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From the Editor



The COVID-19 pandemic has played havoc across Australia and the world. Governments across Australia, and particularly the Federal Government, have initiated major stimulus packages that will greatly help businesses and individuals through these challenging times.

These packages will leave a major debt that we will be paying off for many years to come, but without them many more businesses would be closing permanently, the unemployment numbers would grow even further and the recovery process

would be extremely slow. With these packages in place, the economy will improve much more quickly once the crisis is over and help generate the wealth required to create a stronger position for all of us.

Some of the difficult things for businesses (and everyone else) are the unknowns, particularly in terms of timing – how long before the restrictions will be eased and how long before the economy returns to normal. Planning is very difficult when there are a number of external factors that you have no control over and you don't know how long they will be in place.

It will be almost a day-to-day situation for many businesses, doing their best to stay alive and be in the position to operate normally again when the crisis is over.

Our thoughts are with all our readers, particularly the businesses and individuals most affected in these unprecedented times.

* *

Here at HBR, we have also been significantly affected with the cancellation of advertising plans and events we were planning to cover.

We plan to continue to publish both the hard copy and online versions, but issues are expected to be smaller than normal – including this current issue.

So if you have some news or other story submissions, we are happy to consider including them in coming issues and help promote your business.

Garry Hardie
Publisher & Editor

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Port of Newcastle a powerful link for renewable energy in NSW



March 2020 delivery of Collector wind turbine blades aboard the BBC Coral

Newcastle has again demonstrated its role as a critical trade gateway for Australia's take-up of renewable energy technology, with the latest batch of wind farm components.

More than 200 wind turbines have been imported through Port of Newcastle over the past four years and this number is set to grow a further 25% this year with the arrival of another two shipments aboard specialist project cargo ships, Industrial Strength and BBC Coral.

The 54 Vestas V117-4.2 MW turbines blades arrived in three pieces and will be stored at the Port for several months before being transported almost 500 kilometres by truck to the project site in Collector, located about halfway between Goulburn and Canberra.

The on-site storage – a unique advantage at Port of Newcastle compared with other ports – reduces double-handling of cargo and unnecessary truck movements in regional NSW.

Construction on the 226.8 MW Collector Wind Farm began in May 2019 and is expected to be completed in 2021, with the supply chain a product of collaboration between turbine

manufacturer Vestas, heavy haul logistics group Rex J Andrews, independent power producer and project owner RATCH-Australia and Port of Newcastle.

Upon arrival at the construction site, each turbine will be assembled to its full height of 150 metres to the tips of the blades. Collector Wind Farm will produce enough safe, clean, reliable electricity to power up to 80,000 homes on average each year.

RATCH-Australia's Collector Wind Farm is one of many renewable energy developments under construction across the state as the Berejiklian Government pushes towards net zero emission energy by 2050.

Port of Newcastle CEO Craig Carmody said the growing wind farm import trade was one element of the Port's sustainability plans.

"Port of Newcastle is diversifying its trade as it strives to create a safe, sustainable and environmentally and socially responsible Port that realises its potential," Mr Carmody said.

"We have further grown the wind farm importation trade since receiving components for the White Rock Wind Farm in late 2016.

"When the Collector project comes online, Port of Newcastle will have helped facilitate the import of 269 wind turbines, generating enough renewable energy to power about 374,000 homes each year.

"This important trade is only possible due to the work of specialist heavy haul logistics providers, who have the complex task of transporting oversized components from the country of manufacture to wind farms across regional New South Wales.

"Port of Newcastle is pleased to be providing the ocean gateway for this trade, which is aligned with our vision to remain a world-leading energy port through facilitating new and existing forms of energy."

Vestas' Australian Wind Technology Project Manager Construction, Ajay Pancholi, said the company selected Port of Newcastle because the ample amount of storage space required for turbine components was available close to the arrival berth.

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St Bedes Stage 1- Photo courtesy of SHAC, photography by Alexander McIntyre

2020 Newcastle Architecture Awards announced

Verve Residences by CKDS Architecture with Hill Thalys Architecture and Urban Projects emerged as the foremost project in this year's Newcastle Architecture Awards, collecting a swathe of honours including the prestigious Architecture Medal, the award for Residential Architecture – Houses (Multiple Housing) and a commendation for Sustainable Architecture.

Verve creates a major new urban frontage to King Street in Newcastle. Along the site's north-east boundary to Cottage Creek, an important new public connection is created, linking northward to the harbourfront and southward to National Park. The project sets a new standard of urban architecture in Newcastle, an exemplar combining public benefits, activation and leading residential design.

Consisting of a pair of towers and a linear podium fronting King Street, the Verve Residences accommodates 208 apartments, with a mix of retail and commercial spaces addressing the street and new canal frontage. The careful site planning creates generous public and communal landscape spaces. The small footprint of the towers, extensive podium landscaping, splayed balconies and articulation of the base means that many apartments enjoy corner positions, with extended sunshine, natural ventilation and expansive views.

Jury chair Sam Crawford of Sam Crawford Architects said "The culture of design in Newcastle is evidently very strong. This year's entries were of the highest calibre, highlighting the diversity of work being undertaken in the region. The award-winning projects showcase the extraordinary breadth of talent in the Newcastle architecture community and the ingenuity of local architects working within constrained budgets."

St Bede's Catholic College, Chisholm - Stage 1 by SHAC won the award for Educational Architecture, the COLORBOND Award for Steel Architecture and received a commendation for Sustainable Architecture. This is the third year running SHAC has been awarded the AIA Newcastle Education Award.

SHAC built upon the existing relationship with the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle to complete the first stage of a new Catholic Secondary College. The first stage building utilises the adaptable and flexible structural grid to house the functional area and specialist teaching spaces for the initial school population within a single building. The interim facilities will change function as the school community grows and the future stages of works are completed onsite.

A strong material selection coupled with a symmetrical design approach allows for high quality detailing and execution throughout the building, subtly referencing proportion, geometry and patterns. The building purposely celebrates the exposed, large section structural steel members as part of the external expression of the building, and as a representation of the repetitive and large span structural grid.

Experiencing life at the beach in all its forms, the Beach House by architecture saville isaacs won the award for Residential Architecture – Houses (New) and a commendation for Interior

Architecture. A progression of pavilions and courtyards are strung off a circulation spine/breezeway, from street to beach. There is no differentiation between architecture and interiors – interior becomes exterior, joinery becomes space modulator, and materials become textural art brought to life by the sun.

Also awarded for Residential Architecture – Houses (New) was Vikki's Place by Curious Practice. Located on flood prone land in Newcastle, the home design challenges existing suburban ideals and grapples with the threat of climate change and housing affordability. This multi-generational home focuses on how the clients want to live and occupy space rather than fulfilling a checklist of rooms. The dwelling embraces the qualities of half-finished structures or ruins. The lower portion is made from strong, robust materials to withstand flooding while the upper floor is lightweight, using warm and soft materials.

For the award winner of Residential Architecture – Houses (Alterations and Additions), the interventions at Parry Street by Curious Practice demonstrate the role of design as a transformative process. The project transformed the three separate tenancies within the existing Federation brick house back into a single-family home.

The Signal Box Restaurant by Derive Architecture & Design received the Heritage award for its modestly scaled, light and detailed structure serving as a counterpoint to the State Heritage Listed 'O' Type Signal Box rail control building. The design of a light filigree exposed structure, free spanning suspended platform of steel, concrete and glass provides a transparent form to create a strong connection with the surrounding walkways and gardens as well as sightlines to the Signal Box that make up the significant transformation of the former railway and its associated workings.

In addition to the eight awards, the jury recognised other exemplary projects in Newcastle with commendations going to: Point Frederick House by Slater Architects for Residential Architecture – Houses (New), JAM House by Ramsey Awad Architect for Residential Architecture – Houses (Alterations and Additions), The Boatshed by Sally Morgan Architect with Matt Griffin Designer for Small Project Architecture. The jury also acknowledged Interior Architecture commendations for Cooks' House by Curious Practice and DFK Crosbie Workplace by SDA.

NSW Chapter President Kathlyn Loseby said "It is heartening to see that the 33 projects entered this year exemplify the potential for architecture to positively impact our community, in particular the significant changes occurring in Newcastle and the Central Coast regions."

In total the jury bestowed eight awards and eight commendations. The Institute congratulates all the practices that participated in the 2020 Newcastle Architecture Awards program and thanks this year's jurors, who contributed their time and expertise with great generosity, and to our Newcastle Awards major partner EARP Bros, and category partners hebel and Cemintel."

The Verve - Photo courtesy of Miller Property Corp









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NSW passes flexible long service leave changes to help employees and businesses

On 25 March the NSW Parliament passed changes to long service leave which will create greater flexibility for employers and employees to access leave during the COVID-19 crisis.

The amendments to the Long Services Leave Act 1955 will allow employees to take leave in shorter blocks, such as one day a week, and without the traditional one-month notice period, by agreement with their employer.

NSW Treasurer Dominic Perrottet, who introduced the changes in to the NSW Parliament, said the flexibility was very important during a time when businesses are looking at every option to keep staff on their books.

"These changes will provide another way for businesses to help maintain their workforce during what will be an extended period of disruption," Mr Perrottet said.

"It requires the agreement of both the employee and employer for this to be done.

"We expect this to be an option which will help people get through the next few months and effectively put money in their weekly budgets."

The key amendments are:

- waiving the one-month notice period for taking leave (by mutual agreement between employee and employer)
- greater flexibility for employees to take this leave in shorter blocks if they wish (rather than traditional monthly blocks).

The legislation will have effect for six months from 25 March 2020 with the possibility of an extension to one year.

Students receive \$36,000 boost for studies

A total of \$36,000 has been awarded to 18 talented and inspiring students as part of the 2020 Port Stephens Mayoral Academic Scholarships, thanks to the financial support of local businesses.

The Port Stephens Mayoral Academic Scholarship program is an annual partnership between Port Stephens Council and local businesses to support the next generation of local business and industry leaders as they embark on their tertiary study.

Ampcontrol, Destination Port Stephens, Hunter Land, Hunter Readymixed Concrete, McDonald Jones Homes, Newcastle Airport, Port Stephens FM Raymond Terrace Bowling Club, Salamander Bay Recycling, Soldiers Point Bowling Club, SUEZ Resource Recovery Centre, The Wests Groups, Tomago Aluminium and Weathertex all contributed to the 2020 program.

Port Stephens Mayor Ryan Palmer says the scholarship program is a fantastic way to support local students in achieving their goals.

"The investment of one scholarship from a local business makes a big difference to a young person setting out on the next stage of their academic journey," Mayor Palmer said.

"Whether it is a year's worth of text books, a laptop computer, or student accommodation — this contribution goes a long way to support local students and encourage lifelong learning.



Graham Trott (Year 12 Co-Ordinator), Sophia Long, Phoebe Odgers, Anders Glew and Marty Telfer (Principal) - Photo by ME Photography

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The Station landscaping moves full steam ahead

Landscaping works around The Station are moving full steam ahead, with works started end of March.

Member of the Legislative Council Taylor Martin said these works will transform The Station precinct into a fantastic outdoor space for the community to enjoy.

