on this new responsibility.

"We look forward to continuing to work with the Department as they continue to roll out their Planning Reform Action Plan over the coming months."

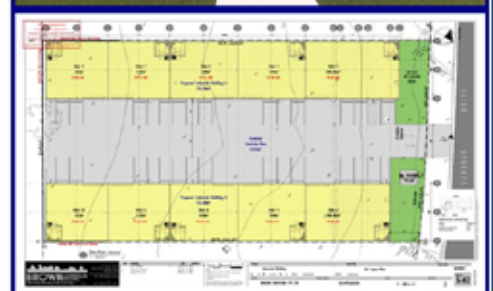
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Notes: 1. We have used our best endeavours to confirm the accuracy of this information yet provide no warranty for its correctness. All enquiries are to rely upon their own investigations.



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The drums are beating but is anyone listening?

Steve Dick
Movable

Not only in a political sense but drums of the war on coal are beating louder than ever before, and like it or not, change will be thrust on this region.

Coal remains an essential issue for our region because the Hunter's prosperity is attached to the commodity. This dependence occurs through the industries that support, maintain and supply services to the coal mines.

Correspondingly, despite commodity company Glencore's victory in its pricing dispute with the Australian Tax Office, coal has become a dirty word, especially if it's from the Wybong Valley. Moreover, many of the valley's towns have between 35% and 50% of their residents working in the mining industries.

The irony of this situation is the rhetoric. For example, Kopec, a Korean coal company, looks as though it may give up on its ten-year aspirations in the Manadlong Valley, sighting its new green credentials. The Federal Government, favour a RED Energy (a Federal Government-owned entity) proposal for a "cleaner" gas-fired plant at Kurri Kurri, whilst AGL and Energy Australia are proposing their own.

Gas is no different to coal in many respects

The truth is that gas is no different from coal in its ultimate impact on global greenhouse gases. Methane gas, for instance, is 23 times more potent than CO₂ (Coal) as a greenhouse gas. Furthermore, methane leaks every step of the process until it is finally burnt. About 30% of Australia's gas is sourced by fracking, with the most likely source for the Red Energy power station coming from the newly Federally approved fracking gas field under the black soil plains of Narrabri. We will not burn coal, but we'll allow fracking under our food bowl when the greenhouse gas effect is in net terms the same – go figure?

Back to the South Koreans, whilst being our region's second-largest thermal coal customer, they are looking to import gas into Newcastle. Yes, Australian gas molecules are sourced in Queensland, liquified, put on a boat and shipped south rather than north. The Korean proposal for a floating gas terminal at Kooragang Island has again made mainstream media with positive fanfare that doesn't question why.

Why are we importing Australian gas at ten times the price?

Why are Australian consumers paying 2.23 times more for gas than South Koreans?

Why do we believe gas is cleaner when it takes the equivalent of 40% of Australia's domestic and commercial electricity supply to liquify it?

And why have we sold all our gas overseas anyway?

Manufacturing resurgence and the HEZ

Manufacturing in the region may experience a renaissance post-COVID and as the tension with China mounts. Still, the best stimulus for the region and easiest to implement by the NSW Government is releasing the Port of Newcastle from the container deed. This move will free the port to start importing and exporting. Unlike Port Botany, Newcastle has a ready-made staging post, an inland port in the Hunter Economic Zone (HEZ).

Likely to be the home of the world's largest battery, the 1200-megawatt CEP Energy battery, the HEZ, unlike many other sites in the region, is ready to go now with affordable land that can provide competitive build and lease proposals.

Fully serviced, unpolluted, only minutes from the M1 without traffic lights and with its own rail spur, HEZ will be integral to the functions of the Port of Newcastle.

So, while the drums beat on the slow death of coal and global tensions mount, the region must remove its shackles by freeing up the Port of Newcastle. Also, if we are serious about greenhouse gas emissions, stop being hoodwinked by the "gas is clean" movement because it's not.

For further information contact Movable on (02) 4915 3000



Steve Dick is a director of Newcastle's leading residential and commercial real estate firm, Movable.

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REFLECTING AND REVIEWING ASPECTS OF YOUR BUSINESS



Marty Adnum **Out of the Square**

A year on from COVID hitting the Hunter is not a bad time to reflect and review some aspects of your business. (Or just go on holidays for 6 months to get over it). Here are some suggestions that may benefit your business regardless of your industry and phase you may be in – recovery, expansion or business as usual. These are not thoughts from a faultless guru, but simply a business operator who in 24 years with Out of the Square has made mistakes and faced challenges, but has never been afraid to learn, adapt and evolve. So, here's my two bob's...

