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From the Editor



There are currently a lot of mixed messages regarding the economy and it is difficult to assess just how good or bad the current economic conditions are.

The latest inflation figures are of concern, with headline inflation for April rising to 4%, from the previous 3.6%. This exceeded nearly all market expectations.

Whilst the RBA kept cash rates steady at its June meeting, it again emphasised the need to keep inflation under control so the odds of a rate rise at their August meeting is certainly increased.

The continued strong unemployment figures would also give the RBA some confidence in raising rates.

This is not something mortgage holders and businesses with loans would want to hear who are struggling to make ends meet.

Regarding labour figures, the local unemployment figures are quite amazing. The rate for Newcastle and Lake Macquarie fell to just 1.7% in May whilst the rate for the entire Hunter remained at 3.1%. Although this will help consumer sentiment, it is not good news for local businesses looking to fill vacancies.

In terms of profitability, many businesses are definitely struggling. CreditorWatch's Business Risk Index for May reached a record high of 1378, representing increase of around 38% over the year to May. Sectors with the largest increases included

Electricity, Gas & Waste Services, Education & Training, Mining and Construction.

There are also a wide range of measures of consumer and business confidence that are in the negative territory.

On top of this, State and Federal Governments have challenging budgetary positions.

So where does this all leave us?

One thing for sure is that the economy is very patchy. Some areas continue to do well while many others are finding it very difficult.

As businesses there are always challenges and we should be conscious of these and take measures where possible.

But at the same time, we should ensure that we do not over-react and make bad news a self-fulfilling prophecy.

We still need to seek opportunities, and this sometimes requires changes and expenditure.

Businesses which maintain strong fundamentals will always maximise their chance of success, even if economic conditions are less than favourable.

Garry Hardie
Editor and Publisher

ON THIS MONTH'S COVER

An F-35A Lightning II stealth fighter, 56 of which are based at Williamtown. This issue includes a Defence feature starting on page 28.



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REMONDIS Australia supplies waste truck and parts for TAFE NSW mechanic students

REMONDIS Australia and TAFE NSW have taken circular economy recycling to a new level by arranging the supply of a used waste collection truck and engine parts for heavy vehicle mechanic students. The partnership has seen REMONDIS deliver a 2008 Volvo FM380 'Hooklift' truck to TAFE NSW Kurri Kurri, along with engines and parts from other used trucks including transmissions and hydraulic gear.

The truck has been a waste collection workhorse in Hunter industrial settings, clocking 34,000 operational hours and more than one million kilometres.

The idea of supplying the truck and engine parts to TAFE NSW came from REMONDIS' Hunter-based Maintenance Manager Peter Murray.

"I recently enrolled two REMONDIS apprentices at TAFE NSW and took an opportunity to visit the Kurri Kurri campus," Peter said.

"There was a light bulb moment that the waste truck we were about to send for scrapping could be given a second life at TAFE NSW, along with engines and parts from other trucks at their use-by date.

"The truck and parts incorporate modern European technology, enabling mechanical students to broaden their skills and knowledge as relevant to the workforce.

"We're big on what's called the 'circular economy' in the waste management industry, that is, looking to find different lives for anything that might end up as landfill. A waste collection truck and parts being recycled for education and training purposes is a shining example."



Dylan Evans, Gavin Shields & Peter Murray

TAFE NSW Heavy Vehicle Head Teacher Gavin Shields said many mechanic students will benefit from the REMONDIS partnership.

"The idea from REMONDIS sounded good from the outset and cooperation and collaboration with the company saw the opportunity progress," Gavin said.

"We envisage we'll get many years use out of the truck and parts, providing students with the opportunity to work on a modern machine that is being used in the industry.

"This is a terrific example of TAFE NSW partnering with industry to ensure that students finish with the best hands-on experience, which in turn boosts employment prospects."

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\$2.5 million fund to boost NSW's visiting seafarer wellbeing

Seafarers visiting the state's ports will benefit from a groundbreaking \$2.5 million Seafarer Welfare Fund which will provide access to a range of critical services and programs during their time in NSW.

In an Australian first, Port Authority of NSW has banded together with the State's two leading private port operators NSW Ports and Port of Newcastle, to deliver a groundbreaking Seafarer Welfare Fund supporting the often invisible but critical visiting maritime workers underpinning 99% of the State's trade.

Port Authority CEO Philip Holliday, alongside CEO NSW Ports Marika Calfas and CEO Port of Newcastle Craig Carmody, announced the first five organisations to successfully secure funding under Round 1 of the \$2.5million 5-year Fund during the Annual Mission to Seafarers Parliamentary Lunch also attended by the NSW Minister for Transport Jo Haylen.

"Standing here today, alongside my colleagues from Port of Newcastle and NSW Ports I am incredibly proud to be part of an industry that here in NSW, acknowledges what seafarers contribute, every day of the year, to the NSW economy and the lives of everyday Australians," Mr Holliday said.

"Seafarers work in one of the world's toughest jobs to bring us the goods we need and to take our exports to the world. We all recognised that by working strategically together through a five-year commitment, we can ensure the care Seafarers receive when visiting NSW is world-class.

"I congratulate the five 2024 Fund recipients: Apostleship of the Sea - Stella Maris, The Mission to Seafarers Port Kembla Inc, The Mission to Seafarers - Sydney, The Mission to Seafarers - Newcastle Inc and Hunter Workers Rehabilitation and Counselling Service (Hunterlink), on their success in the inaugural round of this Australian-first Seafarer Welfare Fund.

CEO Port of Newcastle Craig Carmody said NSW can hold its head high knowing we really take care of the visiting seafarers who facilitate 99% of our State's trade and on whose hard work our economy thrives."

"Seafarers' needs range from fast access to emergency care to practical support such as access to communication facilities, transportation to and from the ports, hospital visits and sometimes one on one counselling.

By joining forces, we have created an efficient funding model where the maritime industry supports its own, which we hope will grow over the years to include contributions from many others.

"It is an efficient model that can sustain or improve key logistical services to seafarers by proven providers, ranging from communication support to transportation and recreation, assessed against clear criteria that demonstrates the positive wellbeing and mental health outcomes for seafarers."

Bladder Cancer MRI trial taking place in the Hunter

Clinical researchers from John Hunter Hospital, Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) and the University of Newcastle are investigating a way to use Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) in the diagnosis of bladder cancer.

While the use of MRIs has exploded in the diagnosis of breast and prostate cancer, vital research is still needed in Australia to determine the role MRI has in bladder cancer and how it can be more useful.

So far almost 30 Novocastrians with bladder cancer have participated in the MRI Bladder Project, undergoing MRI before their bladder tumour resection.

Director of Research in the Department of Urology at the John Hunter Hospital, Associate Professor Alison Blatt said, "Two radiologists independently score these MRI scans without

knowing any other patient information and then we compare the cancer depth predicted by the MRI to the microscope results."

"The standard practice for managing bladder cancer is by resecting the tumour from inside the bladder until we go deep enough to think we have got it all. Then we look at it under a microscope and go back and resect it a bit more if we're not sure."

"This technique has barely changed since it was first performed over 100 years ago, including by my great-grandfather in Vienna. For some bladder tumours, this is adequate treatment, but for others, we can underestimate the depth and extent of the cancer and risk further spread of disease."

By using MRI, the hope is that surgeons will be able to see how deep the tumour is before operating.

"One day in the future, MRI could help us stage bladder cancers without cutting into the tumour," Associate Professor Blatt said.

"As with all areas of the body, MRI requires experienced radiologists and technicians to achieve a reliable answer.

"We know there is going to be a learning curve before we can achieve the kind of results being claimed elsewhere.

"We are hoping to improve this with time and then be able to demonstrate the learning curve accurately for the benefit of other institutions looking to introduce this imaging modality.

"Bladder cancer is a significant cause of mortality and morbidity in Australians and doesn't get talked about enough. It deserves a lot more attention than it gets, and we desperately need more funding to support this trial."

World-leading experts on board for high-speed rail

The High Speed Rail Authority (HSRA) is on track to deliver the first key milestone for Australia's first high speed rail line, with tenders awarded for the Sydney to Newcastle Business Case.

World-leading advisers will support HSRA to plan and develop the East Coast High Speed Rail Network, connecting Sydney, Central Coast and Newcastle. A competitive open tender process sought industry experts with extensive experience in planning and delivering major infrastructure projects like high-speed rail. Industry was also encouraged to form suitable consortia, where necessary, and comply with all requirements set out by the Commonwealth Approach to Market Terms.

More than 300 industry members participated in the HSRA's industry briefing which provided an opportunity for industry to learn more about the program's milestones and demonstrate interest in the project.

The eight work packages have been awarded to the following applicants:

- Project Control Services (Costs, Schedule and Risks) - KPMG
- Economics, Funding and Financing, Demand Modelling and Economic Development Strategy - EY
- Commercial, Delivery Strategy and Industry Engagement - EY
- Transport, Land Use and Property - WSP
- Technical Advisory, Environment and Sustainability, Community and Stakeholder Engagement - WSP and Arcadis
- High Speed Rail Network Operations Planning - Arup
- First Nations Participation and Engagement - GHD
- First Nations Culture and Heritage - GHD

With 14.9 million passengers annually, Sydney to Newcastle is the busiest intercity rail line in Australia. The business case will determine important elements of the network, including proposed corridor alignment, station locations, fleet, cost estimate and construction timeframes.

It will be an opportunity to benchmark best practice and explore lessons learnt from high-speed rail networks across the globe.

The business case is expected to be presented to Government by the end of this year.

Create a more sustainable future

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Gala Ball Raises \$205,000 for vital medical research

The Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) hosted its annual Gala Ball at Newcastle City Hall, on 22 June celebrating the glamour and charm of Italy. The event brought together 260 guests from all walks of life, for an evening of elegance, entertainment, and generosity, raising \$205,000 to support vital medical research.

Professor Frances Kay-Lambkin, who delivered the evening's formal presentation, emphasised the importance of community support in driving medical breakthroughs. "Through research, we bring hope and healthier lives to our community."

The funds raised from the Gala Ball will directly benefit HMRI's ongoing research initiatives aimed at improving health outcomes locally, nationally, and globally. HMRI remains dedicated to its vision of creating the healthiest million people on the planet.

The funds raised at the Ball allow HMRI to support health and medical research that transforms the health of the community through new treatments and models of patient care across areas of need in our community such as stroke, heart disease, diabetes, dementia, cancer, respiratory diseases, and pregnancy, mental health and wellbeing and new and emerging areas of need such as climate health.

"This annual event would not be possible without the continued support of our local and national businesses who each year, give generously in support of medical research at HMRI. It is incredible to have the support of so many wonderful and giving community members. In this very tough economy, we thank them for their support, generosity and willingness to assist us; our community remains the cornerstone and strength of HMRI. It's what makes us so unique," said Professor Frances Kay-Lambkin, CEO and Institute Director, HMRI.



The night was filled with memorable moments, including an incredibly generous silent auction, as well as a live auction by renowned auctioneer Gavan Reynolds.

Sexual, reproductive and gynaecological health clinic opens

Specialists in sexual, reproductive and gynaecological health, Brightwell Health have opened their brand-new multidisciplinary clinic on Hunter Street, Newcastle West.

Founded by Dr. Phoebe Walsh, Dr. Kate Haggart, Dr. Frida Carswell and Dr. Ashmita Desai, the clinic combines decades of industry experience and dedicated advocacy in the sexual, reproductive and gynaecological health space, driven by the belief that everyone deserves better healthcare.