"The Station is already a popular destination for Newcastle locals and visitors and it's on track to get even better – with a plaza, gardens, trees, lawns and walkways," Mr Martin said.

"Works will include bluestone and granite paved areas for gathering and events, shady trees, gardens and Aboriginal designs."

Planning and Public Spaces Minister Rob Stokes said The Station will be the newest public space in Newcastle to be revamped as part of the NSW Government's \$650 Revitalising Newcastle program.

"This transformative program is creating high-quality public spaces and better connections between the city and the sea, alongside world-class public transport, new jobs opportunities and affordable housing," Mr Stokes said.

HCCDC Acting Chief Executive Valentina Misevska said the program of works is also creating an opportunity for HCCDC to trial some new initiatives.

"We have committed to a five-day construction week during this project as part of a trial to realise a more balanced approach to delivering projects and works without weekend disruption for the community," Ms Misevska said.

Landscaping works are expected to be completed towards the end of the year.

Following an open tender process, local company Daracon Construction was selected to undertake these important works.

\$500,000 for coronavirus-affected Port Stephens tourism and business

Port Stephens Council has endorsed up to \$500,000 funding for initiatives to support the embattled Port Stephens tourism and business sectors which have taken an economic hit in the wake of COVID-19.

Council acknowledged that local tourism and business communities are being greatly affected by the worldwide spread of coronavirus and the virus's unfolding impacts will have a significant effect on the broader economy.

"The tourism industry is worth \$621 million to Port Stephens every year and it is estimated that up to 20% of the workforce could be lost over the next 12 months," Mayor Palmer said.

"The impact the coronavirus will have on the Port Stephens economy and our whole community is significant. The Port Stephens Tourism and Business Support Fund will allow Council to respond with agility during this volatile time to provide support to these industries as they need it.

"We'll work with Destination Port Stephens to support and fund destination marketing. We'll also work in partnership with the business community to implement additional strategies required to reduce the impact of this unfolding crisis," Mayor Palmer said.

The resolution also committed to an increase investment in attracting and supporting events in Port Stephens.

"We will actively pursue Government grants available to support the tourism industry now and into the future," Mayor Palmer said.

Collective pitches in to Help Hunter business

A collective that was inspired by the team at Newcastle creative agency Out of the Square (OOTS), will provide a suite of free guides to help local business navigate the current Covid-19 crisis.

The initiative is the brainchild of Marty Adnum, Managing Director, Out of the Square under his concept of HelpHunter. An online resource that hopes to deliver practical, accessible guides from vital services to Hunter businesses to help them now and into the future.

The guides are provided free of charge by the following local organisations:

- **Skildare** - Human Resources
- **Out of the Square** - Creative & Marketing
- **Life Matters** - Mental Health & Wellbeing
- **Australian Business Lawyers & Advisors** - Legal Services
- **Purser Corporate Communication** - Public Relations and Communication
- **Monica Clare** - Recruitment
- **Lambourne Partners** - Business & Wealth Advice

The initiative is supported by the Hunter Business Chamber and the Newcastle Business Club.

HelpHunter - Business went live on 2 April 2020 with a new website www.helphunter.com.au that includes a range of resources and videos from each of the partners, outlining tips that business can access free of charge. Information is



designed by each partner to be useful and relevant in these difficult times.

Marty Adnum said that he was not surprised that local businesses, when asked, were quick to assist and be part of the initiative.

"We each recognise that this crisis will challenge everyone and those who are supported now might have a better chance of surviving and thriving once we move into recovery post the crisis," Marty said.

"No one is getting paid for this work. In fact, each partner has contributed to purchase 'at cost advertising' and OOTS has invested a considerable sum well beyond this, in kind, to help assist the businesses in our region".

"These are incredibly tough times, no one really has all the answers. But that's ok. Let's deal with what we know and have a red hot go, in true Novocastrian spirit. If we fail, at least we tried, but I'm for a glass half full, I believe we will succeed by working together" he said.

UoN releases strategic plan

On 18 March the University of Newcastle Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Alex Zelinsky officially launched the Looking Ahead Strategic Plan 2020-2025 to University staff.

The plan is the University's roadmap to achieving its vision to be a world-leading university for its regions, underpinned by the values of excellence, equity, engagement and sustainability.

Professor Zelinsky said it was an aspirational plan that remained true to the essence of the University of Newcastle, with initiatives and goals that are focused on an outstanding student experience and serving our communities.

"Looking Ahead is a plan for a shared future. One where there is equality; where we address our local challenges, but for global good; and one where safeguarding our environment is at the heart of all our big decisions," Professor Zelinsky said.

The plan is built around six core pillars:

- A commitment to Indigenous education
- Engagement priorities: Better, Healthier Living; Next Generation Resources; Connected Communities; Growing Industries
- Life Ready Graduates
- Asia Pacific Focus
- Reimagining our Campuses
- Inspiring People

"We see it as our responsibility to develop our students not just in knowledge, but to support their growth as healthy and resilient contributors to society," Professor Zelinsky said.

Under the plan all undergraduate programs will feature work-integrated learning opportunities, providing three-way benefits: to students in the form of industry experience; to employers in the form of access to the latest teachings; and back to the University in the form of academic learning that is contextualised by industry practice.

The plan will also see the University adopt a living lab model for the advancement of the four Engagement Priorities - a model

that underpins the success of NIER (Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources) and HMRI (Hunter Medical Research Institute) - world-class institutions that facilitate partner-led problem solving and innovation that stretches beyond the boundaries of the University.

The Looking Ahead Strategic Plan 2020-2025 is available at www.newcastle.edu.au/strategic-plan

F/A-18 disposal provides Hunter region jobs

Workers at RAAF Base Williamtown will service and prepare up to 46 retired F/A-18 Classic Hornet aircraft that will be sold to air combat training company Air USA.

The Classic Hornet aircraft will be used to provide training services to the United States Air Force and will be prepared over the next three to four years.

Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Melissa Price MP, said the work will provide employment certainty for workers in the NSW Hunter region.

"The work to prepare these aircraft and components for sale will provide 24 direct industry jobs while Air Force transitions from the Classic Hornet to the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter," Minister Price said.

"This highlights the strong performance of the region's defence industry in servicing and maintaining the Classic Hornets over the past 30 years."

"Apart from the jobs directly supported by the work at RAAF Base Williamtown, more defence industry jobs are expected to be created across Australia through repair and overhaul work on aircraft servicing components."

The RAAF Classic Hornet fleet is being progressively retired as the F-35A Joint Strike Fighter is introduced into service. The Morrison Government has now taken delivery of 20 Joint Strike Fighters, out of a total order of 72.



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City of Newcastle releases comprehensive COVID-19 plan

City of Newcastle has developed a comprehensive community and business support package designed to help locals through the unprecedented effects of COVID-19.

The package, which has been designed to maintain the organisation's financial sustainability, is initially worth \$5.5 million in the short term and includes interest free payment plans for rates, rent reductions on council-owned buildings, free online training packages, and a boost to the City's infrastructure program to deliver an economic stimulus.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said the package, which was adopted on 24 March, delivers both financial and social support to ensure Newcastle remains resilient during this challenging time.

"We understand that every business is suffering enormously from the impacts of COVID-19 and will likely be affected for the foreseeable future," the Lord Mayor said.

"It's imperative, now more than ever, that we work together.

"Our resilience package has been informed by experts and seeks to focus on areas where local government has a clear strength and mandate.

"Many in our community are facing unemployment and the elderly may become more isolated for the next few months as they minimise their risk of exposure to COVID-19.

"We will further promote City of Newcastle's existing financial hardship policies and make it easier for rate payers to enter interest free payment arrangements.

"The City will also offer free access to digital training resources for all small business owners and their staff, as well as the broader community, to enable the upskilling and transformation of the workforce during the predicted time of slow economic activity."

A City Taskforce, led by the City of Newcastle will be established to act as the local coordinating authority to oversee the future recovery phases of COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

The City will also assist not for profit organisations and will expand its e-library offering in a commitment to support community wellbeing and the most vulnerable and emerging at-risk groups.

Cr Nelmes said the package included enhancing City of Newcastle's 'buy local' commitment.

"Businesses within the Newcastle Local Government Area will be favoured with a temporary change to the procurement policy which further enhances the assessment weighting for locals.

"We will also fast track our invoice payment to provide improved cash-flow for businesses and to keep the economy ticking.

"A 50% discount will be given on rent for all City-owned buildings for the June quarter lifting the pressure for dozens of local businesses and community organisations.

"We are embracing community thinking. The City of Newcastle is a community that cares and looks after each other. We will continue to promote and facilitate equitable access to services and facilities."

For further information on visit newcastle.nsw.gov.au/COVID-19

Independent Brewers Action Plan announced

The independent brewing scene is a significant contributor to the NSW economy and the social fabric of NSW.

Recognising this, the NSW Government has released the Independent Brewers Action Plan which will:

- help to increase tourism through food, wine and ale trail experiences
- provide young people with training opportunities so they can enter the workforce
- help to identify further growth opportunities for the industry.

Currently, two-thirds of the independent brewing industry in NSW is located in rural and regional areas and it employs over 3300 people. With support from the Action Plan, employment figures are expected to increase to 6000 over the next five years.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW, Industry and Trade John Barilaro said the government needed to support independent breweries to succeed domestically as well as crack international markets.



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Draft pricing confirms increased investment and affordable water bills

Hunter Water customers will benefit from increased investment in the region's water and wastewater infrastructure, while gaining more control over their water bills, following the release of a Draft Determination of prices from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

The Draft Determination proposes that Hunter Water will invest \$663 million on new and upgraded infrastructure, technology and services over the next four years to further improve services, customer experience and sustainably service growth.

"IPART's draft determination is welcome news for our residential customers," said Hunter Water's Executive Manager Customer Strategy and Retail, Victor Prasad.

"It shows the typical residential bill will decrease by 8% in the first year, followed by increases of 3% for the next three years, meaning the cost will remain relatively unchanged over the four years, even after forecast inflation of 2.5% is applied.

"In real-terms this means the typical bill is expected to go from \$1,318 in 2019-20 to \$1,200 in 2023-24, a decrease of \$118, which is a great result for our residential customers.

"Importantly, the Draft Determination continues the consumption-based water usage charge. This will provide an additional incentive for our customers to love water, with the majority of the typical household's water bill to come from the consumption-based charge of \$2.41 per thousand litres.

"IPART has given the initial green light to a range of infrastructure projects that support the growth of our region through upgrades to the water and wastewater network, as well as continuing our focus on water conservation and reducing leakage.

"It's also supported our proposal to spend \$6 million on new recycled water infrastructure, and an additional \$11.3 million on stormwater naturalisation works, helping to improve the liveability of our region.

"Not only will our customers benefit from our significant investment in infrastructure to maintain high quality services, but our prices will also decrease in real-terms due to lower than forecast borrowing costs that are reflective of current economic conditions.

"The release of the Draft Determination follows an extensive public consultation process and a public hearing in Newcastle last year. There's still time for our community to have their say and we encourage people to provide their feedback to IPART," said Mr Prasad.