Vision & Purpose – to some this might be a bit airy fairy, but this is the foundation of your business. If you have them great, just ensure they are still relevant. Put simply, your Purpose explains the reason your organisation exists. This can be a practical reason, such as why you come to work each day, often stemming from your founding story. Your Vision though is a bigger 'one day' goal: what the world might look like if you achieve it. In OOTS' case it's 'To play a significant role in Newcastle becoming a global success'. Pretty hefty, but worth striving for.

Values – should cohesively bring your team together with a shared focus; they shape your culture and impact your business strategy. Although these can be guided from the top, ideally they are developed collaboratively with the broader team. If your team helps build them, they will also be more inclined to live and breathe them. Ours were established over 10 years ago and still ring true. 1. Stop, collaborate and listen. 2. Own that shit. 3. Up the ante. 4. Laugh, play, inspire.

Brand cohesion – so you have a logo, and it is on all of your collateral. But how long since you've done a proper audit? Have you printed out all your bits, cross checked them with signage, uniforms, your online presence, etc. Ideally these should all 'feel' cohesive beyond just the logo. Colour palate, fonts, tone of voice are all crucial. It's not always possible to have everything matchy matchy, as different elements may have evolved at different times and there may be budget considerations. But if there is too much variation you could be robbing yourself, and perhaps creating confusion for your customers and team.

Team Morale – 'your people are your biggest asset'. This is true, but for much more than pure financial reasons. I believe it's simply good karma to look after others, especially those you may spend eight hours a day alongside. If your team is happy and loved, you

too will enjoy your working hours so much more. Each month our team votes for two staff members who have delivered based on our values. They then get to spin a wheel and win things like an early knockoff, or local café and fuel vouchers.

Create relevant content – if you have a story to tell that will genuinely help others, do so beyond pure 'advertising'. Meaningful, well-crafted and succinct content be it written or video, will resonate so much better with your audience. Tell people how you are making a difference, explain what's in it for them, how you will improve their life or business. The content is more important than the execution, even if shot yourself on your iPhone. If it comes from the heart and connects with people, it will work.

Support the region – these next two points are a bit 'on the soap box' for me (sorry). I passionately believe we rise by also lifting others. If you can source product locally, do so; if you can cross-promote a local business alongside yours, do so. If you can sneak a blurb on how good the Hunter is into a presentation, do so. There may not be an immediate benefit in it for you, but ultimately it will help you and your friends and family alike.

Give back – almost done, hang in there. This is perhaps the most important point here. Regardless of your level of 'success', I believe we can all do a little bit to help those less fortunate than ourselves. Let's face it if you are reading a business mag there are definitely people less fortunate than yourself. It could be a single \$5 charity raffle ticket, volunteering for a cause or an organisation lead fundraiser. In whatever form you can give, find what feels right for you, then go for it.

Thanks for reading this far. With all of this in mind remember to have fun and play up like a second-hand whipper snipper when you can. Life's short, so enjoy!

For more information contact Marty via 02 4929 6640, email marty@outofthesquare.com.au or visit outofthesquare.com.au

Marty Adnum is Founder and Managing Director of Out of the Square Media. Marty has grown OOTS from his video and television background into an award-winning full service agency.

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TO BRAND OR NOT TO BRAND

Maria Charlton
MAP Marketing

A good brand is more than a memorable logo it's an asset that; increases the value of a company, provides staff with direction and motivation, builds reputation, gains distinction and makes acquiring new customers easier.

Branding can be defined as the sum totals of stakeholder perceptions of customer service, reputation, advertising and logo all working in the same positive direction.

The historical inception of a brand resides in the practice of livestock branding, the act of marking an animal to signify ownership. From this humble beginning; branding evolved to the commercial distinction of enterprises.

In Business to Business (B2B) customers are not choosing between brands of running shoes or cereal. They are making well-informed decisions, often based on past business experience, personal connections, reputation and perceived problem solving expertise.

Professional practices are performance based business; hence the personal presentation of each professional has a significant impact on practice branding.

Often B2B providers argue that brands play no role in their business because:

- Customers are rational decision makers who are not swayed by emotional factors or brand aspirations
- Purchases are all about the relationships between surveying professionals & the customer
- Services are price sensitive
- Sales are made to a limited numbers of customers, so creating a brand is wasteful
- Despite those arguments, brands are important to B2B enterprises. Buyers are still people, and people have emotions that impact on economic decision making.

In "Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking", Malcolm Gladwell asserts that buyers make most decisions by relying on their two-second first impressions based on stored memories, images and feelings.