"Empowering our patients to make their own choices, backed by leading-edge research, is at the core of what we do," says Dr. Phoebe Walsh.

"We believe that everyone deserves access to high-quality healthcare that respects their individual needs and choices," adds Dr Frida Carswell.

To celebrate the grand opening, Brightwell Health hosted an opening event on 28 June at their new clinic on Hunter St, Newcastle West. In attendance to officially open the clinic with a cutting of the ribbon ceremony were The Hon. Jodie Harrison MP and Minister for Women, The Hon. Tim Crakanthorp and Councillor Peta Winney- Baartz.

The event also included an empowering panel discussion with Master of Ceremonies Leadership Coach Liz Murray, who interviewed the Brightwell Health Co-Founders, steering an informative discussion on various aspects of sexual, reproductive and gynaecological health and tackling common myths surrounding menopause.



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Lake Macquarie to host global tech conference

Hundreds of makers, innovators and educators are set to converge on Lake Macquarie later this year for an Australian-first Fab Lab conference exploring innovation, creativity and technology.

FAN7, the 7th Fab Lab Asia Network Conference, will comprise five events from October 8-19, bringing together enthusiasts and professionals in the digital fabrication, STEM and maker communities from across Asia and beyond.

Lake Macquarie Mayor Kay Fraser said the conference would cement the city's standing as a destination for innovation.

Fab Lab Lead Claire Chaikin-Bryan



"A conference like FAN7 reinforces those aims and builds on the fine work achieved so far by our own Fab Lab and Fab Academy."

Lake Macquarie Mayor Kay Fraser

"In so many ways, Lake Macquarie is fast becoming a hub of progressive, forward-thinking ideas and projects," she said.

"We know how important it is to embrace these concepts, harness technology and upskill our workforce to help the city thrive into the future."

"A conference like FAN7 reinforces those aims and builds on the fine work achieved so far by our own Fab Lab and Fab Academy."

Lake Macquarie City Council Manager Arts, Culture and Tourism Jacqui Hemsley said the program would feature industry leaders, innovators and cutting-edge technology with workshops, presentations and breakout sessions, all held at Warners Bay Theatre.

"FAN7 is more than just a conference, it's a celebration of making that brings together the brightest minds in the Fab Lab network and the maker community," she said.

"We're expecting more than 300 people to attend, with many travelling from outside the area and from overseas, so it will be a fantastic boost to our city's visitor economy."

Conference events will include:

- A Fab City Challenge, where teams create prototype solutions to local social, environmental and economic issues
- A Fab City Summit, providing a platform for participants to share knowledge, experiences and ideas
- A Community Festival, featuring competitions, displays and the Fab City Challenge Awards
- An opportunity to attend the partner Hunter Innovation Festival conference and showcase day.

Tickets for the conference are on sale now. Expressions of interest are also open for organisations interested in getting involved. Go to <https://fan7.fablabs.au> for more information and ticket purchases.

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Hunter Water's 2024 Love Water Grants

Hunter Water has announced the 18 recipients of its 2024 Love Water Grants program, awarding over \$125,000 for the program's fifth year. The announcement follows a significant number of applications in various areas, from schools and pre-schools to community groups and organisations.

The one-off grants, valued at up to \$10,000, primarily support water conservation and efficiency initiatives and projects with an education, environmental, or sustainability focus.

Minister for Water, Housing and homelessness, Rose Jackson, commended the Lower Hunter community for its inventive water-saving initiatives.

"The overwhelming response of 71 applications underscores the local community's dedication to finding innovative solutions to preserve our most precious resource.

"In light of the current economic environment, supporting our community is more vital than ever. The array of projects—from infrastructure upgrades to community garden initiatives—all contribute to water conservation efforts and will significantly benefit the residents of the Lower Hunter region," Minister Jackson added.

Survivors R Us, a non-profit organisation that raises awareness of family and domestic violence while working to minimise the effects of abuse, homelessness, and unemployment, is one of this year's grant recipients. The organisation will use the funding to make water-efficient upgrades to its bathroom amenities, restoring the dignity of those using the service, while also improving the organisation's overall water usage.

Ann-Maria Martin, who founded the organisation in 2018, is thrilled and grateful to receive a Love Water Grant.

"We've worked with Hunter Water previously at some of our events, and we are excited to continue our partnership. It's so important that the people who visit us feel safe and welcome. By making these upgrades to our bathroom facilities, we will be taking steps to provide dignity and comfort to our community.

"Thanks to the funding, we will be able to install water-efficient appliances that can help us not only save water but also save on our water bill. We are so grateful and know that the Love Water Grant will make a real difference to the people we support," Ms Martin said.

Hunter Water Managing Director, Darren Cleary, said the Survivors R Us project captured what the Love Water Grants program is all about.

"Supporting our community is at the heart of Hunter Water, and the Survivors R Us initiative promises significant water savings and enhanced facility functionality, fostering positive community outcomes.

"Well done to all of the successful recipients and thank you to all of the applicants. We're proud to support our community as we work together to ensure a sustainable and resilient water future," Mr Cleary said.

For further details on the Love Water Grants program, visit www.hunterwater.com.au/grants.

Hunter Water Managing Director Darren Cleary presenting Survivors R Us Founder Ann-Maria Martin (R) and Treasurer Stephanie Martin (L) with a plaque



Bean Counters Ball raises over \$30,000

At the end of May guests at the annual Bean Counters Ball were transported back to the 80s in their arcade themed event, where generous donations helped increase the total raised for their charity partners to \$330,000 since its launch in 2011.

The event, a joint initiative between local members of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CAANZ) and CPA Australia, raised over \$30,000 for charity partners Samaritans and Hunter TAFE Foundation to help underprivileged youth access housing and education.

The event was made possible with the generous support of their sponsors, in particular the Platinum Sponsors, Gillard Family Lawyers and The University of Newcastle.

Every year guests are treated to a new theme, with 2024 based around 'arcade'. The event featured some 80s inspired arcade games, and even a basketball shootout on stage between CAANZ and CPA Australia.

Guests heard from students living in the Samaritans Youth Accommodation who explained how the accommodation has changed their lives, helping them on their path to finding a career and a stable home.

Tate, a student supported by the youth accommodation said they would not have flourished and become the person they are without the support of Samaritans.

"If I didn't have this opportunity, if I didn't reach out, I don't think I would be here and I don't think I would be alive," Tate said.

Another student, Kayla said she is currently in her first year of university and Samaritans was a huge influence on her career choice after being supported herself in the youth accommodation.

"Because I'm doing social work at university, I'm now working as a youth worker at one of the crisis accommodations," Kayla said. "I want to help the people who helped me."

In addition to the video from Samaritans, Jacob Wiseman, a former recipient of the Bean Counters Ball achievement award in conjunction with Hunter TAFE Foundation, detailed his experience studying while looking after a young family.

"Working full time, juggling three kids under 6, combined with the fact that I'd never done any bookkeeping before in my life, I really felt like I had bitten off more than I could chew," Jacob said.

"Receiving the Bean Counters Achievement Award gave me a much-needed boost and reaffirmed a belief in myself that I could make accounting and bookkeeping a career choice.

"Through the support of the award, I now have a solid foundation for getting off the ground and into this industry. Receiving this award has given me the confidence to start chasing this new career."

To conclude the formalities of the event, the prestigious Young Achiever Award in partnership with Hunter Young Professionals (hyp), was awarded to Giorgia Wilson, a paralegal at Grace Family Law Solicitors and founder of We Gotchu Girl (WGG). WGG is a local charity dedicated to supporting victims of sexual and domestic violence.



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The Kent Hotel unveils renovations

The Kent Hotel is set to embark on an exciting new chapter with the announcement of renovations to its main bar and the launch of a new upstairs Veranda Bar.

With a rich history in Hamilton, dating back a century, The Kent Hotel has long been a beloved destination for locals and visitors alike. Now, in a bid to revitalise this iconic venue, extensive renovations are underway to enhance the overall guest experience in the main bar of the venue.

"We are incredibly excited to announce the revitalisation of The Kent Hotel," said Stephen Hunt Managing Director of Hunt Hospitality.

"With these renovations, we aim to honour the venue's heritage while providing our guests with an enhanced and memorable experience."

The renovations to the main bar, which commenced 29 April, will introduce a contemporary, Art Deco-inspired design that has a welcoming ambience, complete with upgraded facilities and a refreshed aesthetic that pays homage to The Kent Hotel's storied past. Introducing a new U-shaped bar that allows for smooth bar service, a complete view of the action behind the bar and ample places for patrons to sit. The renovations are set to finish in July just in time for The Kent's 100th Birthday.

Rici-lee Wheeler, Chief Operations Officer at Hunt Hospitality added "We're working hard to improve the experience at The Kent Hotel while also restoring key features of the original venue with a modern twist."

In addition to the main bar renovations, The Kent Hotel is excited to unveil its new Veranda Bar, situated upstairs, and boasting 12 new beer taps. The additions to their upstairs bar will offer guests an improved experience and service to the beloved balcony where guests can relax and unwind, with a curated selection of beverages and a cosy atmosphere.

Innovative electricity purchase agreement for Hunter Water

Hunter Water has announced that after following a tender process, it is entering into a Retail Renewable Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with AGL, marking significant progress towards its commitment to sustainability.

Hunter Water Managing Director, Darren Cleary, said the agreement is an important step in delivering long term cost certainty in a time where there is a lot of uncertainty in the market.

"We look forward to partnering with AGL in this agreement to supply our larger sites with electricity. The project is expected to lower our operational carbon footprint by around 70%.

"Sustainability is central to our purpose at Hunter Water and this PPA aligns with our goals and demonstrates our commitment to working towards a more sustainable future that benefits our customers, our community, and the environment."

Under the terms of the agreement, which will formally commence on 1 January 2025, AGL will sell all electricity used by Hunter Water's largest sites and surrender renewable energy certificates sourced from the Silverton Wind Farm near Broken Hill in NSW in a quantity equivalent to a proportion of that electricity consumption.

This commitment from Hunter Water will ensure renewable energy certificates (in the form of large-scale generation certificates under the Commonwealth Large-scale Renewable Energy Target scheme) are surrendered in a quantity equivalent to a proportion of the electricity used by Hunter Water's largest sites, which will gradually increase to 100% in 2030.

The electricity used will power critical infrastructure and operations across Hunter Water's area of operations. The agreement, which lasts until 30 June 2031, is set to provide Hunter Water with a stable and cost-effective energy supply, while supporting Hunter Water's commitment to a low-carbon economy.

This PPA is part of Hunter Water's broader sustainability



program, which includes water conservation initiatives, waste reduction programs, and environmental management. Alongside this, Hunter Water continues to roll out its onsite renewable energy generation program, with 6.5 megawatts of renewable energy capacity to be installed across treatment plants and pump stations by early 2025.

NSW coal jobs hit new record high

Coal mining jobs in NSW reached record numbers in March 2024, making it through the 25,000 barrier for only the second time since coal job numbers were first recorded a quarter of a century ago.

The new record jobs number of 25,505 to March this year is the highest number of coal jobs ever recorded by Coal Services Pty Ltd since it began tracking the number of people working in coal mining in NSW in 1998.

The 25,500 coal mining workers in NSW are more than double the number first recorded in the last quarter of 1998, when there was a workforce of 10,898 coal mining workers across the state.