IPART's Final Determination is expected in June 2020 with new prices to start from 1 July 2020.

Lake Mac moves towards electric future

Lake Macquarie City Council has flicked the switch on a new EV charging strategy, with four new fully electric fleet cars indicating a move towards the City's electric future.

On 9 March Council Lake Macquarie City voted unanimously to adopt a new Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, which provides a framework to install EV charging stations at key locations across Lake Macquarie.

Under the strategy, some stations will be installed and maintained by Council, while private enterprises will roll out others.

Manager Environmental Systems Tim Browne said electric vehicle sales tripled in 2019 in Australia, while the sale of combustion engine cars fell by almost 8%.

"Passenger vehicles are expected to undergo a major global shift towards electric over the next 20 years and we need to be prepared for that future," Mr Browne said.

While combustion engine vehicles still comprised the vast majority of car sales, a continued trend towards electric was inevitable.

"Australia now relies wholly on overseas manufacturers for our vehicle supply, and across the board those companies are shifting their focus to electric vehicle design and production."

Each of Council's new Hyundai Ioniqs features Lake Mac livery and has a range of more than 300 km on a single charge.

Combined, the four vehicles will reduce the Council's vehicle CO₂ emissions by 5000 kg a year, with each requiring about 12 hours on a home charger to recharge. The internal battery requires about four hours to recharge to 80% on a Level Two charge station.

Plant and Fleet Coordinator Glenn Hattander said Council was committed to the electrification of its fleet.

"This will be a gradual transition, but as EV technology advances, prices drop and choices expand, the switch to fully electric becomes increasingly viable," Mr Hattander said.

"In the interim, Council is transitioning its passenger vehicle fleet to hybrid petrol/electric vehicles."

The Council has also upgraded the EV charging station at its Speers Point administration building. The station will soon be open to the public during business hours.



Jobs and training partnership forged in the Cessnock region

A sustainable workforce and supporting existing local businesses to employ more staff locally are the aims of Cessnock City Council's Employment and Training Network.

The collaborative working group is made up of employment agencies and training bodies from across the Cessnock Local Government Area.

The Network is focused on identifying and removing barriers to employment, improving the employment outlook for young people, those returning to work and the unemployed.

The group was formed in 2018 in response to Council's workforce Skills Audit. More recently the decision has been made to formalise the group and commit to collaboratively identify opportunities to improve training and employment outcomes for the benefit of the individual, the business and the community.

Council's Economic Development and Tourism Manager, Tony Chadwick said the formalisation of the network is a positive step that will provide a unified voice to advocate for our communities employment and training needs.

"The Network has already identified difficulties in obtaining a drivers licence as a local barrier to employment and discussions are currently underway into possible solutions to overcome this issue. Other topics discussed included employer and job seeker matching events, employment clinics for small business and remembering to celebrate our successes via adding case studies to the Cessnock Jobs Portal."

Members include Council's Economic Development Team, Hunter Region Employment Facilitator, TAFE NSW, employment and jobactive agencies, youth organisations, PCYC, and other stakeholders with an interest in training and employment.

The formalisation of the Employment and Training Network follows the launch of the Council's Cessnock Jobs Portal in early 2020. The Advance Cessnock City Jobs was designed to make hiring easier for Hunter Valley employers and job seekers. Since the launch of the Portal many local businesses in the community have embraced the platform and have been advertising their vacant positions.

LET'S TALK WITH.....

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

I am Partner and General Manager at Commercial Collective. I am responsible for all operations within the business including all core and connected services. We specialise in Commercial, Industrial Sale & Leasing, Asset Management, Residential Project Consultancy, Acquisition Advisory, Health, Aged Care and Retirement Divestment and the Insurance Protection Division.

I am also responsible for the delivery of Commercial Collective's Vision, Core Values & Company Uniques.

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

I grew up in Kurri Kurri, moved to the Central Coast after school, then to Sydney then to Newcastle.

Without really knowing it, I think I was always destined to end up in property. I remember as a kid going to breakfast each week with my Dad reading through the property section from front to back. Over time I would pick out what was a good deal and what wasn't (I still do it today).

I previously held the Position of Director | Residential Project Marketing at a global real estate agency being responsible for the inception and delivery of all appointed developments.

Upon the cessation of that role I became one of four Partners in the establishment of Commercial Collective. I am proud of the success Commercial Collective has achieved since then. We are fortunate to have a great team who are truly world class and provide exceptional outcomes for both our clients and customers.

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

My biggest passion outside the office is cycling. I have ridden bikes from an early age at various competitive levels and it's something that continues to provide a nice outlet for me.

4. Where do you find inspiration?

I look to people who are market leaders across the globe. I believe that life in general is binary. You are either winning or losing. Going forwards or backwards. I like to move forward. I am always looking to improve. Constant improvement at everything I do in life is a big motivator for me.

Every day I ask myself 'what do I want to do for the rest of my life'. If ever that is different to the role I am in, then I will change it. Simple as that. You must do what you love. I happen to love property. Property touches the lives of all Australians. We play a role in creating prosperity, jobs and help shape strong and lasting communities. We are improving the value of people's lives, that's what motivates me.

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

Understanding that you need to be a value-add provider. People don't care about who you are or what you are doing. Most people care about what they can get out of a situation. What is the upside for them? The biggest learning curve for me is that we all need to be value adding providers through the service we specialise in. I ensure that I disproportionately provide so much upfront value to the people that I am dealing with that it is almost impossible for them not to stick with me. Also being patient. So many people focus on the quick upfront wins; I believe building long lasting relationships that foster on the back of trust are far more critical for long sustained success.

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

I love the Hunter region because of how diverse the economy is. We are not heavily reliant on any one industry. We have a nice complement of varying sectors. The Hunter region has so much opportunity that few have recognised. I am incredibly excited for the next 20 years to how our Region shapes itself as we continue to grow. Net migration and the creation of more jobs will greatly assist our prosperity.

I would love to see a more efficient and sustainable planning system that allows accelerated delivery of land and services.

The Hunter offers so many great natural attributes that some of the big major capitals could only dream of. I'd love to see an increase in large multinational corporations call the Hunter home!!!



DANE CRAWFORD

THE COVID-19 ECONOMY AND COMING OF AGE OF SAFE HARBOUR

Luka Pilipovic
Shaw Gidley

There can now be no doubt that the impact of COVID-19 will have a broad impact across all industry and commerce. We are already taking calls from distressed businesses in tourism, entertainment, food & beverage.

COVID 19 will in many cases have a negative impact on demand as a consequence of self-isolation, government restrictions and nervous consumers. Aside from the financial markets, industries at particular risk include entertainment, recreation, travel, tourism and their supply chains. Consumers are tightening their belts and non-essential trade and commerce is beginning to experience slowing demand.

To make matters worse, on the supply side, a halt to international trade in certain jurisdictions, in part due to closing borders, will make it difficult for those industries who import raw material and stock, to access these goods once domestic stocks run low, possibly impacting future trade.

It is also expected that the financial sector may place further restrictions and controls on access to money reluctant to lend in a volatile market impacting on the availability of working and investment capital negatively impacting economic growth.

The downside will be mitigated to some extent by the government stimulus and the financial sector relaxing lending criteria but to what extent is currently unknown.

Businesses will also experience other significant disruptions and risks with COVID-19 likely increasing the occurrence of the following events:

- Lost productivity as workplaces shut down or are required to move to "working from home" arrangements;
- Employees, particularly key management staff being on sick leave impacting business operations;

- Contractual breaches by customers and suppliers;
- Cancellations and reductions in orders and reduced demand for services;
- Employee terminations including the additional financial burden of paying out redundancy and outstanding leave entitlements;
- Difficulty getting access to capital;
- Negative impact in consumer spending behavior as consumers become less and less willing to spend.

Not many businesses will be quarantined from these issues. We agree with the economic commentators that we are in for a rough road ahead and some of those bumps are already visible throughout the economy.

Business owners may need to consider if indeed their business will remain financially viable, particularly those that do not have significant working capital reserves to carry their businesses through periods where they are operating at break even or below.

Directors should be mindful of insolvent trading as a director could be found liable for any debts incurred from the date of insolvency. Ultimately, what originally was a company debt may well end up being a personal debt, risking the family home and other personal assets.

A company is insolvent if it is unable to pay all of its debts as and when they fall due.

Under the current circumstances, directors should have a heightened awareness of their company's performance in the COVID-19 Economy (C19E). Directors need to be diligent and continually assess the various negative impactors COVID-19 will undoubtedly deliver.

In short, we recommend that small to medium businesses owners undertake business assessments regularly to monitor their business's financial position and performance. This business assessment may include the following steps:

1. Review your cashflow position and undertake a "stress test" of how your cashflow would react to negative impactors. Stay in close contact with your external accountant.
2. How healthy is your balance sheet? A healthy balance sheet is in the positive when comparing current assets to current liabilities. Regularly assess your liquidity ratios.
3. Profit and Loss – review all current and future discretionary expenditure. Determine if non-discretionary expenditure can be reduced - in other words don't waste any cash.
4. Debtor recovery – your debtors will probably be in the same boat as you are, seek their co-operation.
5. Creditors – talk to your creditors, seek their co-operation and enter into arrangements where possible.
6. Speak to your financiers and other lenders requesting their co-operation. Communication is key.
7. Speak to the tax office, it's likely that they will adopt a similar leniency that occurred post GFC.

Regarding the suggestions above, being realistic, conservative and honest about your company's financial capabilities in the current market is paramount. Arrangements are all about good will - do not break this good will. If you endured the GFC, it might be worth looking at what strategies you employed to cope in these tough economic times.

We are hoping for a co-operative market so that businesses are commercially sympathetic to one another, however, there are no certainties in this regard as creditors attempt to fight for their own survival.

Shaw Gidley believes this will be the coming of age of the safe harbour provisions that the government introduced back in September 2017. Shaw Gidley believes that the safe harbour provisions will prove to be the ideal tool for business survival in the C19E.

Restructuring arrangements are complex. Shaw Gidley can discuss any options For further information call (02) 4908 4444 or email newcastle@shawgidley.com.au.



WHEN EXPERIENCE MATTERS

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Contact Shaw Gidley
 Newcastle 02 4908 4444
 Tuggerah 02 4365 3344
 Contact James Shaw,
 Paul Gidley or Jeff Shute



@shawgidley
www.shawgidley.com.au

**NEWCASTLE PERMANENT**

Newcastle Permanent has appointed **Karina Kwan** as a non-executive Director to its board. Karina has 30 years' experience in the financial services industry with expertise in banking, financial markets and risk governance and is a Fellow Certified Practising Accountant.

**ASR RECRUITMENT**

Liz Sealey has joined ASR Recruitment as a Senior Consultant specialising in engineering. Liz is an experienced consultant with an exceptional fill ratio and a values-driven approach to recruitment which closely mirrors that of ASR's. A genuine, warm and committed individual, Liz is a valuable addition to the team.

**CATHERINE HENRY LAWYERS**

Lucie Dei Rocini has joined Catherine Henry Lawyers to work in the firm's health law, elder law and estate planning terms. Lucie studied law at the University of Technology in Sydney. Before becoming a lawyer, she worked as a registered nurse in NSW hospitals and residential aged care facilities. She also worked for a large insurance company managing damages claims for local health districts across NSW.

