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From the Editor



Whilst the world is investing trillions of dollars in renewable energy projects and forecasts of the death of thermal coal mining are regular in the media, one wouldn't think so in the Hunter.

Coal mines are working around the clock. Coal prices are still considerably above historical levels, albeit down from the 2022 peak. The Port of Newcastle is still exporting billions of dollars of coal each month.

The Hunter Valley, which is so dependant upon coal mining, has an estimated unemployment rate of just 1.7% according to the latest ABS Regional Labour Force data for April 2023. This is markedly better than the national rate of 3.6% and the Newcastle/Lake Macquarie rate of 2.9%.

The coal industry will remain a vital part of the local economy for quite a few years yet. Hunter coal is recognised as very high quality and the cost of extraction and transport to market is globally competitive, so it may also be a little insulated from a global shift from coal.

But change is happening. Coal-fired stations are closing across the globe and less new coal-fired stations are being built. Renewable energy is continuing to become cheaper.

Mining is not important just for the huge direct economic benefits but it has one of the highest multiplier effects of any industry, meaning the indirect economic benefits are huge.

We will need to carefully manage regions such as the Hunter as transition from coal does occur over coming decades or local economies will be devastated.

And the effect will not just be on a local level. State finances are also liable to take a substantial hit. In 2021-22, the NSW Government received around \$3.5 billion in coal royalties.

Singleton and Muswellbrook Councils have been campaigning for acknowledgement and action from the Government regarding the economic challenges the Upper Hunter will be facing in coming years.

Climate Change and Energy Minister Chris Bowen announced a Net Zero Authority in Muswellbrook in May. This is a positive step but we will be looking for sustained action over a number of parliamentary terms to ensure that the Upper Hunter remains a major contributor to the economic prosperity of NSW and Australia.

Garry Hardie
Editor and Publisher

Planning a business FUNCTION?

WORK PARTY, CONFERENCE, MEETING, WORKSHOP, EXPO OR OTHER BUSINESS EVENT



View the 2022-23 Hunter Business Function Guide for information on venues and supporting services.

www.hbrmag.com.au/2022-hunter-business-function-guide

Successful testing of 43 foot hybrid boat

A 43 foot hybrid boat being developed by an award-winning collaboration between Ampcontrol, Steber International and the University of Newcastle, was launched on the Manning River, Taree, on 4 May.

Steve Mitchell, Ampcontrol Engineering Manager highlighted the successful deployment as a result of partnership between industry, government and the education sector.

"Marine technology was previously outside of our area of focus as a business, however through collaboration with Steber and the University of Newcastle, we have been able to de-risk our research and development activities in this area to pave the way in developing commercially viable hybrid diesel electric power systems for marine vessels," said Steve.

Steber International, leaders in Australian boat manufacturing and industrial composite technology, originally approached Ampcontrol in 2017 to assist in the development of a prototype for a hybrid police boat. The goal was to create a power-efficient, quiet, and environmentally friendly boat without compromising on the cruising range.

The ongoing collaboration reached a significant milestone in the development of their latest hybrid propulsion system and highlights the dedication of the Ampcontrol, Steber International and the University of Newcastle, to advancing sustainable and efficient technologies for the maritime industry.

Alan Steber, Steber International General Manager, said the project continues to show vast potential across the entire marine sector.

"Hybrid power sources for marine applications are being developed across the globe. We are proudly playing our part, working in partnership with industry leaders and innovators in Regional NSW," said Alan.



The research and development effort received early support from the Federal Government in the form of two AusIndustry Innovation Connection grants. This funding was used to develop a smaller 22-foot prototype hybrid boat which was launched in 2021. The learnings from this work were fundamental to the development of the Hybrid Power and Propulsion system installed in the recently launched vessel.

The successful use of this technology in a prototype marine vessel, including advancements of hybrid propulsion systems, have recently been published in a research paper titled Hybrid Propulsion System for Marine Vessels based on a DC Microgrid by Galina Mirzaeva, Professor at the School of Engineering, the University of Newcastle. The paper was co-authored by Dmitry Miller, Product Manager- Power Systems at Ampcontrol, Steve Mitchell, Engineering Manager at Ampcontrol and Alan Steber, General Manager and Director of Steber International.