The latest data shows that in the Hunter - NSW's largest coal mining region - there were 14,750 coal mining jobs in March 2024.

In the Gunnedah region, the data shows that coal mining jobs remained at near-record levels, with 3,116 coal mining jobs in March 2024, only a slight drop from the all-time record number of jobs set in April 2023 of 3,253.

The data shows that in the Western region of NSW coal mining jobs have reached an all time high with 3,585 workers in coal mining compared to just over 1,400 when job numbers were first recorded in 1998. In the Southern region of NSW the number of coal mining jobs improved over the last 12 months with 3,344 local coal mining workers, over a hundred more than the same time last year.

NSW Minerals Council CEO Stephen Galilee said the increase in coal mining jobs in NSW was a sign of the ongoing importance and resilience of the NSW coal sector.

"The record number of people working in the NSW coal mining sector shows that over the last 25 years, coal mining has become increasingly critical to regional communities and the state economy. These job numbers also highlight the need to support mining communities," Mr Galilee said today.

"A mark of the importance of the coal mining sector to NSW is the strong ongoing demand for our high-quality coal. Coal Services figures show that coal exports to our major trade partners are up almost 16% with thermal coal exports used in energy production up over 19%."

"NSW coal mining is playing a critical role in the budget repair task being undertaken by the State Government. In particular, the decision to increase coal mining royalty rates from 1 July 2024 was the single biggest revenue decision taken by the NSW Government."

"Metals mining jobs are also at near record levels with nearly 8,000 people working in the NSW metals mining sector based on the latest annual NSW Mining Industry Expenditure Survey," Mr Galilee said.

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Maitland City Council adopts \$216 million budget

Following a period of extensive community consultation, Maitland City Council has endorsed a \$216 million operating budget for the 2024–25 financial year.

The budget includes \$156 million for service delivery and \$60 million for a comprehensive Infrastructure Program.

Infrastructure investment will include a range of upgrades to roads across the city, including Maitland Vale Road, Raymond Terrace Road and Haussman Drive.

Many major recreational facilities will also see improvements, including upgrades to athletics infrastructure at Allan and Don Lawrence Oval, floodlighting at Fieldsend Oval and Fred Harvey Oval, and turf at Ernie Jurd Oval.

Council will continue to deliver its valued services for the community, including its aquatic centres, libraries, art gallery, parks and open spaces, flagship events, waste services and more.

Record budget for City of Newcastle

City of Newcastle will support local communities, jobs, businesses a record infrastructure program of almost \$140 million, which is forecast to support 735 local jobs and increase Newcastle's economic output by up to \$305 million.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said City of Newcastle is committed to delivering the community's vision of Newcastle as a liveable, sustainable, inclusive global city.

"From city-shaping projects that will create a legacy for future generations, to essential services that make an everyday difference in the lives of Novocastrians, this Budget will set a new benchmark for our investment in the Newcastle community," Cr Nelmes said.

"We're investing in the things that matter to our residents and delivering a record infrastructure program that will cater for the needs of our growing community while stimulating Newcastle's economy and supporting new jobs.

"Our infrastructure projects will make an everyday difference in people's lives, with \$38.1 million for upgrades to local roads, bridges, footpaths and community buildings, \$7.7 million on stormwater upgrades to address flooding to property and businesses and \$6 million for improving Newcastle's cycleway network and transport options.

"We're also giving back through programs such as our Community Grants, which for the fourth consecutive year will provide more than half a million dollars to support initiatives that deliver positive outcomes for vulnerable members of our community and contribute to the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the city."

CEO Jeremy Bath said City of Newcastle continues to work hard to balance the needs and expectations of our growing community with our commitment to making sure we are financially sustainable.

"City of Newcastle is forecasting an operating surplus of \$4.1 million in 2024-2025, which is an indicator of the underlying financial strength of our organisation," Mr Bath said.

"This is despite ongoing increases in inflation and construction costs, and our position as the only council in NSW to pay the NSW Government more in taxes and levies than we receive in grants.

"We also recognise that many people and small businesses in our community are facing an extremely challenging time as they experience cost of living pressures.

"That is why City of Newcastle is offering support to residents and business owners experiencing financial hardship.

"During the past three years, we have assisted around 2,200 ratepayers to enter into payment arrangements, while an additional 141 people were supported through our rates voucher scheme."

Renewable Workforce Roundtable focuses on local, secure energy jobs

The State Government has hosted the NSW 2030 Renewable Workforce Roundtable in the Hunter to help build the workforce the energy transition needs and address the challenges faced.

The roundtable continues the Government's commitment to ensuring the clean energy transition creates new local, secure jobs in both metropolitan and regional NSW.

Stakeholders from dozens of organisations joined the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Penny Sharpe, the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education Steve Whan and NSW Jobs Advocate Mark Apthorpe to discuss opportunities and strategies. Participants included industry bodies, unions, educators and government agencies.

Key advice from the roundtable will contribute to the NSW 2030 Renewable Workforce Plan.

The roundtable builds on the work underway by the NSW Jobs Advocate Mark Apthorpe. Dr Apthorpe has delivered his initial report, making six recommendations to assist with the successful delivery of the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. The NSW Government is progressing the issues raised by Dr Apthorpe, which will help deliver skills, training and jobs.

The Minns Government is already taking action to create local, secure jobs and ensure people in the industry are able to transition to work in renewables. This includes:

- Launching \$275 million in grants under the Net Zero Manufacturing Initiative, to secure NSW as the place to develop and manufacture clean technology and create new jobs in the process.
- Setting workforce requirements through the Renewable Energy Sector Board's plan and Roadmap tenders.
- Establishing a First Nations coordination team within EnergyCo and developing First Nations Guidelines with key Aboriginal community representatives and government agencies to build pathways to employment.
- Funding employment initiatives for local communities.
- Introducing eight new TAFE NSW microskill courses related to renewables, including Hydrogen Energy Fundamentals and preparing to work in the renewable energy sector.

Minister for Climate Change and Energy Penny Sharpe said "Delivering the energy transition is a big challenge that comes with real opportunities for thousands of good, local and secure jobs.

"The NSW 2030 Renewable Workforce Roundtable brought together the brains and experience across the Hunter and beyond to help ensure the workforce plan for the Renewable Energy Zones will deliver skills, training and jobs across the state now and into the future."

Minister for the Hunter Yasmin Catley said "The Hunter is proud to host the NSW 2030 Renewable Workforce Roundtable, which will help deliver skills, training and jobs right across NSW.

"The ideas and opportunities discussed today can be applied not only here in the Hunter, but throughout the state as the energy sector grows."

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Hunter TAFE Foundation Scholarships and Awards Presentation

The Hunter TAFE Foundation Semester One presentation was held 19 June announcing 39 deserving TAFE NSW students across the Hunter and Central Coast regions who received over \$36,000 worth of scholarships and awards.

Karen Howard, President of the Hunter TAFE Foundation said, "The cost-of-living crisis is continuing to have a detrimental effect on TAFE NSW students. The choice to study requires sacrifices for many students, in the form of giving up hours of employment and childcare as well as travel costs, and further expenses associated with studying. Now more than ever, the support from the Foundation is making a significant difference to a student's life and career journey."

"The support from our generous and loyal donors makes all of this possible and enables the Hunter TAFE Foundation to continue to assist students from a diverse range of backgrounds to successfully complete their studies, enter the workforce or enhance their career pathways," said Karen.

Beneficiaries of the scholarships included students from Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Upper Hunter and Central Coast local government areas, across a wide range of industry areas, such as, Information Technology, Early Childhood, Aviation, Electrotechnology, Accounting, Health, Hospitality, Music, Fine Arts, Real Estate and Screen and Media.

TVET student, Hayley Corrigan, is currently studying Certificate II in Electrotechnology at TAFE NSW Newcastle. Hayley received the inaugural Varley TVET Scholarship that provides support and encouragement to female students in non-traditional industry areas. "My future career goal is to fulfill my passion as an industrial electrician. I have always had an interest with power and creating projects, and I am excited to complete my studies to pursue my passion in the electrical field. Through the support of the scholarship, I can spend more time on my studies and buy electrical tools and equipment that I currently don't have" Hayley said.

Established in 2000, the Hunter TAFE Foundation has a rich history in the region, having evolved from the Newcastle Technical and Further Education Committee Trust Fund, which received its first donation in 1936 to provide skills for employment.

In 2022/23, the Foundation awarded a total value of \$81,564 in scholarships and awards to 69 worthy recipients and we look forward to growing this support to TAFE learners together with our partners.

Hunter TAFE Foundation Scholarships and Awards Presentation



BUSINESS ANNIVERSARIES

Maitland Business Chamber

On the evening of 21 June, the Maitland Town Hall and Council building glowed with the colours of the Maitland Business Chamber, marking a the 75th Anniversary of Incorporation Gala. More than 150 members from the Maitland business community were greeted by a luminous "75" at the entrance, setting the stage for a memorable celebration. 2024 not only commemorates 75 years since the incorporation of the Maitland Business Chamber but also marks 118 years since its inception. Beyond celebrating these milestones, the event paid tribute to the myriads of businesses that have significantly contributed to Maitland's economic growth and industrial landscape over the past century and a half.



Coastal Fire Services

Coastal Fire Services, a Hunter-based commercial fire protection company, is celebrating a decade in business in 2024. From humble beginnings, their team had a mission to offer unmatched fire safety solutions to the community, envisioning a company that not only met but exceeded industry standards. The team originally consisted of firefighters and electrical tradespeople, who identified that changes in legislation meant property managers, landlords and businesses were at risk of non-compliance. Heath Aland, Managing Director of Coastal Fire Services said they wanted to help housing providers and homeowners ensure that they were compliant with industry standards, not just for legal reasons, but for the safety of those in our community.



The Kent Hotel

The Kent Hotel in Hamilton is celebrating its 100th anniversary in July with a month of celebrations, starting 12 July with the unveiling of extensive renovations to its main bar and the launch of a new upstairs Veranda Bar. With a rich history in Hamilton, The Kent Hotel has long been a beloved destination for locals and visitors alike and embarks on a new chapter with upgraded facilities to enhance overall guest experience.



**Is your business celebrating a major anniversary?
We would like to hear from you if you are marking
10, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50 years etc.
Email us at garry@HBRmag.com.au for further information.**



TOMAGO ALUMINIUM

Tomago Aluminium has appointed **Jérôme Dozol** as its Chief Executive Officer and General Manager to steer it into its fifth decade. Jérôme's career includes more than 18 years with Rio Tinto, one of Tomago Aluminium's owners. His most recent role as General Manager of a copper smelter and refinery in Salt Lake City, Utah, was focussed on driving the efficiency of that complex operation. He has significant aluminium industry experience having worked at the Kitimat, Dunkerque and St Jean de Maurienne smelters in Canada.



MORAY & AGNEW NEWCASTLE

Moray & Agnew Newcastle has promoted **Lucy Munro** to Partner. Lucy's expertise is in workers compensation insurance claims. Lucy started at Moray & Agnew as a graduate lawyer and is excited at being invited to join the partnership of the same firm and looks forward to continuing to service clients to the best of her ability.



PROPERTY COUNCIL OF AUST.

The Property Council of Australia has appointed **Amy De Lore** to the role of Hunter and Central Coast Regional Director. Amy joins from her most recent role as Government Relations Lead for Lake Macquarie City Council. She was previously Policy and Public Affairs Manager at Business Hunter, and a former local journalist with broad experience in strategic communication and advocacy.