**MY FLEET GPS TRACKING & TELEMATICS**

Patricia Calderon has been appointed as Marketing Director at MyFleet. Patricia is an experienced marketing and communications professional with a Master of Digital Media from the University of Newcastle, and currently studying towards her double degree of MBA and Master of Marketing. She brings a wealth of knowledge about online marketing to MyFleet and is driving the organisation closer to its audience with the use of innovative channels and strategies.

**MORAY & AGNEW**

Moray & Agnew's Newcastle insurance team is expanding with the appointment **Erin Woodward** as senior associate. A skilled senior lawyer well known in the Hunter, Erin is vastly experienced in personal injury insurance law, having worked exclusively in this field for almost 20 years. She has represented clients in all relevant NSW and Australian courts and industrial tribunals. Erin has a Bachelor of Law and a Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice, and is a member of the Law Society of NSW.

**NEWCASTLE PERMANENT**

Nicki Page has been appointed to the Newcastle Permanent board as a non-executive Director. Nicki offers extensive board experience and her expertise in digital transformation and technology will be a valuable asset as Newcastle Permanent continues to navigate through vast changes in the financial services industry.

Let us know about your people!

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

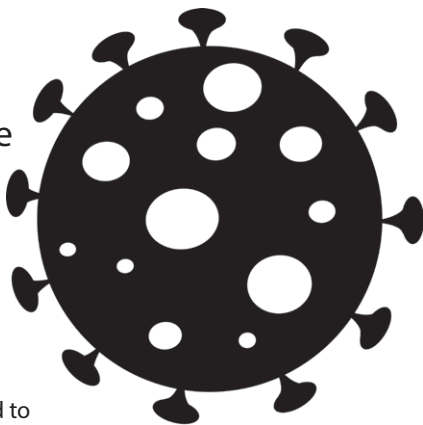
Just email around 80 words on the employment plus a high resolution head shot to **editorial@HBRmag.com.au**.

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



Adapting will help SMEs survive COVID-19

Steve Dick
Raine & Horne
Commercial Newcastle



With many issues swirling around in my head, I've tried to write this article several times because I've never been quite sure what to say in these strange perpetually changing times.

While many have the COVID-19 virus to worry about, others, myself and my staff included must consider the business impacts of this pandemic. There's no doubt those with small businesses, and those involved in hospitality, retail and just about anyone reliant on discretionary spending will be impacted economically. This health-driven business crisis will change many lives forever.

Importance of precise data

I was going to write at one stage about how the Hunter Research Foundation (HRF) breakfast was behind the times with their February presentation.

On that morning, 28 February, (seems like a lifetime ago now) the HRF reported figures from November 2019 not reflective of the experience on the ground and the streets. The data showed there was a lack of market confidence, yet residential housing activity was surging.

That said, the HRF's data didn't reflect the latest Raine & Horne Industrial Average, which measures the vacancy factors across our industrial suburbs. At the start of February, it was 5.91%, the highest in three years however the market had built an additional 50,300 square metre of floor space in the past 12 months.

Aside from the data disappointment, I left the function early with my colleague Alan Tonks. As we walked down the street, I felt a weird Deja Vu moment from a Property Council event at the Shangri-La Hotel in Sydney over a decade ago. Alan and I agreed that very few of that event's youthful attendees would have experienced a downturn. Nine days later, the rescue packages were rejected, and the financial system nearly collapsed with many in that audience left without work. Little did we know that within the month we would be facing a much larger crisis.

Other government-led disasters and survival

I also pondered writing in more detail about the looming disaster in the oversupply of commercial floor space in the Newcastle CBD. This looming surplus amounts to some 18,000 square metres as the NSW Government places many of its departments in one developer's building. The downstream effect on small business, as Government workers leave the city, will cause many to go to the wall.

How does a small business survive in Newcastle after a quadrangle of disasters, only one of which is not created by government?

First disaster: Light rail construction

Second disaster: Loss of car parking in a declining retail market

Third disaster: Covid-19

Fourth disaster: Removal of government departments

Adapt for survival

We are a small business, proudly Hunter based, and we will survive and adapt. Through this current disaster, we will:

- be contactable on phone and email, and if you miss our smiling faces, we can be on Facetime, Skype or Zoom.
- be collecting your rents and paying bills as not all tenants are suffering to the same degree

- be collaborating with clients and contacts from home over video conferencing
- be listing buildings for sale and lease
- be conducting inspections, one person, at a time
- be respectful and careful not to add to the spread of this disease
- be performing two forms of on-line auctions and therefore supporting our new touchless environment
- be there for you when you need to talk through your property issue.

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.

LaneCampos wins RateMyAgent awards

A local real estate agency specialising in personalised service has taken out a number of awards at the Rate My Agent, Agent of the Year awards.

Dave Lane from LaneCampos has taken out Agent of the Year for the Newcastle and Maitland region. He was also ranked number 16 in the nation.

The awards also recognised LaneCampos as the Agency of the Year in the suburbs of Waratah, Waratah West, North Lambton and Georgetown.

Now in its fifth year, the Agent of the Year Awards are the only awards in Australia that celebrate and recognise real estate agents and agencies that provide excellence in client service, based primarily on customer satisfaction. Rather than being judged by industry peers, the Awards are calculated based on the verified reviews that customers provide on the RateMyAgent website. This year 157,374 verified reviews were submitted into the awards process representing one in three properties sold in Australia.

Dave Lane said that he was thrilled and humbled to be announced as the Newcastle/Maitland region's Agent of the Year.

"We established LaneCampos in late 2018 and since then, have helped hundreds of buyers and sellers of properties in the area get their desired outcome," Dave said.

"We promise to provide genuine advice and quality service without the fluff. We want the property experience to be worthwhile."

"The awards are testament to the relationship we have with our clients and we are delighted and humbled by their ongoing support,"
- Dave Lane



Robinson Property wins multiple award categories in RateMyAgent's 2020 Awards

RateMyAgent – Australia's number one reviews, ratings and rankings website for real estate agents – has announced local agency Robinson Property and agents Ben Robinson and Mike Flook as the winners of various 2020 Awards.

Robinson Property, a long established real estate agency providing trusted sales and property management services to suburbs throughout Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Maitland, was presented with fifteen awards across various sales and property management categories.

Of the swag of awards received, Robinson Property Managing Director Guy Robinson, said "We are very proud of being recognised as Property Management Agency of the Year for Newcastle, as well as being ranked within the top 5 Property Management agencies in the state of NSW and the top 10 in the country. It's a tribute to the dedication and expertise of our property management team and their commitment to service excellence."

Mr Robinson continued, "As for sales, the dedicated work of our team has resulted in being awarded Agency of the Year for Newcastle. Individually Ben Robinson and Mike Flook were awarded Agents of the Year for Newcastle and Merewether respectively. So we couldn't be more pleased, especially given that the awards are based on customer satisfaction."

The fifth annual awards held late February in Melbourne's Metropolis Southbank – and MC'd by Melbourne, media personality and comedian Nick Cody – saw Australia and New Zealand's top real estate agents gather to celebrate the industry's brightest stars.

The highly anticipated RateMyAgent Agent of the Year Awards is the only of their kind in the industry and based on customer satisfaction. They acknowledge those who have been the most consistently recommended by local Australia/New Zealand home sellers and landlords.

To win means to have secured the highest satisfaction rating across the country – celebrating and recognising real estate agents and agencies that provide truly excellent client service to home buyers and sellers.

Raine & Horne Commercial

FOR LEASE

COOKS HILL



286 Darby Street

Situated on the corner of Darby and Tooke Street this highly exposed building comes with on-site car parking, reception/office, amenities and lunchroom/kitchen. With its B(2) Local Centre Zone it allows for a multitude of users.
Lease: \$65,000pa + OGs + GST

STEVE DICK 0425 302 771

FOR LEASE

NEWCASTLE



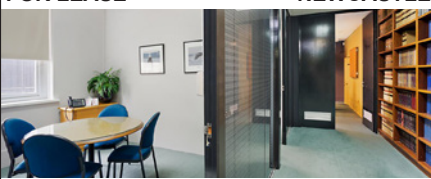
414 Hunter Street (Level 2)

Ideally positioned office in the heart of Newcastle CBD opposite Newcastle Law Courts and with the tram right at the front door. Approximately 155m² (approx) and with lift access.
Lease: \$33,000pa + OGs + GST

JASON MORRIS 0425 302 778

FOR LEASE

NEWCASTLE



14 Watt Street (Levels 2 & 3)

Two entire floors available in Newcastle's East End. Partitioned offices plus boardroom, meeting rooms, open floor plan areas, amenities and kitchen. Comes with (14) on-site secure car parks and easy access to the light rail.
Lease: \$140,000pa + OGs + GST

ALAN TONKS 0474 744 422

FOR LEASE

RUTHERFORD



47 Bradmill Avenue

Free standing workshop with loads of concrete and crushed metal hardstand yard. Other features include; drive-through access to workshop, 3-phase power, automated roller doors plus offices and great staff amenities. It can be rare to find workshops of this size with ample yard space.
Lease: \$70,000pa + OGs + GST

PAUL TILDEN 0425 302 772

FOR LEASE

HAMILTON



79-81 Beaumont Street (Shop 7)

This ex-deli would suit a variety of users from service providers to retail or food. With an alfresco area, cool-room, grease-trap, air-conditioning and rear car park the prospects are limitless.
Lease: \$41,600pa + GST

JASON MORRIS 0425 302 778

Phone: (02) 4915 3000 Web: www.rhplus.com.au
Email: sales@rhplus.com.au

starrpartners

LAST OPPORTUNITY-
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Situated just off the New England Highway in Maitland's premiere large format retail location. Join, Amart Furniture, Nick Scali Furniture and others at HomeCo Rutherford.

HomeCo Rutherford is well positioned to take advantage of one of the fastest growing cities in NSW and a catchment over 200,000 people.

- 800 m² space approx
- Air-conditioned
- Lease incentives available
- Over 300 on grade car spaces
- Modern building with external signage available
- Store frontage and access from carpark

Contact our team today to book an inspection. For further Information please call **Matt Higgins 0403 706 042**

PROMINENT POSITION



The 400m² building would be suitable for retail/showroom and or workshop. The properties location will give any potential tenant high exposure to passing traffic and walk in business opportunities.

Be surrounded by existing national outlets which have thrived in this much sort after location, including; Harvey Norman, BCF, Auto Barn, Pet quarters and pillow talk to name a few.

Take advantage of the only vacancy in the retail strip of Shipley drive.

- Air-conditioning showroom
- Prime Location
- Own amenities
- Onsite parking
- Rear roller door access

Contact our team today to book an inspection! For further Information please call **Matt Higgins 0403 706 042**

VARIOUS INDUSTRIAL UNITS AVAILABLE



Situated just off the New England Highway, 33 Little Kyle street provides an ideal location for any business wanting to be in close proximity to Maitland CBD and Rutherford. As well as the added convenience of hassle free transport, with the property being only a 10 min drive to the Hunter Expressway and only a 2 hour drive to Sydney's CBD.