Strong branding makes important contributions to these first impressions. And, strong brands generate the following benefits.

- Customer willingness to try a products
- Reduced time to close product sales
- Greater purchase probability of products
- Less sensitivity with regard to price increases
- Less incentive to try a competitive offerings
- Motivate current staff
- Attract purpose-driven new staff
- Clarify what your business is about
- Engage new customers by helping you stand out in a crowded marketplace
- Increase customer loyalty
- Recognise businesses more easily

It is also important to determine the strength of your brand compared to your competitors- the so called "brand positioning"- so as to develop an advantage in the minds of your customers.

A unique competitive positioning can be developed through adopting the following four steps:

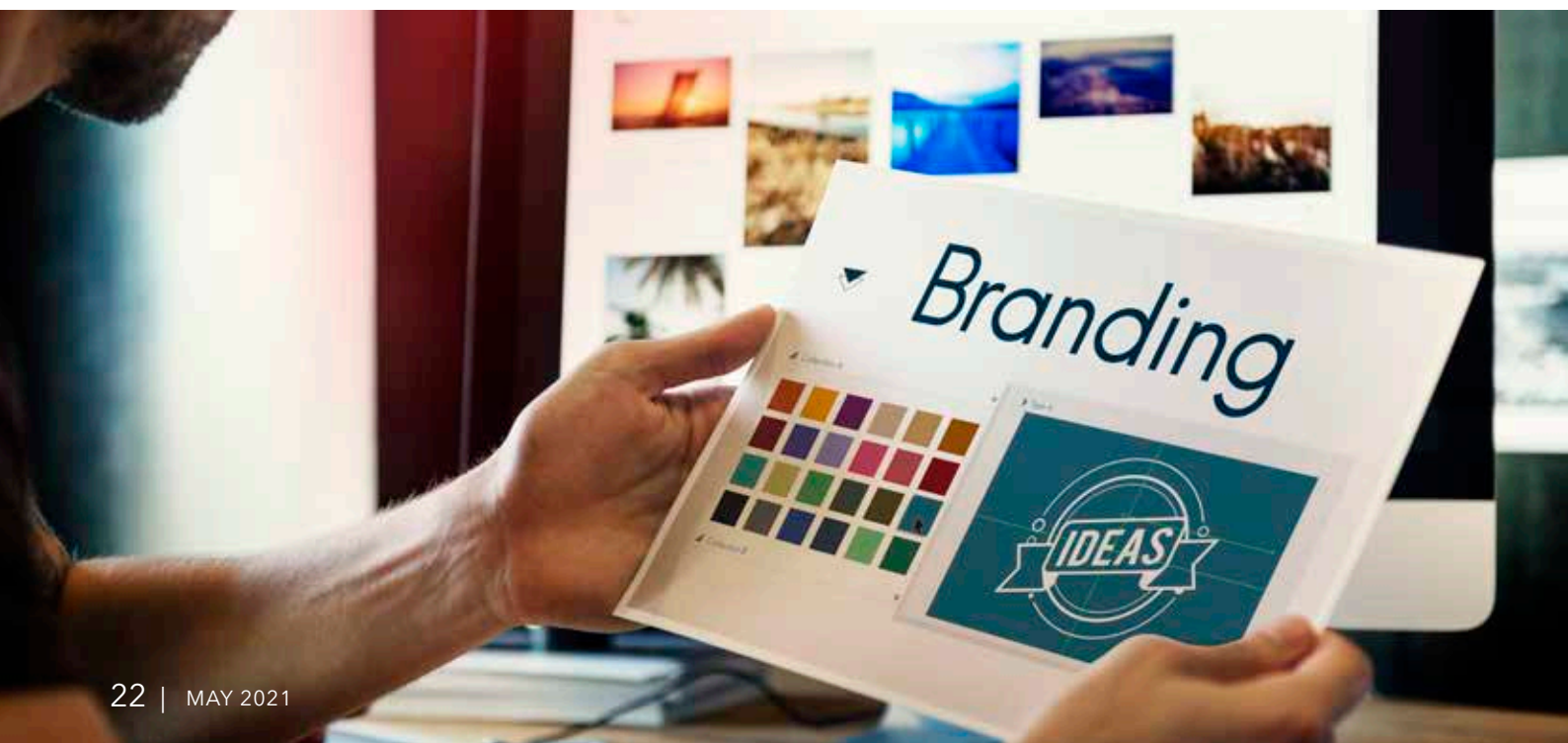
- Research your competitors & the nature of competition in the market
- Identify the competitive differences in your services features
- Find the attributes & features, similar to the competitor's
- Determine your core promise in three-five words

Whether you decide to brand or not to brand is a choice. It can be argued that you cannot afford not to brand in the current competitive surveying environment. Once you embark on the branding path, it is important to be different, distinctive and consistent. Your end game needs to be to gain recognition and help consumers navigate the competitive maze of choice.