PROSPERITY ADVISERS GROUP

Prosperity Advisers Group has appointed **Melissa Rowe** as Chief Operations Officer. Bringing over seven years of executive-level experience from across both private and public sectors, Melissa assumes her new role following a successful tenure as Director Organisational Services at Lake Macquarie City Council. Melissa brings a wealth of experience overseeing large, multidisciplinary teams with leadership extending to driving innovative strategy formulation, system optimisation, and nurturing organisational culture and capability.



SINGLETON COUNCIL

After an intensive recruitment process, **Justin Fitzpatrick-Barr** has been announced as the next General Manager of Singleton Council. The appointment is an internal movement, as Mr Fitzpatrick-Barr is currently Council's Director Infrastructure + Planning. Mr Fitzpatrick-Barr joined Singleton Council in 2020 from Cessnock City Council during a year marked by COVID-19 lockdowns. He will officially commence as General Manager on 12 August 2024.



MORAY & AGNEW NEWCASTLE

Kellie Ross of Moray & Agnew Newcastle has been promoted to Special Counsel. Kellie specialises planning, environment, local government and property law. She is excited to continue working with her clients and colleagues and is proud to be a part of the firm's growth.



MORAY & AGNEW NEWCASTLE

Tina Kealy of Moray & Agnew Newcastle has been promoted to Special Counsel. Tina's expertise lies in the areas of estate planning, wills, deceased estates and property law. She said she is privileged to have been part of Moray & Agnew for 8 years – with amazing clients, colleagues, and a culture that genuinely supports the progression of women.



VBD BUSINESS, TAX & WEALTH ADVISERS

Jeremy Lee, the newest member of VBD Business, Tax & Wealth Advisers, brings 10 years of public practice experience specialising in business advisory, focusing on strategy and improvement. He has collaborated with diverse industries such as retail, primary production, mining, hospitality, finance, manufacturing, and health. Jeremy prioritizes forming robust business relationships with stakeholders, emphasizing the individuals behind each business.



LEA GLOBAL

Newcastle based financial advisory firm Prosperity Advisers Group has announced that CEO and Founder, **Allan McKeown** has been appointed as LEA Global Chair of the Asia Pacific Regional Council. LEA Global is an international alliance of independently owned accounting and consulting firms, boasting a rich legacy since its establishment in 1999. With an impressive network of over 190 member firms worldwide and a collective revenue exceeding 2.9 billion USD, LEA Global has a significant



MORAY & AGNEW NEWCASTLE

Hamish Thomson has been promoted to Associate at Moray & Agnew Newcastle. Hamish is a talented lawyer specialising in compulsory third-party insurance claims. He is highly regarded by his clients for his commitment to best practice service delivery. Since joining Moray & Agnew Newcastle, his forensic approach to insurance claims has helped the team achieve an impressive record of evidence-based claims resolution.

COMING EVENTS.....

24 July 2024

Business Hunter

Business Development Forum

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-development-forum>

25 July 2024, 5pm – 7pm

Newcastle Tourism Industry Group/NTIG

Creating bookable product in the local visitor economy in preparation for a growth in international visitors from 2025 and beyond

Venue: Noah's on the Beach

<https://ntig.org.au/news-events/>

26 July 2024, 12:00pm – 2.00pm

HunterIF

Manufacturing: A Future Made in Port Stephens

Venue: Marrook Culture Centre

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-development-forum>

2 August 2024

Business Hunter

Business Infrastructure Forum

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-infrastructure-lunch-series>

7 August 2024

Business Hunter

Business Development Forum

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-development-forum>

21 – 22 August 2024

Hunter Defence

2024 Hunter Defence Conference

Venue: Rydges Hunter Valley

<https://www.hunterdefence.org.au/hunter-defence-conference-2024/>

22 August 2024, 5pm – 7pm

Newcastle Tourism Industry Group/NTIG

Upcoming events in Newcastle and how your business can participate and benefit

Venue: Rydges Newcastle

<https://ntig.org.au/news-events/>

23 August 2024

Business Hunter

Energy & Resource Lunches

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-energy-resources-lunch-series>

27 August 2024, 9:00 am – 3:30 pm

HIA

Finance and Admin Workshop

Venue: HIA Office, Mayfield West

Cost: \$110 – \$220

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

28 August 2024, 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Port Stephens Women in Business

PSWIB August Event - Tips on growing your business" with Financial Planner Kathy Rimmer

Venue: Tanilba House

Cost: \$110 – \$220

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

30 August 2024, 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

HIA

Hunter Apprentice Awards

Venue: City Hall, Newcastle

Cost: \$110 – \$160

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/apprentice-awards/hunter-nsw/2024/apprentice-awards-newcastle-aug16>

4 September 2024

Business Hunter

Business Development Forum

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-development-forum>

23 September 2024, 8.30 am – 2.30 pm

Regional Angel Investor Network

RAIN PitchFest Newcastle – Session 1

Cost: Free

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

26 September 2024, 8.30am – 2.30pm

Firewire Digital

Newcastle SEO Conference 2024

Venue: Rydges Newcastle

Cost: \$375

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

07 October 2024, 6:00 pm - 11:30 pm

HIA

HIA-CSR Hunter Housing and Kitchen and Bathrooms Awards

Venue: NEX, Newcastle

Cost: \$240 – \$480

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/housing-awards/hunter-nsw/2024/hia-housing-awards-newcastle-oct19>

14-19 October 2024

Lake Mac Libraries Fab Lab

FAN7 (7th Fab Lab Asia Network Conference)

Venue: Warners Bay Theatre

Cost: \$250 – \$775

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-development-forum>

16 October 2024

Business Hunter

Business Development Forum

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-development-forum>

18 October 2024

HMA

Hunter Manufacturing Awards 2024

Venue: Nex, Newcastle

<https://www.hma.org.au/>

18 October 2024

Business Hunter

Business Infrastructure Forum

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-infrastructure-lunch-series>

24 October 2024

Business Hunter

Business Hunter Innovation Series

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-innovation-lunch-series>

8 November 2024

Business Hunter

Energy & Resource Lunches

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-energy-resources-lunch-series>

13 November 2024

Business Hunter

Business Development Forum

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-development-forum>

Top four cyber threats to Australian businesses

Smart technology, AI and trading in non-fungible things: developments in the cyber world continue to unfold with implications we don't fully understand yet. Last year was an active one for cyber criminals, with Australian victims reporting nearly 23% more attacks than 2022, according to the Australian Signals Directorate.

It was also the year of the third-party breach and attacks on cloud storage. Data theft extortion-motivated events increased, with the cyber criminals responsible for 44% of global business ransomware incidents both demanding a ransom and also leaking the data.

Here are four leading trends, according to our cyber experts.

1. After infiltrating a system cyber criminals lie in wait

Once they have hacked into a targeted system cyber criminals maintain a watching brief to discover how they can best manipulate data to serve their objectives.

Insurance considerations

Insurers will require policyholders to provide proof of data being manipulated. When reviewing cyber insurance policy terms check reporting requirements and the definitions and conditions that apply.

2. Extension of 3rd-party cyber security breaches to 4th, 5th and 6th parties

Over half the cyber security breaches reported by businesses globally were believed to originate with a third party. This is due to vulnerabilities in the transfer of information from one system to another. In almost 43% of breaches managed service providers were the weak link.

Insurance considerations

Costs arising from a third-party provider can depend on factors such as the definition of a shared computer system. If your data is impacted the policy may limit the cover so it's worth having your cover tailored to your specific business risks.

3. Cyber criminals are joining forces to form organised crime networks

Indications in 2023 showed that criminal entities have been collaborating on the dark web, splitting up the actions of infiltrating and exploiting target businesses.

Preparation is key to effective cyber defence

Businesses with incident response planning and testing save on premiums and may respond to an attack quicker because they already know their roles, responsibilities and who to engage to help.

Our experience indicates prepared businesses have fewer breaches and achieve around 30% cost savings in the event of a breach.

4. Cyber criminals exploiting regulatory breach reporting controls

As regulations concerning cyber security breaches and data compromise reporting are tightening, cyber criminals are observing business activities for when vulnerabilities may open up and they can strike to obtain maximum advantage.

Insurance considerations

Businesses can expect increased regulator and insurer interest in data loss prevention. Retention of data will be a focus of interest in data loss prevention and risk management will likely require privacy impact assessments and the implementation of strong access controls.



How Gallagher can help

As most business liability policies exclude cover for cyber liability, business owners should consider a separate cyber insurance policy that covers your risk exposures and includes contingent costs such as business interruption, legal expenses and data recovery.

Gallagher brokering caters to businesses of all sizes and types, across multiple industry sectors, in accessing appropriate scope and levels of cover for cyber exposures.

Whether you have a question about your business insurance program, need to discuss a claim or are looking for local advice risk management advice, contact Mark Bramley, Area Director - Newcastle, 0417 293 29



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 123 Pacific Hwy, Charlestown, NSW

Should you use an insurance broker?

In business it can often be more time and cost efficient to deal with suppliers direct. Why would you want to complicate things by involving a middle person who also needs to make some money for their services?

While this may be sound logic for some areas of business, it is not the case for insurance. An insurance broker offers a wide range of benefits to businesses.

Utilising insurance brokers' knowledge and skill

As a business owner you may consider yourself as an expert in your field and running your business.

An insurance broker is paid to be an expert in insurance, understanding the risks as well as the cover available to mitigate these risks.

The insurance broker industry is highly competitive which is good news for the customer, maximising the service levels provided.

And if for some reason you are not comfortable dealing with a particular insurance broker there are many others available that would be pleased to discuss your needs.

Having the right cover

The whole purpose of insurance is to provide some cover against risks to your business. But it is common for business owners to not fully comprehend the risks to their business or fully understand what is and isn't covered in an insurance policy.

Because different policies can have quite different levels of coverage, inclusions and exclusions, it is not always easy to compare different policies.

The language used in policies can sometimes also be difficult to understand, even those that say they are written in plain English.

An insurance broker has many years of experience and can be an enormous asset in finding the best coverage to suit your needs and budget.

Accessing policy options from a range of insurance companies

Insurance brokers can often access policy options from a wide range of insurance companies and provide you with a much broader range of policies to choose from.

They also keep up to date with the latest offering from insurers.

This means that it is much more likely that an insurance broker will find the best policy for your business.

Saving you time

It can be extremely time consuming to try to find out what policies are available and try to compare them, even if you think you have the expertise.

Because insurance brokers deal with insurance policies every day, they can quickly and efficiently match your needs with available cover.

Saving you money

Insurance brokers can often access policies at better rates than individual businesses or negotiate costs and policy terms that would be difficult for the individual business to do.

Of course, the ultimate excessive cost is to pay for an insurance policy that doesn't suit your needs and an insurance broker will act in your interests to make sure this doesn't happen.

Insurance brokers work for their clients

Insurance brokers are legally bound to work in the best interest of their clients, not the insurance company. Insurance company



employees do not have the same legal obligation.

Helping with claims

If you need to claim, insurance brokers can help you with the process. Making a claim can be time consuming and stressful.

They also know how to minimise problems if there are queries with your claim or some aspects are out of the ordinary.

The help on making a claim is even more valuable when the occurrence that triggered the claim requires other actions by the business, for example reorganising some aspects of the operations.