Key features of all units

- Kitchenette
- Off street parking
- Full height roller door (6m x6m)
- New LED Lights
- Toilet facilities
- Fully fenced yard

Contact our team today for pricing and to book an inspection!

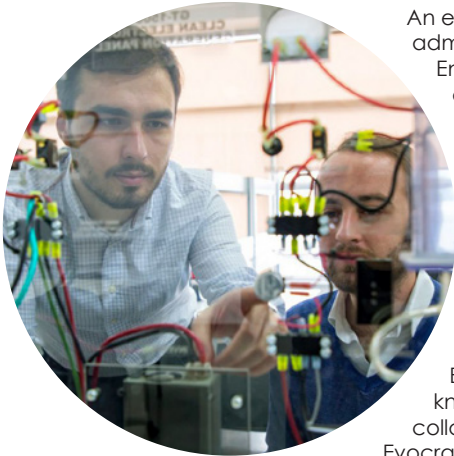
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INNOVATION

#HunterInnovate

Collaborate to Innovate program set to improve local business collaboration



An exciting new program administered by the Entrepreneurs' Programme and Austmine, and hosted by the NSW Energy and Resources Knowledge Hub is helping demystify the process of industry-research collaborations, and helping businesses to be collaboration ready.

Founder and Chief Technology Officer of Evocra, Michael Dickson knows first-hand the value of collaborating with a university. Evocra partnered with a research

team at the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources, a partnership that helped evolve their Tasmanian water solutions company into an Australian Technologies Cleantech Award finalist in 2017. More recently, with Arcadis, Evocra won both the prestigious 2019 UK based Brownfield Briefing "Best International Project" and the 2019 Engineers Australia "Technology Innovation" Award having operated a major PFAS remediation project. They are now being contracted to treat PFAS contamination sites internationally.

"If you have an innovation company, the rigorous academic validation that someone like NIER can provide can be highly beneficial," said Michael Dickson of Evocra.

"Through our partnership we have been challenged and pushed to review and prove our technology and we are better for that, achieving positive commercial outcomes," he said.

In many cases, SMEs have the market knowledge and concepts to trigger innovation, but can lack the scientific rigour and testing facilities to take an idea through the development and demonstration phases to commercialisation.

An effective collaboration partnership can help a business identify key drivers influencing the marketplace to capitalise on trends.

It can also provide access to the critical innovation components of advanced technical expertise, testing infrastructure and a knowledge framework to help achieve commercialisation.

The Collaborate to Innovate program will help business leaders understand the different methods of engagement and identify partnership options that might work for their business.

The proposed project, a collaboration between NIER, the Federal Government's Entrepreneurs' Programme (EP), Austmine (as an Industry Partner to EP) and the NSW Energy and Resources Knowledge Hub, aims to provide a supporting pathway for SMEs that are considering research collaboration.

As a specialist in the area of industry partnerships, NIER will explain some of the common collaborative models, and the steps involved.

"Successful collaborations are improving business prospects all over the world, and are based on mutually beneficial research opportunities and a shared respect for the expertise that each member of the partnership contributes," said Professor Alan Broadfoot, Executive Director of NIER.

EP Business Advisors will also be at the forum to outline the key

business capabilities considered important for SMEs in order to successfully engage with universities.

Following the forum, SMEs interested in developing their R&D potential will have the opportunity to apply for a more intensive Collaborate to Innovate program. This extended program includes a tailored gap analysis with a Business Advisor to produce a development plan with specific recommendations for moving forward. A 12 month development pathway will be mapped out and SMEs will get access to a business advisor and research support services through NIER's partnership programs.

The Collaborate to Innovate program invites all interested business persons to attend the forum to find out more about how to access a collaborative R&D partnership to fast track business growth.

Hunter Innovation Festival postponed

The 2020 Hunter Innovation Festival planned for 6 – 22 May has been postponed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It has been rescheduled to **October 2020** pending the review of ongoing advice from health authorities and further consultation with our stakeholders. The Hunter Innovation Festival is an important annual event that aims to connect, inspire and promote a culture of innovation amongst Hunter businesses, industries and communities.

For further information on the Hunter Innovation Festival or to discover how you can participate visit

<http://hunterinnovationfestival.org>



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INNOVATION

The Incubator Tank facilitating local innovation development and commercialisation

#HunterInnovate

The Incubator Tank is propelling Newcastle's wave of digital transformation, acting as an innovation service platform. Built by industry for industry, the venture is changing the way industry, academia and students collaborate to solve today's business problems.

Set up by local entrepreneur duo Tony Parezanovic and Andrew Ciezak, the 5-year-old Incubator Tank has a unique way of engaging with industry, helping unlock digital transformation for businesses and their customers.

The process involves exposing companies to the digital tool sets needed to build web apps and mobile apps. One of the key differentiators of the incubator tank is that it has the capacity to become your innovation and development team.

Tony Parezanovic has built a successful career in the Newcastle tech scene for 22 years, establishing YNot Tech after completing a Bachelor of Computer Science at the University of Newcastle. Andrew Ciezak followed a similar path, founding Impervium Solutions after graduating from the University of Newcastle with a Bachelors Degree in Computer Science and Engineering (Honours) (Hardware).

Unlike major incubators and start up hubs, the Tank doesn't just commercialise an idea or scale a business, it provides industry with know-how and tools to create a tech product to take to market fast.

Incubator Tank Co-Founder Andrew Ciezak describes the process as a "unique collaboration of local industry leaders and companies exploring disruptive technologies to make global impacts on their industry sector."

One of the unique features of the Incubator Tank innovation as a service platform is allowing companies to work collaboratively together in a joint venture fashion to build a product that solves a problem for their entire sector. It's an untapped market in Newcastle, and one that's gaining interest locally and nationally.

Local industry is receptive and beginning to adopt the Incubator Tank model, including NIB's new joint venture. The Incubator Tank has established a relationship with NIB and Cigna's joint venture, Honeysuckle Health, which has achieved \$10 million in funding.

A question of innovation or moonshot?

Christina Gerakiteys
SingularityU Australia

We are no longer simply asking 'What is innovation?' We have surpassed the notion that all businesses should be innovating. Yet many are talking and few are acting. Start-ups, accelerator programs and collaborative workplaces are now the norm rather than the novel. The words 'creativity' and 'innovation' are common in organisational dialogue.

Innovation is a process that must be supported and backed up. With resources. And that means time and money.

I have had the pleasure recently of working with the United Bank of Switzerland. They have progressed a cohort of fifty of their top-level global executives through a three-part innovation course. The final component of the course requires the development of impact projects, at Moonshot level.

A Moonshot is committing to solving a problem or creating possibility, before you have actually figured out how you will make it happen.

The term Moonshot originated when Astro Teller, Captain of Moonshots at Google X, in discussion with Larry Page, decided that Google should be doing something daring and big. "Most of the world is trying to grow incrementally", he told Larry Page. "Are we doing something that will actually change the world?"

Google's definition of a Moonshot is a project or proposal that addresses a huge problem, proposes a radical solution and uses breakthrough technologies to achieve it.

Moonshot Thinking has inspired innovation throughout history. To continue to create, we need to imagine first, then execute. Sometimes we have to start over. Most organisations operate with a solid Unique Selling Proposition. The brave organisations, the ones impacting lives on a global scale, Moonshot. So set your mind to an impossible idea and use technology to bring it into reality.

You need courage and persistence. You need to think big. You may not think it's possible. Moonshot thinking is choosing to be bothered about how you can make it real. As JFK said, "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

With Innovation and Moonshots, ethical conversations and debates are frequent and increasingly necessary. How smart should we let AI become? Should we engineer each human by editing DNA? If we created 'fake' meat and milk, couldn't we feed the world's undernourished and starving? Will autonomous vehicles reduce fatalities on our roads? Can we live forever?

Back to the United Bank of Switzerland. What I have enjoyed the most about this experience is the support from the Head of Executive Development and the Global Program Lead for the cohort. They have created opportunity and backed it up with organisational support. This isn't a one-off, feel good program. They have provided resources in time and funding to get things done.

Remember the 80:20 rule? It will no longer suffice. Organisations need to switch over to the 70:20:10 rule. 70% of an organisation's time and resources need to be spent on Business as Usual, the operations that clients have come to you for, and that keep the doors open. 20% of your time needs to be spent on Business Development, what's going to come next. Without it, an organisation is likely to enter a period where there are no new opportunities. Without it, cash-flow comes to a standstill and your teams have nowhere to focus their efforts. Uncertainty follows, a time of fear and insecurity.

We propose that 10% of organisational time be spent on creating a Moonshot. With change happening at exponential rates, an organisation needs to stay ahead of staying ahead. What might be the next new? What is possible with the convergence of technologies or from unusual collaborations?

What is your organisation doing to impact the world? And to stay in business?



Christina Gerakiteys is Co-CEO of SingularityU Australia. She is a change catalyst and instigator of Moonshot Ideation. Christina opens hearts and minds, inspiring impossible to possible.

INNOVATION

#HunterInnovate

How to get your innovation practices delivering the results you want

Claire Quigley
Launchpad9

If you are not satisfied, or only partially satisfied with the outputs of your innovation effort, then you are not alone. According to a McKinsey Global Innovation Survey, only 6% of executives are satisfied with their innovation performance. So what can you do?

As a senior business manager or executive, the first question to ask is 'what are the results our business wants to achieve in the next 3 to 5 years, and consequently what do we need from innovation to do this?'

Secondly, determine how 'innovation fit' your business is. In other words, assess whether your business is ready to embrace and execute innovation practices that will deliver outputs that are of value and planned for, not start-stop projects or surprises regarding costs or deliverables.

An important point to make here is that innovation is made up of three things: (i) something new, that (ii), is of value to a market, and (iii) creates sustainable profitable growth for your business.

There are eight pillars for consideration in your innovation fitness assessment, as illustrated in figure 1 below.

Portfolio Management: We regularly review our innovation and product portfolios at business and unit level. We are clear on how we decide the make-up of these portfolios between incremental, adjacent and transformational innovation.

Networks and Partnerships: We gather insights, and work with Partners to create valuable offerings to market. We also source externally where it gives us more speed or efficiencies but doesn't impact IP.

Strategy Communication: We actively communicate our vision and goals to our staff, along with how we will execute. Where ideas are accepted or rejected by senior management, this is quickly and clearly communicated to the idea / project creator.

Customer Experience: We are solving problems as opposed to selling products or solutions. We have a clear view of every touchpoint a customer has with us, and consistently look to improve this engagement.

A unified Metrics Dashboard: Traditional KPIs are complimented with innovation specific metrics that indicate innovation project success rates and maintains accountability across all stakeholders.

By assessing your business against these pillars, you should quickly get an indication of where the business' strengths and challenges are around innovation leadership, management and execution, and gather your team to act accordingly.