The next phase of the project will be to add a powerful Diesel Generator which will electrically couple into the electrical power system to ensure that the boat has the same operating range as its full diesel counterparts.

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Tender awarded for Newcastle Art Gallery expansion

The second stage of the Newcastle Art Gallery expansion began in May after councillors unanimously awarded the \$43.8 million contract for the main construction works to Hansen Yuncken Pty Ltd.

The appointment is a major milestone towards the delivery of an expanded and upgraded Art Gallery of international standing, which will become a fitting home for City of Newcastle's nationally significant \$126 million collection.

Hansen Yuncken has completed significant infrastructure projects in NSW and Australia in recent years, including HOTA, Home of the Arts on the Gold Coast and locally, the new Maitland Council Administration Centre.

An 18 month program of work will begin with site establishment in May while grouting of the historic mine tunnels, 80 metres below the building, continues. Almost 12,000 cubic metres of grout has been placed so far in the Borehole and Dudley seams, with the mine remediation to ensure the safety of the site ahead of the main expansion works now nearing completion.

Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said she was looking forward to being able to welcome the community back into the reimagined Art Gallery, with construction scheduled for completion in late 2024.

"The expansion of Newcastle Art Gallery will consolidate the Hunter's reputation as an active and vibrant centre for the arts and culture, providing a significant cultural tourism opportunity for NSW," Cr Nelmes said.

"By more than doubling the size of the Gallery and delivering a suite of modern facilities, the expansion will provide greater access to our nationally significant collection and a wider range of prominent exhibitions."

Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation Chair Suzie Galwey said excitement was building amongst its members and donors as the project reaches the next phase.



Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Claydon, Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes, Newcastle Art Gallery Society President Prue Viggers, Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation Chair Suzie Galwey and Hansen Yuncken Regional NSW Business Development Manager Matt Bandy celebrate the awarding of the tender for the Newcastle Art Gallery expansion.

"We are delighted to see the expansion project reach this important milestone and look forward to construction commencing as soon as possible on this flagship cultural asset for our region," Ms Galwey said.

"The Foundation thanks its members and donors for their generosity and unwavering support for this project over many years. We believe today's announcement will inspire additional excitement and community support as the Foundation works towards its ambitious \$13 million philanthropic goal."

The expansion project is supported by \$5 million from the Australian Government under the Regional Recovery Partnerships program and \$5 million from the New South Wales Government, as well as \$10.5 million from the Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation made possible through the Valerie and John Ryan bequest, Margaret Olley Trust, and community fundraising over many years. A further \$2.5 million is being sought through the Foundation's public fundraising campaign.

Ampcontrol purchases Androck

Ampcontrol, Australia's largest privately-owned electrical engineering company, announced on 16 May the acquisition of Hunter-based Androck Engineering & Mining Pty Limited (Androck).

Established in 2006, Androck began as an exclusively based repair-supplied company to support the Australasian underground mining industry. Initially starting as a specialised component overhauling facility, it has grown into a substantial supply & manufacture operation, including the engineering & re-engineering of many problem issues in the underground mining sector.

"There is a great opportunity for the industry when Ampcontrol and Androck combine their offerings. Androck's extensive mechanical and machining expertise, capability, and manufacturing operations will enable Ampcontrol to further accelerate the development of our energy and electromotive solutions at scale to support industry decarbonisation," says Rod Henderson, Ampcontrol Managing Director & CEO.

Androck has five workshops located in Ruthersford, NSW, and has capabilities in machining, fabrication, hydraulics, and electrical repairs. They conduct equipment services and overhauls, including continuous miners, shuttle cars, and multi-bolters.


"Keeping manufacturing jobs within Australia has always been important to me. With a workforce of 65 people, I'm excited to see how the Androck product offerings and skilled people can support Ampcontrol, its customers and the wider industry to help make net zero a reality," says Darren Rockley, Androck Managing Director & Owner.

"Knowing Androck will be going to the 'good home' of Ampcontrol leaves me confident there will be a smooth transition of our business operations for our customers and will see our manufacturing remain onshore."


Mr Rockley will remain in the business following the acquisition transaction to support the integration of Androck into the Ampcontrol business and focus on strategic growth opportunities.