Insurance brokers will also be of considerable help if there is some sort of dispute regarding the claim. They can often advise you of your position without the need for expensive legal advice and follow through on your behalf.

Even in straightforward claims, insurance brokers can often make the process of much faster, minimising business interruptions and helping operations to get back to normal more quickly.

2025 HUNTER INVESTMENT PROSPECTUS

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We are currently seeking support for the 2025 edition of the **Hunter Business Investment Prospectus**, the annual hard copy and online publication that promotes the Hunter Region as a smart business, investment and lifestyle choice.

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

Newcastle has undergone a tremendous change over the decade or so, with many billions of dollars of public and private investment bringing new life to Australia's second oldest city.

With so many projects renewing the city, we sometimes forget how run down some parts of Newcastle were. It has certainly been a tremendous transformation.

Although the term of Newcastle Renewal may not be the headline term it was in past years, it is indeed still proceeding with vigour with a wide range of major projects from business and Government.

Some of the major projects and recently completed, in progress and planned include the following. This is only a small selection.

727 HQ

727 HQ, a 15-storey commercial high rise, includes more than 11,000 sqm of commercial space to cater for up to 1,000 employees, a rooftop terrace, two retail spaces, more than 200 car parks and end of trip facilities including ground floor showers and bike storage. The site also incorporates a Melbourne-style public laneway alongside the building connecting King and Hunter Streets, which will include artwork and decorative lighting.

Dairy Farmers Towers

Dairy Farmers Towers marks the rebirth of one of Newcastle's most iconic locations with over 180 residences, five floors of commercial space, and some of the best views of Newcastle. The residences will be situated in two towers - the North Tower will be 99 metres tall and the South tower will be 89 metres in height. Each tower will include layouts featuring 1, 2, and 3 bedrooms. The iconic glass bottle and clock remain and will continue to live on through the redevelopment into Dairy Farmers Towers. The project is expected to be completed by second quarter 2025. Commercial spaces will be a prominent feature of Dairy Farmers Towers. It will also feature collaborative workspaces, precinct pools, wine bar and cellar, function rooms, green spaces and gym.



East End Project

The \$750 million East End project, the largest master-planned mixed-use site in Newcastle, is coming to completion. The master plan includes a mix of residential, retail and commercial uses across the 1.66 ha site (four distinct stages). The approved development application includes 47,800 sqm of residential floor space (approximately 500 apartments), 4,900 sqm of retail floor space and 2,700 sqm of commercial floor space. The \$250 million Stage One of East End, encompassing 155 apartments, was completed in 2021. Stage 2 (124 apartments) was complete in 2022. Stages 3 and 4 will include 235 dwellings across five buildings, 1,731 sqm of retail floorspace and approximately 300 parking spaces.

Horizon on the Harbour

Horizon on the Harbour is a residential development project located on Honeysuckle Drive. The project comprises 110 stylish units, spread across three buildings ranging from 7-8 levels, all connected by a spacious podium and two basement car park levels. The majority of apartments are north facing with views to the harbour. Over 75% of the apartments are naturally cross ventilated enjoying multiple orientations, and all living rooms open directly to courtyards or balconies.

ONE Apartments

Located in Newcastle's CBD, ONE is a twin-tower development, offering one, two and three-bedroom luxury apartments with market-leading-sized floorplates and a selection of vistas. ONE Apartments feature a Scenic Lounge on the 22nd floor, providing 360° panoramas over Newcastle Harbour, Stockton, Merewether and the Watagan Mountains. Also located on the western side of the 22nd floor, the Sunset Room is a bookable function room. Both rooftops feature interior-designed indoor spaces with luxurious lounges and stylish dining areas. Outside are landscaped lawn terraces with undercover barbecues and seating and dining facilities. ONE will also have its own private cinema and private gym.

Swift on Hunter

Altim Property's Hunter is the first A Grade commercial office building in Newcastle which allows small businesses to own their own premises. Swift features five floors of sustainably designed commercial suites ranging in size. Suites range in size from 50 sqm to 196 sqm all with car parking included. The Swift building also features end of trip facilities, bicycle storage rooms, licence plate recognition and is targeting 4.5 Star NABERS rating.

The Store Site

The Store site at 854 Hunter Street in Newcastle is a \$200 million redevelopment that will take design and opportunity to new levels in the city's emerging West End. The redevelopment of the 12,000 sqm site will combine innovative design solutions to provide an integrated masterplan delivering a new 15,000 sqm standalone office, retail and two residential towers and structured carpark that is built over the NBI designed and approved by Transport for NSW. The office space is anchored by NSW Government tenants.

Broadmeadow Place Strategy

City of Newcastle has released the Draft Broadmeadow Place Strategy, a 30-year plan that outlines how housing, employment opportunities and public spaces are developed in Broadmeadow. The Strategy presents a vision to revitalise the 313-hectare precinct, with up to 20,000 new homes for 40,000 people, and 15,000 jobs to be created, while retaining Broadmeadow as the region's premier sport and entertainment destination.

CITY OF NEWCASTLE DRIVING TRANSFORMATION

The past decade has seen Newcastle undergo a major transformation to become a contemporary urban destination with a thriving arts scene, vibrant night-time economy, lively café and small-bar culture, and a diverse calendar of major sporting, music and arts events.

City of Newcastle is taking the lead role in driving the city towards this shared vision through the implementation of our Community Strategic Plan, Newcastle 2040, investing in the local infrastructure, facilities and services needed to cater for our growing population.

During the next 12 months, we're investing more than \$415 million across 60 services and more than 280 projects across the city as part of City of Newcastle's 2024/25 Budget.

This includes almost \$140 million for infrastructure, delivering marquee projects such as the Newcastle Art Gallery expansion and essential infrastructure such as roads, parks and sports facilities.

This investment is forecast to support 735 local jobs and increase Newcastle's economic output by up to \$305 million. From city-shaping projects that will create a legacy for future generations, to essential services that make an everyday difference in the lives of Novocastrians, this Budget will set a new benchmark for our investment in the Newcastle community.

Our infrastructure projects respond to the needs of our community, with \$38.1 million for upgrades to local roads, bridges, footpaths and community buildings including \$5 million for renewing roads in the western corridor.

We're spending \$7.7 million on stormwater upgrades to address flooding to property and businesses in areas such as Mayfield East and Darby Street and \$6 million for improving Newcastle's cycleway network and transport options.



Expanded Newcastle Art Gallery

We're also revitalising our coast, city, and urban centres with over \$10 million for projects such as the East End Public Domain Plan, Hunter Street Mall and local centre upgrades at Orchardtown Road, New Lambton, and Georgetown. These upgrades are designed to deliver a significant upgrade to improve pedestrian and cycling accessibility, create a safer environment, provide green space and improve amenity for residents and businesses.

During the past decade city of Newcastle has worked incredibly hard to balance the needs and expectations of our growing community with our commitment to making sure we are financially sustainable.

These projects and services we're delivering are fundamental to building an inclusive, liveable, and sustainable city, and ensuring we continue to be an attractive destination for visitors and investment.

Newcastle Renewal

Delivering for Newcastle



Artist impression: Georgetown Local Centre renewal, part of City of Newcastle's \$140 million infrastructure investment for 2024/25.

newcastle.nsw.gov.au



Heal Urgent Care: Innovating Patient Experience with Evoke Projects

Open 7 days a week and conveniently located in Newcastle & Maitland, Heal Urgent Care Clinic offers comprehensive services including medical consultations, X-rays, blood tests, infusions, and urgent healthcare needs—all under one roof.

At Evoke Projects, we partnered with Dr Tim Stewart, the visionary founder of Heal Specialist Urgent Care to bring his vision to life with an innovative fit out that prioritises patient care and community benefit. Evoke were involved from the early stages of the project, assisting in carefully selecting the locations and navigating council requirements to bring this vision to life. The clinic's design emphasises privacy and efficiency, with treatment bays, an isolation zone for infectious diseases, and essential facilities like treatment rooms, pathology services, and an X-ray facility. The serene lounge areas, equipped with amenities and soothing aesthetics, enhances patient comfort while the staff benefit from a dedicated breakout space.

"We had an initial meeting with the team at Evoke Projects and went through what our requirements were, and really gelled with Jerry and the team over the amazing service they could provide!"
Dr Tim Stewart, Managing Director, Heal Urgent Care.

With the expansion of Heal Urgent Care into a second clinic in Maitland in November 2023 Evoke and Heal Urgent Care created a welcoming environment for the local community setting it apart from other clinics in Australia. Again, the design focused on minimising waiting time through an efficient patient flow system. Patient privacy and comfort was also vital while maintaining an open and natural light-filled atmosphere.

The new clinic continues to uphold the standards set by the Newcastle location, providing high-quality healthcare services with a focus on patient comfort and staff well-being. By incorporating impactful external signage and meticulous wayfinding elements, we've enhanced visibility and elevated the patient experience, ensuring that the Heal brand identity is prominent and inviting.

"Working with Evoke Projects has been an incredible experience," says Dr. Tim Stewart, CEO and Founder of Heal Urgent Care. "The thoughtful design, from floor finishing to ambient music, has truly elevated the patient experience. Without the building we have now, we wouldn't be able to achieve the results we're seeing."

Heal Urgent Care displays the innovative design principles we champion at Evoke Projects. Our fit out not only enhances functional efficiency and aesthetic appeal but also strengthens brand identity, staff well-being and community well-being. By creating a seamless flow from entry to treatment, incorporating essential medical facilities, and ensuring patient privacy, we've helped Heal Urgent Care set a new standard in the healthcare industry.



To discuss how Evoke Projects can transform your healthcare or workplace environment, please call us on 1300 720 692 or visit evokeprojects.com.au.

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We always consider the whole.

Taking a holistic approach in turn helps to improve occupant health, wellbeing and productivity, while fostering an organisation's culture through place.

We aim to create environments that set people up for success — however that might look for them.

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Places that enable people to do well.**



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CKDS ARCHITECTURE'S MIXED-USE PROJECTS: EAST END BLOCK 2, HORIZON AND DAIRY FARMERS CORNER

Newcastle's urban landscape is everchanging; even prior to 1948 when it was first classed a 'city', the industrial powerhouse was a unique town. It does, however, feel like the Newcastle we know and love nowadays has graduated from Town to City only recently as we begin to see projects of sizeable scale nearing completion and even more cranes in the sky.

Local practice, **CKDS Architecture**, is leading the charge with several impressive projects in the works and recently completed.

In the centre of the city, East End Block 2, the next evolution of the exciting Hunter Street Mall redevelopment, is almost ready for handover to client Iris Capital. The ambitious full-block redevelopment will add 110 high quality units and five reconfigured historic dwellings to Newcastle's housing market.

Over in Honeysuckle, Horizon, designed in association with Hill Thalys Architecture + Urban Projects, has just been completed and is up for a state architecture award in the upcoming 2024 Australian Institute of Architecture (AIA) Awards. Horizon will add a further 110 units to the housing market, with dwellings spread over three building forms complimented by generous communal rooftop garden space, landscaped public spaces and several retail tenancies.

Nearby in Newcastle West, Dairy Farmers Corner is currently in construction and will deliver 184 units in Newcastle's tallest tower once completed in the next few years. The scheme retains and celebrates the heritage-listed Dairy Farmers clock



Horizon

tower, inviting the public to experience the icon in a new way through the landscaped pedestrian laneways and public art displays.