To get more innovation wins on the board, please contact Claire Quigley, Launchpad9 on Claire.quigley@launchpad9.com.au or visit www.launchpad9.com.au



Innovation Fitness Assessment © Launchpad9 2020

There is a more in-depth assessment available but in essence each pillar exhibits the following best practice:

Staff Culture & Operation: Our culture welcomes ideas from any source or person. Our people function as a team who strive to achieve business and team goals, not just individual KPIs.

Key Tools and Skills: We have sufficient resource and assets to undertake innovation. We consistently provide tools and training to our people so they are confident to progress ideas. We have clear decision-making tools to qualify in / out ideas quickly.

Systems and Processes: There is a governance process in place to ensure we have a balanced portfolio and are executing against the business goals. There are clear systems and processes for each team to engage with and a line of sight to the end.



Claire Quigley is Director of Launchpad9 and has a practical, fun, no-nonsense approach to helping leaders, innovators and educators to stretch thinking and fast-track the path to meaningful, sustainable growth through innovation. Her speciality is in helping businesses design and embed innovation practices that produce predictable outcomes, inspire cultural change and move clients toward best practice. Claire holds local and international experience in the B2B space ranging across multiple industries including professional services, technology and traditional industries.

INNOVATION

Local IT provider and University awarded joint research grant

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A joint research project has commenced between local IT company Strategic Group and the University of Newcastle into the secure management of Internet of Things (IoT) devices within the agribusiness sector.

The research project is supported by an Innovation Connections grant as part of the Australian Government's Entrepreneurs' Programme, in partnership with Strategic Group. Set to run over 12 months, the joint research project aims to produce a new system for agriculture businesses to monitor and maintain their fleet of IoT devices.



Strategic Group's Director of Business Development, Aron Robertson, said they utilised the Federal Government's Entrepreneurs Programme which assisted in connecting the Business to the key researchers at The University of Newcastle after identifying a gap in the market.

"Many of these businesses have amassed a range of IoT devices over time to help monitor and measure all different areas of the land. This collection of IoT devices are usually from all different brands and manufacturers, with an array of diverse price points," explained Aron.

Currently farms and agriculture producers use a range of different smart technologies, from monitoring soil moisture and PH levels, through to drones taking aerial photographs of crop fields. While all these devices are beneficial and can help improve productivity, they also have the potential to create vulnerabilities in information and cyber security.

"It's been well publicised how easy it can be to hack into different IoT devices which leaves these agribusinesses open to having their data stolen or accessed for nefarious purposes."

The project will see the University of Newcastle allow Strategic Group staff to use their Advanced Cyber Security Engineering Research Centre (ACSRC) and associated Cyber Security Labs. This will allow researchers to undertake this research development and testing within an environment that allows for a range of scenarios to be trialled.

The University of Newcastle has a world recognised School of Electrical Engineering and Computing with extensive facilities, knowledge and expertise in the area of cyber security and IT as well as producing high quality graduates.

The University's labs are separated into two environments; the System Security Lab and Smart Network Infrastructure Security Lab and the Malware Lab.

"We are excited to be working with the University of Newcastle and having access to their world class facilities. These labs give our team access to research and development technologies that we would not normally have," Aron said.

"Additionally having the ability to work with the ACSRC research staff is really valuable and will assist us in our architecture design and testing of the IoT provisioning system."

Peter Speirs from Strategic Group will be working part-time at the University, in conjunction with Professor Vijay Varadharajan, the Global Innovation Chair in Cyber Security, Dr Rukshan Athauda, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Electrical Engineering and Computing (Information Technology) and Mr Kallol Krishna Karmakar, Research Fellow in the School of Electrical Engineering and Computing.

They hope to work collaboratively to research and develop a new solution for provisioning IoT devices that will enable secure data collection and devise a plan to trial the developed system in customer environments.

"Once our research term is complete we hope to have a finished product to trial in real world scenarios with our agribusiness based customers. Our aim is to deliver our clients and the wider agriculture industry a safe and secure way to manage a range of different IoT devices and third party software."

The research project is set to be completed in February 2021.

HOPE IS NOT A STRATEGY.

VINCE LOMBARDI



INNOVATION IS VITAL
YET MANY BUSINESSES
STRUGGLE TO GET THE
RESULTS THEY ARE
LOOKING FOR.....

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One stop shop for innovation, product development and manufacturing

The Hunter region is an emerging hub for innovation, and Design Anthology is one of the local visionaries leading the way.

Design Anthology's team of seven have delivered over 100 projects across various categories including aeronautics, medical devices, mining and industrial, military, consumer electronics and more.

2019 was a big year for Design Anthology with two of their designs for Orica's FRAGTrack taking out major categories at the Hunter Manufacturing Awards: Excellence in Product Design & Excellence in Innovation.

Design Anthology also received the Lake Macquarie Business Excellence award for Excellence in Small Business.

Owner Josh Jeffress, accepted the award saying, "It is an honour for me to accept this award, on behalf of our phenomenal team and our innovative customers. It really showcases what is possible when the right people work together."

Businesses and individuals of all backgrounds come to Design Anthology to develop products, conduct design reviews, undertake prototyping and optimise manufacturing. Design Anthology begins the project with a detailed discussion about what the clients' aims are and what support they need.



Design Anthology work from concept to manufactured product for City of Newcastle Smart Pole

From there the process involves different phases including concept development, concept validation, detailed design, prototyping, manufacturing preparation and more.

"Design Anthology is really passionate about making design and the process of product development understandable to everybody. We have a really clear step-by-step process, where people don't necessarily have to buy into the entire development," Jeffress says.

"You can't skip straight to prototyping if you haven't detail designed the product, nailed the concept, understood your



Design Anthology
Growing intelligent design for the Hunter

ph: 02 4021 1027

designanthology.com

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market and considered all the manufacturing requirements and best practice processes. We find out where people are in their process and work with them from there."

While developing product ideas is their core business, Design Anthology have spent the last few years focusing on finding strategic partners who could deliver additional services based on their clients' needs. Services including mechanical and electrical engineering, mechatronics, branding, videography, intellectual property protection, business advice, marketing and manufacturing which typically fall outside product designs' scope of work. Design Anthology identified that a streamlined product development process is really what customers need for their products to succeed and fortunately the Hunter provides a great hub of cutting-edge businesses to collaborate with.

"It makes the entire design process easier because there is a single place where the action happens, a single plan, and we manage the process without the client needing to source additional services, manage the work flow between parties, read additional contracts or budget separately for additional services," says Jeffress. "It appears to be a win-win situation as clients get access to a network of expertise as and when they are needed."

Design Anthology's goal is to be the first and only partner that people think of when considering engaging product designers. By positioning themselves at the hub of design and innovation in the region, building a network of experts around them and continuing to offer barrier-removing fixed-price workshops, Design Anthology are well on their way to achieving that goal.

"We live and breathe design and we care deeply about the success of our clients," said Jeffress.

"It's such a pleasure to work with such a fantastic and capable network of talented people right here in the Hunter region."

VR and AR providing new opportunities for businesses

The fourth industrial revolution, also known as Industry 4.0, is affecting every industry worldwide and is rapidly transforming how businesses operate. New forms of human-machine interaction such as Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality are right here right now.

AR is a digital layer superimposed on the physical world, integrating the physical, real environment with virtual details to enhance or 'augment' the real-world experience through smartphones, smart glasses and other head-mounted displays.

VR creates an interactive, completely digital environment that provides a fully enclosed, synthetic experience incorporating audio and visual feedback and is experienced using a head-mounted device.

Both platforms can co-exist in a business. AR can alter our day-to-day interactions with digital machines and systems while VR enhances individual immersive experiences by isolating the user from the real world.

VR technology for industrial use is now outpacing gaming and entertainment. Industrial VR training and marketing for example is now being readily and easily run off a gaming laptop and an off the shelf VR headset, that anyone can buy from major retailers such as Harvey Norman.

With this level of accessibility, the ability to design and build VR/AR content has reached new levels, allowing companies like Charlestown based Creative Pipeline to offer full VR/AR production services and custom designed software which offers clear benefits and cost savings for businesses engaged across a broad range of industries including mining, engineering and the medical sector.

Companies such as Orica and Bradken have already taken the plunge and are using VR to accelerate and enhance their training outcomes and transform their approach to marketing by allowing their customers to connect to and understand products and their benefits in new ways.

"Both Orica and Bradken work in hazardous environments. They have VR kits set up either on an exhibition stand, or in a room in their office, and they can take people into these

hazardous places that they work in. To give their customers, executives or their new employees, the ability to experience these environments, to see exactly what it is like, has been a game changer," said Tim Black, MD at Creative Pipeline.

The concept of "experiential learning" is a staple of industrial training. Traditionally this is performed on the job, by being "shown what to do." Creative Pipeline are taking this concept and applying it to a simulated VR environment, where the trainee can have the power of experiential learning, but in a completely safe training room.

The trainee still needs to complete their training on site, but if they can cover 80% of what they have learned before stepping foot into an actual dangerous environment by understand how things work in that environment (e.g. site entry procedures, PPE requirements, exactly how to do a task, etc.), VR is doing its job. This training methodology is providing huge cost savings and exceptional learning outcomes.

"We are working very closely with our clients to understand their requirements and to be able to accurately build these virtual environments and VR/AR scenarios that offer them clear benefits. I have worked in the production of industrial training media (i.e., animation, multimedia and video) for over 20 years, so it is a great time to be able to take that experience and apply it to this fantastic technology."

"I can see a time when VR and AR provide the standard for improving all forms of training and education, including marketing projects. VR/AR won't completely replace traditional learning, but it will certainly make it much better."

"Once you have tried AR or VR and have seen what is possible, it is hard not to get excited about what can be done right now in your business. At Creative Pipeline, we are making sure we have the solid business foundation to support current demands and support the future growth of this technology. We are looking forward to some exciting years ahead".

As industries grow to realise how VR/AR applications can provide new benefits, Creative Pipeline is seeing these technologies being increasingly utilised to enhance engineering analysis and design processes.

"We are currently undertaking R&D where we are using large datasets, processing files and turning them into visual depictions and simulations. We are now turning numbers into vision and developing new analysis tools!"

Telstra Purple recently partnered with Creative Pipeline to jointly deliver AR solutions for a wide range of use case scenarios utilising the new Microsoft HoloLens 2. These use cases include repair & maintenance, design & assembly, QA and a range or remote field worker support scenarios. This partnership provides Creative Pipeline clients with the highest levels of cyber security available.



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To innovate or not to innovate ... Is that the question?

Trevor Stuart

Australian Industry Group (Ai Group)

The Hunter Region is full of innovation groups, clusters, networks and facilitators. Through Ai Group, HunterNet, Hunter Business Chamber, Newcastle University, I2N, Hunter Innovation Project, DaSH, The Melt, 1804, Hunter DiGiT, RDA Hunter and countless other organisation and groups, the region is a labyrinth of both opportunity and confusion for business within the Region.

For established businesses, operating in mature industries (i.e. many of our businesses in the Hunter Region), and not typically self-described as start-ups or indeed "movers and breakers", what does Innovation look like? The answer is both simple and complex. For these businesses, Innovation (a grossly over politicised phrase incidentally) starts through acknowledgement of a need to adapt. This typically comes through understanding one's own environment (your business and your networks) and an understanding of the external environment such as political, economic and social factors which tend to nudge the markets in which you operate.