For more information please contact Maria at maria@mapmarketing.com.au



Maria Charlton, the Managing Director of Map Marketing is a Fellow and Certified Practicing Marketer with the Australian Marketing Institute (AMI) and holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Masters in Business Administration. She has extensive experience in strategic marketing, market research, business development and business communications.



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OAS Technology launches new look

OAS Technology, leading integrator of IT systems and solutions based in Newcastle, Muswellbrook, Tuggerah and now the Manning Region, are delighted to announce the launch of their refreshed logo.

Over the last 30 years, OAS have continued to evolve within the ever-changing IT landscape. In 2015 they heavily invested in their own Hosted Cloud Solution and with this came a new product brand – “Minder Secure Cloud Services – powered by OAS”.

“Whilst the Minder brand was only ever intended as a product brand to show our commitment to the evolving need in cloud solutions, it has become a brand on its own, co-existing with our established OAS brand, causing confusion not only internally, but also amongst our valued client base,” says CEO David Lynch.

The same philosophies, but a fresh look

With the knowledge gathered from intensive marketing workshops, the Board of Directors are excited to announce that the company will now solely operate as OAS Technology with a fresh look and feel as they will continue to provide the very best service and technology solutions for their clients.

What is changing?

Though OAS have changed their visual identity, their core beliefs have not changed. “We have never been swayed from delivering world class IT solutions that empower small to medium sized businesses in Australia to continuously evolve” says David Lynch. “Along with announcing our refreshed brand identity, we have revamped our website and you can now find us at www.oas.com.au.”

If your business is looking for IT advice or a new IT provider, contact OAS Technology at itsales@oas.com.au or call (02) 4940 1800.








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YOUR DATA, YOUR PRIVACY AND YOUR REPUTATION

Tony Heitmeyer
CIBIS International

We're all taking it seriously now

As a business manager or company director, you would already know about the Australian Privacy Principles and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We see notices on websites and we're increasingly prompted to "Accept Cookies" and other tracking technologies.

To date, it's been relatively easy to overlook your obligations with regards to actively managing data privacy and governance issues, but times are changing, and so they should.

Consider for instance, who has covert access to your microphone, camera or location services on your phone? Who might access your home video surveillance footage, or gain unauthorised access to your health or police records? Where is this information stored, who is it shared with and what protections are in place?

This data often contains very intimate and personal information, which should be protected in a very serious way – particularly when dealing with minors.

Whether it's Tinder, Facebook, Fitbit, your children's overly

friendly teacher "reaching out" (grooming), or your local lawyer using unencrypted email sending confidential information about your decision to leave your violent partner, you'll want assurances that your data is treated with respect and that all reasonable efforts have been made to protect and use that data ethically.

So how proactive are you with data protection? What would a significant data breach cost your organisation reputationally? Have you thought about a cyber event exposing information you have not responsibly secured?

For more than a decade, CIBIS has been forthright with data protection and confidentiality. It's reassuring to see university, local government and business clients increasingly request data be hosted within Australia and subject to cybersecurity assurance assessments.

As consumers, we're more mindful of the huge amounts of data being amassed about us and our activities. We still hear people say "I've got nothing to hide, so I don't care" but as a business operator you'll need to be proactive and on the front foot.

Reputations are at stake – both yours and your customers.

For further information contact Tony at CIBIS International on (02) 4925 8500, email tony@cibis.com.au or visit www.cibis.com.au





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50 year anniversary and rebrand for Sharp Electronics Group

This year marks a major milestone for Sharp Electronics Group as it celebrates 50 years in business. On 17 May, it also finalised an important rebrand, bringing Sharp Electronics Group and OfficeTrend together to create Sharp Office.

Managing Director George Tuntevski explained "Since 1971, we have been committed to helping other businesses grow by offering the latest in business technology, printing solutions, office products, office furniture, all paired with a superior level of home-grown customer service.

"We aim to help you stay ahead of the game when it comes to how your office operates and we want to help you solve your greatest challenges.

"With that purpose in mind, and in looking to the future, we recognised the need to evolve and stay true to our purpose.

"After conducting feedback surveys, we found that our customers and suppliers are confused with two of our brands, Sharp Electronics Group and OfficeTrend, and often did not realise they are owned and operated by one company.