CKDS Architecture followed the esteemed 'Design Excellence Pathway' to achieve approval for each project, working with local and state authorities to find the best design solution for these large-scale, city-defining projects. In addition, Horizon was also deemed a State Significant Development which is a very impressive result for the practice and highlights the team's ability to design in association with other Architects.

The skyline continues to grow and change in New South Wales' second largest city, with **CKDS Architecture** designing a significant portion of the new homes hitting the housing market – a great outcome for the residents of our great urban city.





THE RELOCATION OF WHITAKERS JEWELLERS WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF INSIGHT BUILDING SERVICES

Whitakers Jewellers is a four generation family business which started in the Upper Hunter in 1903. We have had stores in Muswellbrook, Maitland and Hunter St from early 1900's through to the early 70's. Our family business then evolved into shopping centre locations throughout the Hunter Region until 2006. Once we had closed our regional stores, our Custom Design Boutique in Darby St Cooks Hill was unveiled. We have grown to be the leading Custom Jewellery Design Boutique in the Hunter and beyond. Our new Charlestown store welcomes a fifth generation of our family renewing our focus and opens up new opportunities for our clients to have a more varied selection and enhanced experience in-store.

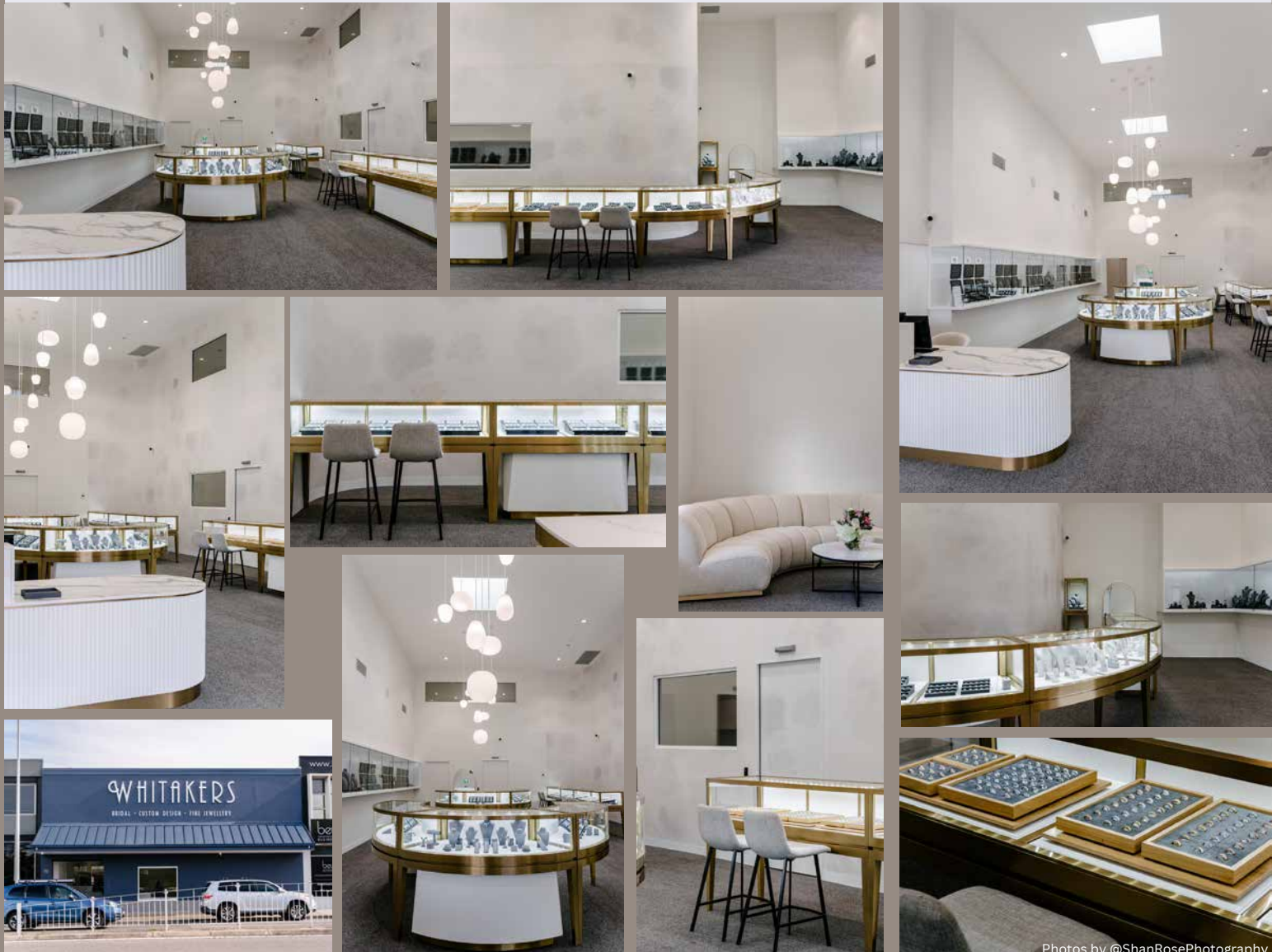
THE RELOCATION: Our new location is designed to allow a superior in-store experience but was motivated by a desire to own our own premises and provide a foundation and permanent location for the emerging fifth generation of our family working in the business. This new generation will do the same as those who preceded them driving us forward to even more prominence in the minds of the community as providers of exceptional quality jewellery with an unsurpassed in-store experience.

WHY INSIGHT BUILDING SERVICES: From our first meeting with Insight we realised we had found a partner in the building process. A company who have vision and listen to their clients ideas, enhancing them with their own expertise in construction and fitting out of commercial premises. They worked to our deadlines and achieved an outstanding result which will become a landmark in the Charlestown business community and a fabulous platform for our family business to grow.

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Photos by @ShanRosePhotography

Defence in the Hunter

Defence is a critical sector for the Hunter region's economy, injecting billions of dollars annually, employing thousands of skilled people and providing a wide scope of opportunities for local businesses.

Defence has a long history in the region, including ship building and maintenance as well as land-based defence, highlighted by the 15,000 ha Singleton Military Area which includes the Lone Pine Barracks.

It is air-based defence that is currently experiencing massive growth, centred on the 56 F-35A Lightning II fighters that are based at the RAAF Base at Williamtown.

Global Defence prime contractors including Thales, BAE Systems, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Varley Group, Northrop Grumman, Airbus and Raytheon are based in the region to support Defence's billion dollar presence.



Bohemia Interactive Simulations

These Defence primes provide through-life sustainment for Defence and market leading niche defence suppliers.

The Hunter offers the complete value chain with expertise in:

- advanced and precision manufacturing
- research and development
- diagnostics and prognostics
- specialist engineering and design
- logistics and asset management
- fleet planning
- through-life supply chain management
- capability management
- weapons systems support
- training, accreditation, certification and design approval
- military simulation training.

The defence industry in the Hunter is supported by a wide array of manufacturing, service and other industries. Local businesses of all sizes are increasingly recognising the opportunities that the defence industry provides and are ready to offer their expertise.

Hunter Defence is a collaborative task force focused on demonstrating the capability of established Hunter defence industry suppliers to government and primes, as well as upskilling local SMEs to become 'Defence ready'.

Hunter Defence represents a diverse group of industry stakeholders in the region, including manufacturing and supply firms, industry networks, specialist consultants, advisors and government.

The Hunter is also home to the global top 200 University of Newcastle. This provides a unique opportunity to bring the University, Defence and industry together to collaborate and innovate to drive economic growth in the region. This opportunity extends into emerging avenues of research, development and employment.

The Hunter has been associated with Defence for many decades but has never seen the level of investment that will be pumped into the region in coming years. It is now placed to be not only nationally recognised for defence but evolve further to become a truly globally recognised centre of defence.

Innovating together



 **BOEING**

Former PM to share insights at 2024 Hunter Defence Conference

Former Prime Minister The Hon Kevin Rudd AC in conversation with The Hon Joel Fitzgibbon will be one of the highlights of the two-day 2024 Hunter Defence Conference scheduled for 21 and 22 August 2024 at Rydges Resort Hunter Valley.

Defence Industry Adviser and Hunter Defence Taskforce Chair, Tim Owen AM said the focus from the Australian Government on a defence strategy alongside budgeted investment planning meant there was significant opportunity for Hunter industry.

“The National Defence Strategy was released in April 2024 and it has six immediate priorities, all of which could provide opportunity for Hunter-based primes as well as small to medium enterprises.”

A priority objective of the Strategy is advancing conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability. Attendees will hear first-hand (albeit virtually) from former Prime Minister and now Ambassador of Australia to the United States The Hon Kevin Rudd AC who will provide an update on AUKUS, the strategic partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

“A key part of AUKUS is developing robust and resilient, sovereign supply chains and this is where the Hunter defence industry can make a significant contribution.”

“The Hunter defence industry is highly capable, and the Hunter Defence Conference is the gateway for government, industry and defence forces to come together to help address Australia’s strategic risks.”

“This is reiterated in the recently released Defence Industry Development Strategy which recognises the defence industry as a critical partner in providing the deterrence our strategic circumstances demands.”

The 2024 Hunter Defence Conference agenda has been released, with speakers across government, defence forces, defence primes and industry.

Conference agenda summary

Day one – Defence investment, capability development and working with defence primes

NSW Premier The Hon Chris Minns will headline the first day’s events, followed by a discussion on AUKUS by The Hon Kevin Rudd in conversation with The Hon Joel Fitzgibbon. Dr Peter Cock will outline the Astra Aerolab innovation precinct and potential advantages for local defence industry. Senior Military and Industry leaders will provide valuable insight on strategy, funding and opportunity on behalf of Strategic Analysis Australia, Australian Defence Forces, BAE Systems Australia, Boeing Defence Australia, Lockheed Martin Australia and Hanwha Defense Australia. Conference attendees and presenters will participate in dedicated networking functions unique to the Hunter Defence Conference.

Day two – Defence technology, industry support and SME compatibility

AUKUS and sub-surface technology will start day two followed by a panel discussion on funding options including local angel investors and venture capitalists interested in supporting innovative and growing businesses. Artificial Intelligence is impacting the defence sector, and we will explore associated AI trends and opportunities. The day will conclude with an SME panel of three local defence businesses discussing the challenges and the opportunity outlooks for businesses operating within the current defence environment. The conference will conclude with a networking social and gala dinner highlighted by a keynote address from The Hon Pat Conroy MP, Minister for Defence Industry.

Exhibition

The 2024 Hunter Defence Conference will also include an exhibition across the two days.

At the time of this issue going to print, the list of exhibitors



Rear Admiral Dave Mann presenting at Hunter Defence Conference 2023
Credit 3L Photography

included 4Links, Astra Aerolab, HIVIS Group, Newcastle Airport, Newcastle Office Interiors, NSW Government, Omnia and Verizon. Opportunities for other exhibitors were still available at this point but interested parties should act quickly so they don’t miss out.

Sponsors and funding partners

The 2024 Hunter Defence Conference is made possible through the support of sponsors and funding partners.

At the time of going to print this list included: Astra Aerolab, Boeing, Built Australia, Business Hunter, HunterNet, Lockheed Martin, Master Builders Newcastle, Newcastle Airport, Newcastle Office Interiors, NSW Government, RDA Hunter, The University of Newcastle and Varley.