There will be no immediate changes to current trading, workforce, operations, branding, or customer contracts and orders during the acquisition period. The existing product and service offerings from Androck will remain unchanged and form a part of the Ampcontrol offering.

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Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley becomes Rydges Resort Hunter Valley

Rydges Resort Hunter Valley was launched in May, with new managers EVT planning to establish the hotel, formerly known as Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley, as one of NSW's premier destination resorts. EVT plans to boost the well-established resort with vibrant hospitality, entertainment and events to further enhance the Hunter Valley's reputation as NSW's most dynamic wine tourism region.

Hotel owner and Schwartz Family Company director, Dr Jerry Schwartz, welcomed the arrival of Rydges to the resort, saying that EVT would utilise their events and entertainment expertise to build further the resort's attraction for leisure and conference guests.

"The Hunter Valley should be one of Australia's most preferred tourism destinations and we believe that EVT and Rydges can build on its current popularity and elevate it even further," said Dr Schwartz.

"The resort is pivotal to the Hunter Valley's recalibration away from its former mining background to a new era based on tourism. There are so many attractions and activities available at the hotel and throughout the surrounding region, which makes it ideal for couples, families, groups, conferences and incentives.

"Our goal is to make Rydges Resort Hunter Valley NSW's premier destination resort. It will embody everything that is special about the region and its attractions," said Dr Schwartz.

Norman Arundel, EVT Director of Hotels and Resorts, said: "As the fifth SFC property under EVT's management, the synergy between Dr Schwartz's passion for the Hunter Valley region and our operational expertise, will deliver a truly unique guest experience.

"The property is a sprawling playground in the heart of wine country and a destination in its own right, with something for everyone," said Mr Arundel.

A wide range of initiatives are planned over the next twelve months, including:

- New fully electric passenger train: in line with the resort's commitment to sustainability, a fully enclosed air-conditioned electric train is being introduced to transport guests around the expansive resort;
- New tour celebrating local artists of the Hunter Valley: to enhance guests' experience of the local area, a 'Hunter Valley Art, Wine and Food Hop' tour will be offered every Saturday, on the hour between 10 am-5 pm, visiting eight locations showcasing the best of art, scenery, food and wine.



Norman Arundel and Dr Jerry Schwartz launching Rydges Resort Hunter Valley. Photo by Chris Elfes.

- Substantial expansion of family fun facilities: the resort's extensive existing children's facilities such as the Water Dragon Kids Club, train rides, pony rides and year-round heated water park will be expanded further with the addition of a new Ferris wheel, new 8 metre high, 22metre long, three lane water slide, new roller coaster, new pirate ship and jumping castles in 2023.
- Three new self-guided walking trails have just been introduced with the Creek, Vineyard and Estate Walks giving guests the opportunity to appreciate the stunning countryside and peaceful vistas.
- New equestrian facilities: have been created to cater for adults and children wanting to participate in the sport.
- Hunter Valley Wine & Beer Festival: the 11th event is being staged at the resort on 24 June, showcasing the region's finest wine, craft beer, and for the first time, distilleries.
- Glamping: Plans are underway for the addition of glamping facilities and cabin accommodation for school groups.

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Revitalisation of Hunter Street Mall set to continue

Construction is set to commence on the next stage of the revitalisation of the city's East End enabling the reinstatement of the Hunter Street Mall as a traditional high street.

This stage of the project is expected to cost \$1.9 million and will focus on a section of Hunter Street bound by Perkins and Brown Street, as a key pedestrian and cyclist entry point to the East End Village.

Wider footpaths will make way for alfresco dining and new street trees will increase shade cover, with the work also to include upgraded street lighting, road surfaces and stormwater infrastructure.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said the next phase of the project represents an important step in revitalising a historic part of the city undergoing rapid and transformative renewal.

"City of Newcastle is investing in the future of our East End cultural heritage precinct, with this next phase of public domain works aimed at creating opportunities for new development, retail, public spaces and providing notable links to the harbour," Cr Nelmes said.

"Our vision for the East End Village is to reinstate Hunter Street as a traditional high street and as an attractive destination for locals and visitors to enjoy, with enhanced outdoor dining and unique local retail opportunities.