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Your internal business environment

For many SME's and even larger organisations operating in mature industries, the internal business environment can be all consuming. It is also the easier environment to understand and control and therefore it is easier to focus attention internally. Internal consideration with regard to Innovation should include:

Resources: cash – how much are you willing to invest in your idea or opportunity, people – do you have enough people in the business to allow time to be committed to product/service development, skills – do you have the right skillset within your people, if not, is training or outsourcing the answer?

Patience: Are you playing the long game, the short game, or the game appropriate to your priorities and the size of the opportunity? Either way, it won't go as planned, and some patience and perseverance will be required. Be patient but keep moving forward!

Strategic Alignment: OK ... first of all ... do you have a plan? What are your plans for the organisation? Do your innovation activities align with your vision? Are you focussing on the activities which provide greatest value to your key stakeholders? Have you defined who your key stakeholders are? Have you spoken to them about their needs? This is often the biggest challenge for any organisation. The challenge of understanding the needs of your shareholders/family/community/staff/customer should not be underestimated.

The external environment

Many organisations are grappling with this at the moment. Again, particularly businesses and public institutions who are challenged by government policy (or perhaps lack thereof). For the Hunter Region, the two dominant policy areas are Health Care and Social Assistance (the biggest employer in the Region - by a long shot!) and Energy which has consistently been the most divisive and volatile policy area for a decade. Energy policy will greatly influence economic activity within the Hunter Region over the next thirty years. Unfortunately, government policy often lags the attitude and expectation of community, so an organisation should not discount the voice of the community when evaluating innovation strategy.

Finally, in the slightly amended words of Ferris Bueller ...
"Business moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and adapt once in a while, you could miss out."



Trevor Stuart is the Regional Manager for the Australian Industry Group. Ai Group is a peak employer organisation with a Vision for thriving industries and a prosperous community.

INDUSTRIAL MANSLAUGHTER – A BRIDGE TOO FAR FOR NEW SOUTH WALES

Jeremy Kennedy
Roberts Legal

Recently proposed safety legislation in NSW indicates that industrial manslaughter is simply a bridge too far for our state Government.

The introduction and passing by the Legislative Assembly of the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Review) Bill 2020 clearly indicates that we have baulked at this level of regulation in our state. This is despite highly publicised national interest following high profile workplace disasters, a Federal Senate Inquiry – ‘They never came home’ – the frameworks surrounding the prevention, investigation and prosecution of industrial deaths in Australia’ and also an independent review – ‘The review of the model Work Health and Safety Laws’ – December 2018, undertaken by Marie Boland, which all recommend such laws.

Other states, commencing with Queensland, have either passed such laws or are working on their introduction, which will see a major shift in the Work Health and Safety landscape. Queensland introduced industrial manslaughter legislation, which commenced in 2018, with fines of up to 10 million dollars against corporations and 20 years gaol for individuals. Victoria has passed similar industrial manslaughter legislation with maximum penalties for corporations of 16.5 million dollars and 20 years gaol for individuals, whilst Western Australia’s proposed legislation has fines of 10 million dollars and 10 years gaol for individuals. The ACT is on the bottom end of the scale with corporate penalties of 1.62 million dollars and 20 years gaol for individuals.

It appears the Labor Government states have taken the lead egged on by the unions, whilst the Liberal/Coalition states have baulked at this move and have taken a more conservative approach. That is not to say that the NSW Government has not had a response at all. In the recent bill the NSW Parliament has introduced a new category 1 offence, that being an offence of ‘gross negligence’. This is in addition to the already existing Work Health and Safety offence of recklessness.

Whilst this falls short of industrial manslaughter legislation, the offence of gross negligence will require a lesser fault element than the already existing offence of recklessness and make it easier for prosecutors to successfully commence proceedings under the highest-level category 1 offence provisions.

The bill also increases maximum penalties under the legislation to \$3,463,000 for companies and \$346,500 for individuals together with 5 years gaol. Interestingly there has also been a note proposed to be inserted into the Work Health and Safety Act that references the availability of manslaughter in The Crimes Act 1900 as a reminder this is an already existing option for state prosecutors. This offence in The Crimes Act however is only available for the prosecution of individuals punishable by up to 25 years gaol. This is not a corporate offence where incorporated companies or organisations can be prosecuted.

Whilst the bill has fully passed the legislative assembly, it has not yet made it to the Legislative Council and given current developments in regard to COVID-19 and a very distracted Parliament, it may not be until 2021 when the legislation will actually take effect.

Other key elements of the bill for NSW businesses relate to the proposed prohibition on insurance for Work Health and Safety penalties. Currently businesses can take out insurance for penalties handed down by the courts for what amount to criminal prosecutions of breaches of the Work Health and Safety Act.

The bill proposes to make it illegal for such insurances and any indemnities which may be offered under insurance policies or other agreements between companies and their officers and employees. This has been a somewhat controversial issue for many years since the insurance industry developed these products. Whilst legally questionable, there has however been continued reliance upon such insurance products by Defendants with no definitive court judgement on their legality.

Whilst it remains to be seen how these new provisions will be enforced by the state regulator, SafeWork NSW, there is no doubt that such legislation will bring Work Health and Safety into a sharper focus for companies and their directors with high level prosecutions being easier to achieve and the ability to mitigate risk through insurance and taken away by the legislator.

Roberts Legal strongly recommends that companies and their officers review their Work Health and Safety systems and policies to ensure compliance with the Work Health and Safety Act, conduct a review of their current insurance program to ensure that they are not paying premiums for what will soon become obsolete products and ensure that they have a disaster management plan in place should the unforeseen and unlikely event of a major Work Health and Safety incident or fatality occur in their workplace.

Roberts Legal can assist in reviewing company Work Health and Safety management systems and policies and provide appropriate training and legal representation in relation to such matters.

For further information please call Jeremy Kennedy on (02) 4926 2236 or email jeremy@robertslegal.com.au



Jeremy Kennedy has 30 years of legal experience as a specialist workplace, employment and industrial relations lawyer with a focus on work health and safety, serious incident management and prosecutions by safety regulators. Jeremy has been acknowledged in 2018 by DoYLES Legal Guide as a leading WHS lawyer nationally, and in 2018 and 2020 as highly recommended in the areas of labour law by Best Lawyers International Legal Guide.

DEALING WITH THE DANGERS OF ASBESTOS

Andrew Russell
Hazmat Services

There is no such thing as being too careful when it comes to dealing with asbestos.

Exposure to asbestos can cause serious, long-term and potentially fatal diseases such as lung cancer, mesothelioma, and asbestosis, all of which can take many years to display their associated symptoms.

While the use of asbestos has been phased out in building materials since the late 1980s, it wasn't until 31 December, 2003 that a total ban on manufacture, use, reuse and import of all forms of asbestos was introduced throughout Australia. Many commercial and residential buildings still contain asbestos meaning exposure to the deadly material is still an ongoing risk, particularly for trades-persons and renovators. Well maintained asbestos products can remain in place with little or no risk to occupiers but when asbestos is disturbed by drilling, sawing, sanding, high pressure water blasting or uncontrolled demolition, asbestos fibres may be released and the risk or exposure increases significantly.

Asbestos products were routinely used in construction of commercial, industrial and residential properties throughout Australia from the early to late 1900's but to a lesser extent in the 1990's and leading up to the 2003 asbestos ban. If you work or live in a building or house constructed during these times it is likely that asbestos will be or has been present. In most cases you can't tell if something is asbestos by appearance so it's best to assume and have it checked out by a competent person.

If you suspect that you have asbestos in your residence or workplace or you are not sure, don't take someone's word for it, have it inspected and assessed by a Licenced Asbestos Assessor. Sample analysis must only be carried out by a NATA Accredited laboratory. All workplaces built before 2003 are required by Legislation to have an asbestos register and management plan if asbestos is present. An Asbestos Register is also required for residential renovation or demolition. Removal of asbestos is required by law to be carried out by Licenced Asbestos Removal Contractor if there is greater than 10 sqm of non-friable or bonded asbestos requiring removal or for any amount of friable asbestos and an asbestos clearance is required to comply with legislation prior to any other works being carried out. Air monitoring must be undertaken for any friable asbestos removal work and for non-friable asbestos removal where there is a risk to nearby occupants. Air monitoring and clearances should be undertaken by a Licensed Asbestos Assessor or Competent person who is independent from the asbestos removalist with analysis only conducted by a NATA Accredited Laboratory. Hazmat has its own in-house NATA Accredited Laboratory located in Carrington to carry out air monitoring with same day results provided.

"Our in-house team of consultants and technicians are NATA Accredited and Licensed Asbestos Assessors meaning we can provide full service and rapid turn-around of results.



HAZMAT SERVICES



OHS | WASTE | ENVIRONMENT



Hazmat Services is a locally owned, Newcastle based Company specialising in OHS, Waste and Environmental Consulting Services. Our qualified Team deal specifically with Asbestos and other Hazardous Materials found in the workplace or at home.

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- ◆ Asbestos and Hazardous Materials Surveys
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Air monitoring, for example, is undertaken by trained, accredited and licensed personnel using calibrated and well maintained equipment and results are provided on the same day. This means that we and our clients can be confident and satisfied that the risks to site personnel are monitored and reported in a timely manner, asbestos removal controls have been adequate and a swift reaction can be made to elevated readings and adjustments to site controls." Managing Director and Principal Consultant Andrew Russell said. Compliance is the key when dealing with asbestos to ensure the safety of all involved, and short-cuts, lack of accreditation and waiting days for results can result in devastating consequences. With one of the largest, most experienced and fully qualified and accredited asbestos consulting teams in Newcastle, our clients can be assured they are receiving the right advice and accurate results on time every time.

In addition to the legislative requirement that all workplaces constructed prior to 2004 have an Asbestos Register and Asbestos Management Plan, these are also required prior to demolition or renovation of residential properties and this is often overlooked in the planning stages. Many Local Councils require these reports as part of the development consent process.

For further information on dealing with asbestos, contact Hazmat on (02) 4961 1887 or email andrew@hazmat-services.com.au



Andrew Russell is Managing Director and Principal Consultant at Hazmat. He is a qualified Occupational Hygienist with 30 years' experience with asbestos and hazardous materials consulting and monitoring, industrial hygiene and environmental monitoring programs undertaken throughout Australia and overseas. Andrew is supported by a team of qualified and motivated professionals to assist clients to achieve compliance with hazardous workplace legislation requirements.

NEW REPORTS ON WHS AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION RELEASED

The Comparative Performance Monitoring report 21st edition and Comparison of Workers' Compensation Arrangements in Australia and New Zealand 2019 have been published.

The Comparative Performance Monitoring report analyses trends in WHS and workers' compensation scheme performance across Australia and New Zealand.

Key findings from the 21st edition include:

- The incidence rate of serious workers' compensation claims decreased by 10% across Australia between 2013-14 and 2016-17, with falls recorded in most jurisdictions.
- WHS authorities across Australia:
 - undertook 230,054 workplace interventions;
 - issued 46,472 notices for WHS breaches, and
 - finalised 289 legal proceedings, resulting in \$18.9 million in fines ordered by the courts.
- Total expenditure for workers' compensation schemes across Australia was \$8.457 billion in 2017-18, of which over 80% went to claimants through either direct payments or services.