For the latest information on the Hunter Defence Conference and details for purchasing tickets visit <https://www.hunterdefence.org.au/hunter-defence-conference-2024/>

An advertisement for Built Australia. The background is a photograph of several construction workers wearing white hard hats and orange safety vests with 'Built' written on them. They are standing in a large industrial or construction site. Overlaid on the image is the text 'Accelerating Priorities Together' in large white font. Below this is an orange arrow pointing right, followed by the website 'built.com.au'. At the bottom, there is a paragraph of text: 'We are a 100% Australian-owned diversified general contractor, proud to accelerate the delivery of critical infrastructure that enhances Australia's future defence capabilities.' and the 'Built Australia' logo in large, bold, orange and white letters.

2024 Hunter Defence Conference - Full Conference Agenda

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 21 AUGUST

Defence Investment, Capability Development and Working with Defence Primes

Emcee: Ms Katherine Ziesing

08:00 - Registrations open and Exhibition

Networking time

08:45 - Conference Welcome and Emcee Introduction

Tim Owen

Chair - Hunter Defence Task Force

Hunter Defence

08:50 - Welcome to Country

Brad Twynham Author, Speaker, Business Strategist

09:00 - Emcee Overview of the Conference

Katherine Ziesing

Strategic Communications Manager

Hanwha Defence Australia

09:10 - NSW Government Welcome

The Hon. Chris Minns, MP

Premier of NSW

09:25 - Newcastle Airport – Astra Aerolab: Defence, Aerospace and Innovation Precinct

Dr Peter Cock

Chief Executive Officer

Newcastle Airport and Astra Aerolab

09:40 - AUKUS Update

A Perspective from The USA

Interview between The Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon (Former Minister for Defence) and H.E. The Hon. Kevin Rudd (Australia's Ambassador to the United States). Mr Rudd will be appearing virtually.

10:25 - External Perspective on Defence's Proposed Way Forward and Alignment with NDS/Budget/IIP/DIPS

Michael Shoebridge

Defence Sector Expert

Strategic Analysis Australia

11:05 - Morning tea and exhibition

Networking Time

11:30 - ADF Capability Roundtable and Q&A

Moderated By Katherine Ziesing

Joint Capabilities Representative (TBC); Director General Major Surface

Ships CDRE Brad Smith; Head of Aerospace Systems AVM Graham

Edwards; Head of Army Capability MGEN Richard Vagg

12:45 - Lunch and Exhibition

Networking Time

Sponsored by Boeing Australia

13:45 - Defence Prime Panel

IIP, Projects and Budget Impact

BAE Systems Australia: Andrew Chapman (Director Aerospace); Boeing

Defence Australia: Amy List (Managing Director), Lockheed Martin

Australia: Warren McDonald (Chief Executive); Hanwha Defense Australia:

Susanne Multerer (Head Industrial Development)

15:00 - Afternoon Tea

Networking Time

15:15 - Networking with Primes and Defence Leaders

2 x 30 Minute Small Group Discussions

16:30 - Welcome Cocktail Event and Exhibition

Networking Time

Sponsored by Built Australia

DAY TWO: THURSDAY 22 AUGUST

Defence Technology, Industry Support and SME Compatibility

EMCEE: Ms Katherine Ziesing

08:00 - Registrations Open and Visit Exhibition

Networking Time

09:00 - Welcome and Day Two Overview

Katherine Ziesing

Hanwha Defence Australia

09:10 - Budget Impacts on Acquisition – Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG)

AVM Graham Edwards

Head of Aerospace Systems

Defence Australia

09:50 - Defence and Technology: Sub-Surface Capabilities

Moderated By Katherine Ziesing

Andrew Glynn, Vice President - Programs, Anduril Australia & Asia Pacific

and Representative from the Australian Submarine Authority (TBD)

10:55 - Morning tea and exhibition

Networking Time

11:30 - Funding Options for Your Growing Defence Business – Panel Discussion

Moderated By Allan Aaron

Industry Advisor (TBD); Hunter Angels: Prem Chand (MD ananda advisory

and Chair Hunter Angels Limited); Commonwealth Bank Australia: Paul

Cragg (Executive Manager Hunter & Central Coast)

12:20 - Workforce Skills Future Survey Update

Tim Owen

Chair - Hunter Defence Task Force

Hunter Defence

12:30 - Lunch and Exhibition

Networking Time

13:30 - AI and Related Trends Impacting Us All

Prof. Toby Walsh

Scientia Professor of Artificial Intelligence

University of New South Wales and CSIRO's Data61

14:30 - SME Industry Panel

Moderated By Katherine Ziesing

Bale Defence: Link Bale (Managing Director); Birdon: Joe Smith (GM

Defence); NuPress: Craig McWilliam (Chief Executive)

15:30 - Conference Wrap Up

Tim Owen

Chair - Hunter Defence Task Force

Hunter Defence

18:00 - Gala Dinner – Arrival Drinks

Networking Time

Sponsored by Lockheed Martin

19:00 - Gala Dinner

The Hon Pat Conroy MP

Minister for Defence Industry, Australian Government

Sponsored by Lockheed Martin

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Defence in the Hunter

2024 National Defence Strategy

On 17 April, the Federal Government released the inaugural National Defence Strategy, which sets out a fundamentally new approach to the defence of Australia and our interests.

Developed in response to last year's Defence Strategic Review, the 2024 National Defence Strategy outlines the Government's strategic framework to guide the significant and urgent changes required to address Australia's challenging strategic circumstances.

Together with the rebuilt Integrated Investment Program, the National Defence Strategy is a blueprint to deliver an ambitious transformation of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to an integrated, focused force capable of safeguarding Australia's security for decades to come.

National Defence

Australia faces the most complex and challenging strategic environment since the Second World War. It demands a coordinated, whole-of-government and whole-of-nation approach to Australia's defence.

This new approach is founded on National Defence – a concept that harnesses all arms of Australia's national power to achieve an integrated approach to our security.

The National Defence Strategy sees a Strategy of Denial become the cornerstone of Defence planning. This approach guides Defence's contribution to National Defence and spans all domains – maritime, land, air, space and cyber.

The adoption of National Defence also means the ADF will shift to an integrated, focused force designed to address Australia's most significant strategic risks. This will ensure the ADF has the capacity to:

- defend Australia and our immediate region;
- deter through denial any potential adversary's attempt to project power against Australia through our northern approaches;
- protect Australia's economic connection to the region and the world;
- contribute with our partners to the collective security of the Indo-Pacific; and
- contribute with our partners to the maintenance of the global rules-based order.

Budget

Underpinning the National Defence Strategy is a generational investment in the ADF's posture, capability and structure.

Since the release of the Defence Strategic Review last year, the Albanese Government is investing an additional \$5.7 billion over the next four years and \$50.3 billion over the next decade in Defence funding, above the previous trajectory over that period.

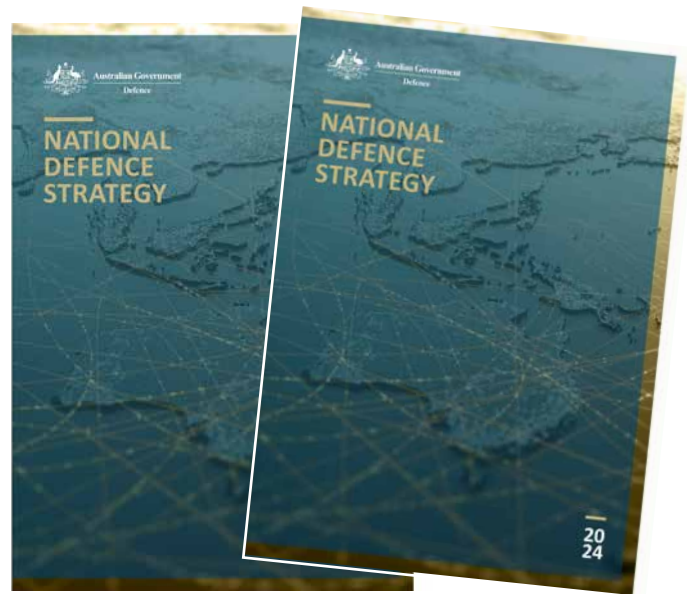
These additional investments include:

- \$11.1 billion over the next decade to deliver the Government's response to the independent analysis of Navy's surface combatant fleet;
- \$1 billion over the next four years to accelerate ADF preparedness including for long-range strike, targeting and autonomous systems; and
- \$38.2 billion over the next decade to fund the rebuilt IIP and accelerate and sustain priority capabilities.

This increase in annual funding will see the Defence budget grow to more than \$100 billion by 2033-34 – an historic investment, critical to giving effect to the National Defence Strategy.

The Government's investment in the Defence portfolio will see overall funding reach \$765 billion over the decade, including \$330 billion for the capability investments outlined today.

Comparatively, the 2020 Defence Strategic Update and 2020 Force Structure Plan outlined \$270 billion for the 10-year period to 2029-30.



People

People are Defence's most important asset. As the ADF transitions to an integrated, focused force, Defence must recruit, retain and grow the highly specialised and skilled workforce it needs to meet the objectives of National Defence.

The Albanese Government has already introduced several key initiatives to improve recruitment and retention, including the ADF Continuation Bonus, better access to study opportunities and more health benefits.

While these are important steps, we recognise the need for a fundamental transformation of Defence's recruitment and retention system.

The National Defence Strategy calls for a widening of eligibility criteria to enable more people to join the ADF including developing options, where appropriate, to recruit non-Australian citizens; streamlining and improving the recruiting system; and encouraging personnel to serve longer through retention initiatives.

To address these challenges, Defence will develop a new, comprehensive workforce plan this year that will be aligned with the National Defence Strategy and Integrated Investment Program to help meet current and future workforce needs.

Partnerships

Under the National Defence Strategy, Defence will adopt a more focused approach to its international engagement. These efforts will protect Australia's economic connection to the world and help shape a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous.

Australia's Alliance with the United States remains fundamental to our national security. The Albanese Government is committed to deepening and expanding our defence cooperation with the United States, and working together with the United Kingdom under the auspices of AUKUS.

The Government is also deeply focused on enhancing Australia's defence relationships across Southeast Asia and the Pacific, as well as in the Indian Ocean and North Asia regions.

The path forward

The National Defence Strategy is a reflection of the Government's foundational thinking on defence policy. It outlines a coherent, sensible and logical plan – one that is built on strong foundations and hard decisions, and backed up with the necessary funding.

It will be updated biennially alongside the Integrated Investment Program to ensure defence policy, strategy, capability and planning keeps pace with the rapidly evolving strategic environment.

The next National Defence Strategy will be published in 2026.

The 2024 National Defence Strategy is available at <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/strategic-planning/2024-national-defence-strategy-2024-integrated-investment-program>

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Defence in the Hunter

Hunter girls soar at RDA Hunter's GIRLS WITH A MISSION

RDA Hunter's hugely successful GIRLS WITH A MISSION (GWAM) Program took off again in June as a lead activity of the organisation's long-running, Australian-government funded ME Program.

Giving students the opportunity to engage with female leaders in STEM and aerospace, GWAM increases female awareness of aviation and engineering skills and careers in the local defence industry. It engages school students in a workshop program to help improve their technical knowledge in STEM and build enterprise skills like teamwork and communication.

Delivered in partnership with the region's Defence Industry, Tighes Hill TAFE's Aviation and Aerospace Department, and the Luskintyre Aircraft Restoration, the workshop program saw students construct and test-fly a model aeroplane to complete a scenario-based aid mission. Industry representatives provided one-on-one mentorship to students during the activities, and engaged in conversations about their own career journeys so students could "see what they can be".