"Rebranding to one name makes it simpler so that we will be recognised as the one trusted company by customers new, and long-standing.

"We will continue to offer the same services and products, we have the same great team, and we remain 100% locally owned and operated."

Choosing a name is important and the business found that 65% of its customers know them as Sharp, in one form or another, so it was important to retain the name Sharp. The Office part highlights the focus on helping businesses with all their office needs.

"The name Sharp Office had to reflect our proud history, as well who we are today and how we can help you," said George Tuntevski.

From 17 May, there were changes to the logo, building, vehicles and website but customers can still get in touch the same way by phone, email or by visiting the website.

Sharp Office Managing Director George Tuntevski



Lake Mac Community Internet of Things Network now available to innovators, businesses and schools

The region's innovators, businesses, community groups and schools are being encouraged to connect to Lake Macquarie City's Community Internet of Things (IoT) Network and experiment with sensors and data.

The free-to-use public network is now one of the largest IoT Networks of its kind in NSW and covers all of Lake Macquarie. The local network provides many opportunities for the community and businesses to connect devices to measure things like environment and weather patterns, collect customer traffic data and track a piece of equipment or product via GPS.

Lake Macquarie City Council's Smart Cities Lead Claire Chaikin-Bryan believes the possibilities are endless for people interested in connecting to the Community IoT network.

"There is a range of sensors that can connect to the network, but people are also able to build their own sensors and start collecting data. The network is free to use, which means businesses and innovators can use the network to get experience with IoT without making a large investment or long-term commitment," Ms Chaikin-Bryan said.

"We're using the network to measure weather, urban heat and air quality, track lifeguard rescues with sensors on rescue boards, and measure usage of amenities. We're encouraging people to connect and experiment with sensors and the data, and if you're new to IoT technology, we're hosting a series of IoT workshops to find out more."

Lake Macquarie Mayor Cr Kay Fraser said the growing IoT market presented a huge opportunity for Lake Macquarie City's economy.

"We know that innovation and lifestyle will shape the most successful cities in the world in the future. We are very lucky to have an amazing lifestyle already, and now we have one of the largest IoT networks in NSW. This will help us attract innovators, creators and entrepreneurs to our City," Cr Fraser said.

"There are some wonderful opportunities for our major industries to utilise the IoT network, especially as our economy continues to change and grow. I'm eager to see how our community and businesses use their expertise to make the most of the network and technology."

The Internet of Things (IoT) is the connection of physical devices to the virtual world and/or each other via the internet, to be controlled or communicate information and data.

The Lake Macquarie City Community IoT Network runs on the global The Things Network (TTN) which uses LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network) technology and has been deployed around many parts of Australia. This means sensors that work on the network in Lake Macquarie will also work in Sydney, Perth, the Sunshine Coast and anywhere there is TTN coverage.

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STRATA MANAGEMENT



A defendant isn't happy with how things are going in court, so he gives the judge a hard time.

Judge: "Where do you work?"

Defendant: "Here and there."

Judge: "What do you do for a living?"

Defendant: "This and that."

Judge: "Take him away."

Defendant: "Wait; when will I get out?"

Judge: "Sooner or later."

A farmer is out riding her horse when she starts to feel hungry.

The farmer says "I'm so hungry, I could eat a horse."

The horse comes to a quick stop and looks at the farmer and says, "Mooooooo."

Roy was a single guy, living at home with his father and working in the family business.

When he found out he was going to inherit a fortune when his sickly father died, he decided he needed a wife with which to share his fortune.

One evening at an investment meeting he spotted the most beautiful woman he had ever seen.

Her natural beauty took his breath away.

"I may look like just an ordinary man," he said to her, but in just a few years, my father will die, and I'll inherit \$200 million."

Impressed, the woman obtained his business card and three weeks later, she became his stepmother.

A sales manager was addressing an underperforming sales team at the start of a new month:

"We are going to have a sales contest this month. The winners will get to enter next month's contest."

To resolve conflicts between management and staff, I brought both sides together and asked employees to jot down key words on a flip chart.

One participant complained about management's tendency to interfere and wrote the word nitpicking.

A manager leaped to his feet to ask, "Shouldn't there be a hyphen between nit and picking?"

The attorney tells the accused, "I have some good news and some bad news."

"What's the bad news?" asks the accused.

"The bad news is, your blood is all over the crime scene, and the DNA tests prove you did it."

"What's the good news?"

"Your cholesterol is only 130."

A man has been found guilty for overusing commas.


The judge warned him to expect a very long sentence.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH


"It is only when they go wrong that machines remind you how powerful they are."

- Clive James

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