"We will be improving pedestrian accessibility, enhancing lighting and providing important cycling links to improve the functionality of entering the precinct."

Deputy Lord Mayor Declan Clausen said delivering these outcomes for the community have taken significant collaboration as well as public and private sector investment.

"City of Newcastle is proud to have undertaken significant



CN civil construction and maintenance team member Travis Henley, Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes, CN civil construction and maintenance team member Mark Simmonette, and CN project manager Michael Head.

planning work to protect the heritage of the East End, including the protection of important view corridors which are so iconic for our city," Cr Clausen said.

"We are working closely with Iris Capital to deliver upgraded, high quality public amenity through our adopted East End Streetscape Plan, with the first \$5 million stage already delivered by the City of Newcastle at the block bound by Hunter Street, Wolfe Street, King Street and Perkins Street.

"Together with Iris Capital and its contractors we are working to best coordinate the sequence of works in this next phase to reduce the impact on the community."

The East End Village project is being delivered under the City Centre Revitalisation Program, one of City of Newcastle's four Priority Projects.


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The background image shows an industrial waste processing facility. In the foreground, there are large piles of dark brown, granular material, possibly compost or mulch. Behind these piles is a large, light-colored metal structure, likely part of a conveyor system or a sorting machine. The background wall is made of corrugated metal. The bottom of the image is partially obscured by a dark, semi-transparent overlay containing text and a list of services.

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Sensors to help improve parking in Darby Street

City of Newcastle (CN) will install parking sensors along Darby Street to help improve parking availability for customers of local businesses.

Darby Street commercial precinct was selected as a location for the new technology in response to feedback received during the recent Streets as Shared Spaces trial, and as part of recommendations identified in CN's Parking Plan 'On the Street'.

Newcastle Deputy Lord Mayor Declan Clausen said supporting local businesses by improving parking turnover in this popular area is a priority.

"We conducted extensive consultation with businesses, as part of the highly successful Darby Street Streets as Shared Spaces project. From this feedback, we heard parking turnover was a concern for businesses, who requested that City of Newcastle explore more options to improve parking availability," Cr Clausen said.

"Most businesses surveyed in the Darby Street and Hamilton precincts supported the installation of parking sensors.

"Installing the sensor technology will allow us to collect data on parking occupancy and turnover, ensuring parking spaces and restrictions suit the needs of customers and traders now and into the future.

"Many local businesses have told us that some drivers are parking well beyond the two-hour limit, which prevents people who are coming for a meal or coffee from being able to find a spot on Darby Street. The sensors will support our staff in enforcing the existing time restrictions, whilst ensuring turnover."

In the coming weeks, sensors will be set beneath the road pavement in parking spaces along Darby Street (between Queen and Bull Street), Council Street (between Darby Street and Council Street Carpark exit) and in the Council owned carpark behind the Hotel Delany.

The sensors do not collect identifiable information, but work by recording when a vehicle arrives in a parking spot and when it leaves, monitoring the length of time the vehicle has stayed in the space.

Additional locations for parking sensors are under review for commercial precincts in Beaumont Street, Hamilton, and selected areas of Hunter Street, Newcastle.

Installation is planned to occur later this year in Hamilton, with areas in the Hunter Street precinct in Newcastle under consideration for installation in line with current infrastructure works in this area.

Upgrades commence at Darling Street Oval

A major redevelopment of the grandstand and amenities at Hamilton South's Darling Street Oval has begun. Demolition of the existing grandstand commenced in May as part of a project worth more than \$3 million, which is being funded by City of Newcastle, Newcastle Olympic Football Club (NOFC) and the State and Federal Governments.

The joint investment will deliver a new grandstand for NOFC's spectators with female-friendly changerooms and improved disability access, as well as the refurbishment of existing amenities and a new formal off-street carpark.

Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said the upgrade of the grandstand, which will seat more than 300 football fans, will address an ever-growing demand for the 'world game'.

Amenities for people with a disability will be included on both levels of the building, while a lift will ensure the facility is fully accessible. The new grandstand will also include a community space and designated accessibility area on the upper floor for spectating.