- Average workers' compensation premium rates across Australia have decreased by 10% over the last five years.

The Comparison of Workers' Compensation Arrangements in Australia and New Zealand report has also been published. It provides information on the operation of workers' compensation schemes in each jurisdiction across Australia and New Zealand.

For further information visit www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au

CORONAVIRUS ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR NSW WORKPLACES

SafeWork NSW has released a guide to help businesses comply with their obligations under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 during the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Under WHS law all employers or businesses are required to take action to manage the risk of COVID-19 to workers and others in the work environment.

Businesses must comply with national and state public health directions in relation to COVID-19.

All workplaces must assess the risk (in consultation with workers) and look for ways to minimise the spread of the virus. These may include:

- ceasing non-essential work activities that involve close personal contact (less than 1.5m)
- implementing controls to reduce direct contact with workers and customers, including:
 - social distancing of at least 1.5metres (1 person per 4sqm indoors)
 - barriers to create space at counters, between workstations, seated areas etc.
 - modifying shifts and rosters to reduce peak periods
 - working from home.
- Implementing controls to reduce environmental exposure, including:
 - inspecting and reviewing air conditioning and ventilation systems
 - increasing cleaning and disinfection of high traffic areas or shared surfaces
 - provide cleaning products and instruction for cleaning workspaces
 - provide instruction and amenities for personal hygiene and infection control

Businesses are required to notify SafeWork NSW of serious illnesses (including COVID-19) arising out of the conduct of the business or undertaking:

- illness requiring the person to have immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital
- any confirmed infection to which the carrying out of work is a significant contributing factor, including any infection that is reliably attributable to carrying out work that involves providing treatment or care to a person, or that involves contact with human blood or body substances

For further information visit www.safework.nsw.gov.au

LOCAL MANUFACTURER ACHIEVES A FIRST IN FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

Following recent changes to the Guidelines for Disinfectants under Therapeutic Goods Order 104, Tomago manufacturer Whiteley Corporation has confirmed VIRACLEAN has the first newly approved label claim for killing the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus on contaminated hospital surfaces.

The Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration (the TGA), has confirmed that Viraclean [AUSTL 69000], which is manufactured by Whiteley Corporation, has "Kills Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)" added to its label. The new amendments to the TGA guidelines under Therapeutic Goods Order 104, which allow listed disinfectants to make validated claims to kill the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus on surfaces, will be complemented by approval under Section 42(d)(k) of the Therapeutic Goods Act.

Viraclean is the first product approved in Australia with this disinfection label claim against the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus. It is important to note that this product is a surface disinfectant and not intended for use directly on people, or for treating a patient.

Viraclean is a Hospital Grade Disinfectant intended for use on a wide range of hospital surfaces which may be contaminated. Viraclean is an infection prevention technology which allows the healthcare sector to better protect hospital patients and staff from the risk of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus cross infection via inanimate high touch objects and surfaces.

Dr Greg Whiteley, Chairman of Whiteley Corporation, says "We are delighted to announce this new claim for our product Viraclean®, which is a truly Australian invention, developed, manufactured and proven in Australia."

Dr Whiteley continued, "This new label claim for Viraclean against the virus responsible for the current pandemic will add to certainty around the level of hygiene in hospitals, particularly in Intensive Care Units, Emergency Departments, and a range of other clinical, medical and dental applications. These claims will also be applied to INSTRUMAX PINK, which is used for Disinfection of Non-Critical Medical Devices in the hospital and healthcare sector."

"We know that this virus does have the capacity to survive on hard and relatively soft surfaces for a prolonged period of time, therefore, cleaning and disinfecting those surfaces is incredibly important to limit the spread of the virus."

"The hospital surfaces around a patient who is infected with this virus will be contaminated by the patient shedding the virus. Viraclean is suitable for use in these hospital situations."

Viraclean and Instrumax Pink complement each other for this purpose. Instrumax Pink is ideal where there is a lot of very sensitive medical equipment that could be corroded or destroyed by harsh disinfectants.

Dr Whiteley added, "We applaud the TGA for their efficiency in passing the amendments incorporated under Therapeutic Goods Order 104 (TGO 104). The TGA regulatory framework outlines the various requirements for documentary and complying evidence of disinfecting performance."

As a more technical comment Dr Whiteley said, "The testing against Coronavirus in the case of this SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)

relies on a number of surrogate viruses. This is important because using a surrogate protects the laboratory staff but allows a scientifically accurate representation of the disinfectant performance against all of the Coronaviruses including SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus. This approach allows the TGA to manage the regulatory aspects of both the approval and also market performance to ensure public health standards are maintained."

Dr Whiteley concluded, "We also express our thanks to the team at ACCORD Australasia for their collaboration with the TGA in achieving the timely outcome in amendments to the guidelines under TGO 104. This new Viraclean label claim against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) through use of surrogate virus testing will allow our company to provide our Australian and New Zealand healthcare community with certainty around cleaning and disinfecting of health care surfaces and non-critical medical devices."

HUMANOMICS AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE COMMENCE SILICOSIS RESEARCH

Hunter based workplace health services company, Humanomics has commenced a silicosis research project in partnership with the Centre for Resources Health & Safety (CRHS) at the University of Newcastle.

The purpose of this research is to undertake an independent study to identify current testing technologies and scientific protocols for the early screening of silicosis and to validate these technologies with the aim of developing new testing protocols to proactively reduce workplace generated lung disease.

Respiratory diseases cause 6% of deaths annually and 10% of lung cancers are attributed to workplace exposures. Silicosis has been on the increase in recent years and has been widely reported as the next asbestosis. Silica dust is 100 times smaller than a grain of sand; it is invisible and is prevalent across a range of industries including stone cutting, construction and demolition, tunnelling and quarrying and mining operations.

For Humanomics' MD, Sanjiv Parmar, the decision to embark on this research project has been driven by the recognition that existing silicosis detection and testing methods can be inconclusive, expensive and very arduous for affected and suffering employees.

"Unfortunately, silicosis is an irreversible condition and has taken the lives of many young workers. We are trying to make a difference and save lives. For me this research and the outcomes are very personal to me as I lost two brothers-in-law to work related lung disease," said Mr Parmar.

"The Centre for Resources Health and Safety connects leaders in the fields of work-related disease and therapy research across the University of Newcastle, so I am very happy to be working with this level of expertise. I am hoping that we find new and better ways to detect silicosis early. It would be great to know our contribution could save so much suffering."

The early silicosis detection research has support from Work Cover NSW and the NSW Dust Diseases Board and is supported by an Innovations Connection grant as part of the Australian Government's Entrepreneurs' Program in partnership with Humanomics.

NEW PROGRAM TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

A new program has been launched by one of Australia's largest and longest serving workplace health services providers, Rehab Management. CheckInToday includes a suite of online services and health interventions designed to provide businesses with a holistic approach to support an individual's health and wellbeing.

Delivered by Rehab Management health professionals, benefits of the program include early identification of mental health barriers or issues, increased engagement in return to work post quarantine, and avoiding the implications of social distancing. It also a way for large businesses to show a duty of care by providing support to employees who find themselves unexpectedly laid off.

"CheckInToday is a simple way to offer support in incredibly challenging times. Even before COVID-19, Australian trends in mental health conditions in the workforce have not been positive. The SuperFriend 2019 national survey found that an overwhelming 50.6% of the Australian workforce has experienced a mental health condition," says Marcella Romero, CEO of Rehab Management.

"Managing mental health is going to be an absolute priority in the coming months, not just for those who are employed but for the incredible number of Australians being currently laid off.

While employers may themselves feel helpless in this situation, CheckInToday is a simple but effective way to show they care. I would argue that it is a duty of care for some of our large organisations to do what they can to support the thousands of people they are having to let go," continued Marcella.

"Another priority will be managing employees physical wellbeing following long periods of home stay and potential isolation. We need to ensure people keep up their physical fitness. A mechanism to identify those that may need support early is going to be vital," continued Marcella.

CheckInToday uses evidence-based measures to identify trends and tailor a participant's experience via a stepped process, and delivers deidentified data snapshots to employers to help them understand the wellbeing of their people.

Firstly, the participant is provided access to an online screening tool. This screening questionnaire is simple, fast to fill out and can be completed on a mobile or computer. The results are provided back to Rehab Management in real time and then used to formulate a tailored program for the participant.

The program can cover a range of wellbeing support across physical, mental, social, health and lifestyle, work and study. Based on an individual's results, they will be connected with Rehab Management health consultants suited to their needs through telephone or online platforms. For example, they may be provided with psychological support, or a tailored physical exercise program, or coaching to set daily goals.

"CheckInToday is useful for employers to keep their finger on the pulse when it comes to their employees' wellbeing and implement targeted interventions where necessary," finished Marcella.

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STRATA MANAGEMENT



A man lost his job at the bank on his very first day.
A client asked him to check their balance, so he pushed them over.

Police arrested two kids yesterday, one was drinking battery acid, the other was eating fireworks. They charged one - and let the other one off.

A grocery store opened early for senior citizens. A long, orderly line began to form.

Suddenly a young man tried to cut in line and was subsequently beaten by an old woman with a cane and chased back to his car.

A few minutes later the young man tried it again only this time he was punched in the stomach by an old man and he ran away.

The third time the young man walked up and yelled, "If you old people don't let me unlock the door, none of us are getting in!"

My brother went to jail.

He didn't take it very well. He was yelling insults and attacking everyone.

I don't think we will play Monopoly with him again.

A guy asks his neighbour in an apartment building: "Mr Trepper, you live directly above me and you have the same sized two-room apartment as I do. How many rolls of wallpaper did you buy when you moved in?"

"We got 18 rolls," answers the neighbor.

A few weeks later the guy meets his neighbour again and says, "It's really funny - I put the wallpaper on everywhere and I still had 10 rolls left over."

The neighbour smiles, "Yeah, so did we."

Tom and Anna are both 60 years old and have been married for 40 years.

One day they go for a walk and all of a sudden a fairy stands in front of them and says, "You've been married for so long and you're so cute together, I'll grant you a wish each."

The woman is beside herself with joy and wishes for a trip to Thailand. Poof - she's holding two tickets to Thailand and a five star hotel voucher for two.

The man says, "Wow, that's one chance in a lifetime! I'm sorry, darling, but I wish I had a wife that's 30 years younger than me."

"Are you sure?" asks the fairy.

"Yes!" replies Tom without hesitation.

Poof once more - and he's 90.

Why did the scarecrow keep getting promoted?

Because he was out standing in his field.

A man who lived by the sea grew a cucumber so large he was able to turn it into his house. One day a bad storm flooded the area with seawater and damaged his home.

Now he's in a pickle.


"I love my job!" exclaimed the farmer. "All you do is boss me around all day!" complained one of his sheep. "What did you say?" challenged the farmer. The sheep glared back and growled...

"You herd me."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"It is health that is the real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver." - Mahatma Gandhi

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