The program, which saw 45 students participate, comprised two separate one day workshops, one based at the Tighes Hill Campus, and the other in Luskintyre - which assisted Upper Hunter Schools access this exciting and informative opportunity.

Day One at TAFE NSW Newcastle (Tighes Hill) Aviation Skills facility saw TAFE NSW teachers deliver the educational components of the activity and University of Newcastle Aerospace Engineering representatives guide students through the activities.

schools and Hunter Defence Industry to help build a skilled future workforce since 2009.

"We've been successful in inspiring students to study STEM subjects at school and higher education and consider careers in our local defence industry.

"Expanding GIRLS WITH A MISSION into new schools across the Hunter is a great result for the program. We're very pleased that GWAM remains a valuable and interesting activity for our partner schools and their students. GWAM and activities like it are possible because of the unwavering support of our industry partners and partner schools who help us create and deliver programs that teach industry-relevant skills," Mr John said.

TAFE NSW Team Leader, Aviation and Aerospace Andrew Trease said the program gives students a practical, hands-on experience, using techniques and equipment that is used in the aviation industry today.

"TAFE NSW prides itself on our relationships with local schools and employers in our region, and this program is an excellent example of organisations coming together to provide an extraordinary experience."

"We are actively engaging with industry all the time, to stay across the latest updates in skills needs, and to ensure we are providing quality training to meet the evolving trends and demand for workers in this space."

"These students are gaining first-hand knowledge about working in the aviation industry, potentially sparking an interest in pursuing this as a career path, while also getting a foot in the door with important industry contacts."

New grant program to grow Australian defence industry

The Defence Industry Development Grant (DIDG) program, announced in the Defence Industry Development Strategy, will soon be open for applications.

The new grant program will provide over \$150 million over four years dedicated to supporting Australian small to medium-sized business in areas of sovereign industrial priorities, exports, skilling and security. Each of the four program streams will begin to receive applications later this month.

This is in addition to over \$30 million that has been allocated under the previous grant programs this financial year.

The DIDG program replaces and expands previous defence industry grant programs. Nine businesses have been selected as the final recipients under the previous Sovereign Industrial Capability Priority and Defence Global Competitiveness Grant programs, receiving a total of \$2.9 million in funding.

Launching the program, Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy MP said "I am very pleased to launch the new Defence Industry Development Grant program, with publication of the program guidelines which will allow applications to be submitted within the next few weeks.

"Through this new program, the Albanese Government continues to help local businesses to grow, innovate and create high skilled, well-paid jobs for hard-working Australians.

"The new program places stronger emphasis on our need to focus financial support on industry priorities which have flowed from the Defence Strategic Review, through the Defence Industry Development Strategy which I released in February, and with clear alignment to the National Defence Strategy which was released in April.

"I commend all recipients of the previous grant programs announced today, and look forward to seeing the growth of their business."

Grant opportunity guidelines and the sample application form which describe the application requirements for the DIDG program, have been published at www.business.gov.au/grants-and-programs and on GrantConnect.



The second workshop attracted Upper Hunter students to work with representatives from Luskintyre Aircraft Restoration to recreate historical models based on aircraft located in their hangar.

RDA Hunter's CEO and Director of Regional Development, Mr Trevor John, said the organisation's ME Program, which is funded by Australia's Department of Defence, has been linking Hunter



An Australian Government Initiative



Regional Development Australia

GROWING THE FUTURE HUNTER DEFENCE INDUSTRY WORKFORCE

The ME Program is an industry led Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skilled workforce development initiative designed & delivered by RDA Hunter.



A Department of Defence grant enables the ME Program to link industry with schools to make classroom learning workplace relevant and provide the local defence industry with motivated and career aware candidates.



In the 2023-2024 financial year, ME Program school grants, activities and events influenced 16,488 students from 54 high schools, facilitating meaningful interactions with over 100 industry representatives.



Since 2009, RDA Hunter has positively impacted the lives of thousands of students and professionals alike.

Photographer: Lewis Morley



This level of engagement underscores RDA Hunter's pivotal role in advancing STEM initiatives in the Hunter to develop the region's skilled workforce of the future.

Find out more at rdahunterstem.org.au



Regional Development Australia
HUNTER

ME PROGRAM

Defence in the Hunter

Top Chicks program

Aircraftwoman Emma Loffman-Moore, a 25-year-old aircraft technician, felt the pressures of leaving home for the first time and facing independent decisions.

She was inspired to join the Top Chicks program after hearing glowing reviews from her male colleagues who completed the Top Blokes program.

Top Chicks equips 18 to 25-year-old women in Defence with tools to navigate life confidently.

Building on the success of its male counterpart, Top Chicks focuses on emotional awareness and regulation, resilience, confidence and self-worth.

"I wanted to make new friends, seek advice from experienced Defence members, and learn how others adjusted to new social circles and routines," Aircraftwoman Loffman-Moore said.

"I'm eccentric and quite feminine, so navigating a predominantly male environment can be tough.

"This program helped me realise that everyone's differences contribute uniquely to the team – each person has strengths and weaknesses."

The course boosted her confidence and helped her personal growth, prompting her to encourage others to join.

"Be vulnerable; it's a closed-door environment. If you feel uncomfortable elsewhere, this is your chance to be heard, find empathy and make lifelong friends," Aircraftwoman Loffman-Moore said.

"I now have a tight group of friends. We meet for coffee, stay connected in our Signal group and check in on each other when we cross paths on base."

The nine-week course, held at 2 Operational Conversion Unit at RAAF Base Williamtown, addresses the unique social, emotional and physical needs of young women through two-hour workshops.

"If you feel uncomfortable elsewhere, this is your chance to be heard, find empathy and make lifelong friends."

The relaxed, out-of-uniform environment broke down barriers among ranks, allowing the women to speak freely and find solace in shared experiences.

Corporal Samantha Mead, of 26 Squadron, was one of two mentors on the inaugural course early this year.

Collaborating with head educator Laura Collinson from Well Education, Corporal Mead integrated Defence-related topics such as managing postings, moving away from social circles, relationship issues and stresses of Defence life.

Corporal Mead saw significant personal growth among the women.

"Initially, they felt isolated in their work and personal lives, but by the end of the course, they realised they weren't alone and formed genuine connections," she said.

Corporal Mead said Top Chicks was unlike any other course Defence offered.

"It aims to make female aviators holistically better people both in and out of the workplace," she said.

"I wish a program like this had been available when I enlisted at 18, but I'm grateful to be involved now as a mentor in such a beneficial initiative."

Leading Aircraftwoman Hannah Flay, a personnel capability specialist at 77 Squadron, appreciated the course.

"Connecting with women facing similar challenges was incredibly helpful at my age," she said.

The 21-year-old said it normalised issues such as stress around postings and provided comfort through shared experiences.

The course also addressed the impact of social media on body image, self-worth and identity, equipping women with tools to nurture a healthy self-perspective.

The rapid success of both courses surprised Flight Sergeant Ryan Hodgson, one of the creators and facilitators.

"We knew we had something good and were passionate about making both courses happen, thanks to the support from Air Commodore Pete Robinson, Commander Air Combat Group, and Warrant Officer Wade Shipway, Group Warrant Officer, who supported us from concept to execution."

Alpha Echo plans to move to WAC P52

Alpha Echo is an Australian company that specialises in security advice and enterprise wide Cyberworthiness. The company has a multi-disciplinary team of subject matter experts that work closely with Defence and Industry to deliver on Cyber outcomes at a military grade level.

Alpha Echo is scheduled to move into bespoke secure facilities within Williamtown Aerospace Centre Precinct 52 (WAC P52) in 2027.

Director of Alpha Echo, Joshua Weeks commented, "Our company has grown significantly over the last seven years, and with this growth comes the requirement to consider long-term secure facilities.

"The Cyber domain continues to influence the Defence Industry, Government and business so we envisage further expansion and the requirement for a 'fit for purpose' space to operate.

"Several of our current contracts are with Defence and the ability to be located at Williamtown will only enhance this relationship. We are excited to be a part of the next phase of the Williamtown Aerospace Centre and establishing a permanent home at Precinct 52."

General Manager of Alpha Echo, Rebecca Shepherd said "The demand for our services is increasing and Precinct 52 will allow us to maintain the required rate of effort to meet industry needs.

"The ability to access secure facilities remains a challenge in the region so we welcome the opportunity to work with James and his team to

create the appropriate facility for our business.

"We cannot ignore the impact that Cyber activity is having on our industry and society in general so the ability to be able to expand and continue to meet the needs of our partners is critical."

Precinct 52 Managing Director, James Garvey commented, "We are excited to work with a Hunter based industry leading cyber security firm, Alpha Echo.

"Alpha Echo has grown substantially in the past seven years to now be seeking a second presence from the initial offices in Hunter Street, Newcastle.

"Joshua Weeks and his team will continue to support the Australian Defence Force and commercial industry with local sovereign capability.

"These emerging Defence SME companies continue to flourish and grow Williamtown Aerospace Centre as a Defence Technology cluster."

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A man goes to a doctor and says, "Doc, you gotta help me. I'm addicted to Twitter!"

The doctor replies, "Sorry, I don't follow you."

After directory assistance gave Glenda her boyfriend's new telephone number, she dialled him - and got a woman.

"Is Mike there?" Glenda asked.

"He's in the shower," she responded.

"Please tell him his girlfriend called," Glenda said and hung up.

When he didn't return the call, Glenda dialled again.

This time a man answered.

"This is Mike," he said.

"Hey, you're not my boyfriend!" Glenda exclaimed.

"I know, I know," he replied. "That's what I've been trying to tell my wife for the past half hour."

"The CEO of Ikea was appointed Prime Minister of Sweden.

Unfortunately, he is not available for comments as he is still assembling his cabinet.

A man is walking through the woods when he sees a bear charging at him.

He knows he can't outrun a bear for long, so he starts praying, "Dear Lord, I beseech thee. Please, o Lord, please let this bear be a Christian!"

The bear catches up to him, knocks him down on the ground, then gets on its knees and says, "Dear Lord, thank you for this food I am about to receive..."

One day, Einstein has to speak at an important science conference.

On the way there, he tells his driver that looks a bit like him "I'm sick of all these conferences. I always say the same things over and over!"

The driver agrees: "You're right. As your driver, I attended all of them, and even though I don't know anything about science, I could give the conference in your place."

"That's a great idea!" says Einstein. "Let's switch places then!"

So they switch clothes and as soon as they arrive, the driver dressed as Einstein goes on stage and starts giving the usual speech, while the real Einstein, dressed as the car driver, attends it.

But in the crowd, there is one scientist who wants to impress everyone and thinks of a very difficult question to ask Einstein, hoping he won't be able to respond. So this guy stands up and interrupts the conference by posing his very difficult question. The whole room goes silent, holding their breath, waiting for the response.

The driver looks at him, dead in the eye, and says "Sir, your question is so easy to answer that I'm going to let my driver reply to it for me."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The stars will never align, and the traffic lights of life will never all be green at the same time. The universe doesn't conspire against you, but it doesn't go out of its way to line up the pins either. Conditions are never perfect. 'Someday' is a disease that will take your dreams to the grave with you. Pro and con lists are just as bad. If it's important to you and you want to do it 'eventually,' just do it and correct course along the way." - *Tim Ferriss*

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