Councillor Peta Winney-Baartz said the project works supports a key action in CN's 10-year Strategic Sports Plan (2020) to provide a sportsground designated for staging NPL and WPL football games.

continued on page 12



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An artist's impression of the new grandstand to be built at the Darling Street Oval.

"We have worked collaboratively with NOFC to bring their long-held ambitions for the sportsground to life with a design that complies with NPL standards whilst ensuring Darling Street Oval can cater for a host of football training and fixtures all year-round including schools, juniors, social, premier women, and men's football," Cr Winney-Baartz said.

NOFC President George Sofianos said as a club that is approaching its 50th anniversary in 2026, its facilities have experienced a dramatic increase in usage from their 480 players and visiting teams.

Newcastle Airport reaches sustainability milestone

Newcastle Airport has achieved a significant milestone in its sustainability journey by being only the second airport in Australia to meet all requirements to enter the Airport Carbon Accreditation Program at Level 4 - Transformation.

The program, initiated by the trade association of the world's airports, Airports Council International (ACI), is the only institutionally endorsed, carbon management certification standard for airports worldwide, and recognises airports' commitment to reducing their carbon footprint. The program has 508 participants globally and Newcastle Airport is now in the top 61 airports in that group. There are no airports in Australia with a higher accreditation, which is a huge achievement for Newcastle Airport.

The Level 4 - transformation status acknowledges Newcastle Airports' carbon management strategy towards absolute emissions reductions and approach of shaping partnerships to reduce the emissions of airport stakeholders.

"We are thrilled to be only the second airport in Australia and the eighth in the Asia Pacific to have reached level 4 in the Airport Carbon Accreditation Program," said Newcastle Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock.

"We are committed to being the green gateway to the Hunter and providing a practical demonstration of the new energy transition that is occurring in our region, this includes our new terminal being built to target 5 Star Green Star standard.

"This achievement is a testament to our team's hard work and commitment and demonstrates our continued commitment

to reducing our environmental impact as we grow. We know sustainability is a key focus for the government, with the recently announced establishment of a Net Zero Authority.

"We're proud to be doing our part in the sustainability journey of our region.

"Achieving Level 4 is an important milestone for us, and we are proud to be recognised for our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint. It reflects our ongoing efforts to ensure that our operations are sustainable and responsible, and we are committed to continuing our work to reduce emissions further," said Dr Cock.

Georgina Chalker, Newcastle Airport's Executive Manager People, Safety and Environment, shared her excitement about the achievement.

"Sustainability has been a key focus for us over the last few years, and we have made great strides in reducing our carbon footprint. We are 100% net zero in carbon emissions for our electricity and committed to achieving net zero for emissions within our operational control by no later than 2030. We are partnering with our stakeholders to further reduce our total emissions footprint," said Ms Chalker.

Airport Carbon Accreditation is a comprehensive program that assesses and recognises an airport's efforts to manage and reduce its carbon emissions. The program is divided into six levels: Mapping, Reduction, Optimisation, Neutrality, Transformation and Transition, with each level requiring airports to meet specific criteria and implement carbon reduction measures.

Hunter builder wins two national housing awards

Hunter's Greenbuild Constructions won two awards at the 2023 HIA-CSR Australian Housing Awards – the HIA Australian Bathroom of the Year and the consumer-voted HIA-CSR Australian People's Choice Home. Winners were unveiled before 550 industry leaders at the prestigious residential building industry awards ceremony on Hamilton Island.

The winning bathroom by Greenbuild Constructions boasts a dramatic greyscale palette and intriguing interplay of texture and sculptural form. Occupying centre stage is the oversized circular bathtub, nestled within a curved wall in a luxurious setting. Australian Bathroom of the Year is partnered by HIA Business Solutions.

Greenbuild Constructions were also successful in being named the HIA-CSR Australian People's Choice Home. Selected by an international audience through Houzz Australia, the stunning street frontage of curved masonry and rich timber battens only hints at what the property conceals within. Full of impeccable and unexpected details, such as peekaboo skylights and a deep central void, the complex build is a testament to the skill, talent and perseverance of the Greenbuild Constructions team.

HIA Managing Director Graham Wolfe said the HIA-CSR Australian Housing Awards recognize the best in Australia's residential building industry.

"HIA is committed to recognising the outstanding achievements of our members. The HIA-CSR Australian Housing Awards allow us to acknowledge their skill and their commitment to quality in design, material selection and construction. Our Awards' program brings together members who excel in building exceptional homes, kitchens and bathrooms and run highly successful businesses.

"HIA Award winners build with exceptional workmanship; demonstrated in projects that push the boundaries in design and innovation. It is my absolute pleasure to congratulate each winner for their hard work and commitment to excellence," Mr Wolfe added.

Tasmania's Lane Group Construction won the highest residential building award bestowed each year, winning the 2023 HIA-CSR Australian Home of the Year for a spectacular cliffhugging property anchored to its windswept, bushland location by heavyset stone pavilions and described by HIA judges as 'a once-in-a-lifetime build for Tasmania'.

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COMING EVENTS.....

20 June 2023, 7:10 am – 8:45 am

nfp connect

June Breakfast – Save the Date

Venue: Soul Cafe

Cost: N/A

www.nfpconnect.com.au/event/2023-june-breakfast/

21 June 2023, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

HIA

Building Industry Workshop

Venue: HIA Hunter Office

Cost: Members \$120, Non Members \$240

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/workshop/hunter-nsw/2023/workshop-mayfield-west-jun21>

23 June 2023, 8 September 2023 & 23 November 2023, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Business Hunter

The Business Hunter Energy & Resources Lunch

Venue: McDonald Jones Stadium

Cost: \$110

www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-mining-lunch-series

1 July 2023

Business Singleton

Singleton Business Awards

Nominations Closed 27 March

www.businesssingleton.com.au/singleton-business-awards

4 July, 1 August, 5 September, 10 October, 14 November &

5 December 2023, 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Newcastle Business Club

Newcastle Business Club Luncheon

Venue: Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club

Cost: \$75 – \$85

<https://www.newcastlebusinessclub.com.au/events/>

21 July 2023

Lake Macquarie City

Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards 2023

Venue: Belmont 16s

<https://www.lakemac.com.au/Our-Council/About-us/Awards/Lake-Mac-Business-Excellence-Awards-2023>

2 August 2023, 8:00 am – 9:00 am

University of Newcastle

Integrated Innovation Network (I2N) Startup Stories

Venue: I2N Hub Honeysuckle

Cost: Free

www.eventbrite.com.au/e/startup-stories-mika-koelma-hey-zomi-tickets-536469463607?aff=ebdsoporgprofile

3 August 2023, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

HIA

Business Admin Workshop

Venue: HIA Hunter Office

Cost: Members \$110, Non Members \$220

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/workshop/hunter-nsw/2023/workshop-mayfield-west-aug03>

11 August 2023 & 27 October 2023, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Business Hunter

Business Hunter Infrastructure Lunch Series

Venue: McDonald Jones Stadium

Cost: \$110 – \$1600

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

23 & 24 August 2023, 7:30 am – 10:00 pm

Hunter Defence

2023 Hunter Defence Conference

Venue: Rydges Resort – Hunter Valley

Cost: \$1190 – \$1290

<https://hunterdefence.org.au/hdc2023/>

25 August 2023, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Business Hunter

2023 Business Hunter Awards

Venue: NEX

Cost: N/A

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/business-hunter-awards>

22 September 2023, 5:30 pm – 9:30 pm

Newcastle Business Club

90th Celebration 2023

Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club

Cost: \$140 – \$160

<https://www.newcastlebusinessclub.com.au/event/luncheon-november-2023-3/>

9 October 2023

Business Hunter

Business Hunter Innovation Series

www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-innovation-lunch-series

20 October 2023

HMA, Inc

2023 Hunter Manufacturing Awards

(applications close 18 August)

Venue: NEX

www.hma.org.au

5 December 2023, 10:30 am – 4:30 pm

Newcastle Business Club

2023 AGM

Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club

<https://www.newcastlebusinessclub.com.au/event/2023-agm/>

ARE YOU ORGANISING A COMING BUSINESS EVENT?

We would be pleased to receive basic information as above for consideration for inclusion in a coming issue of HBR.

Advertising opportunities in HBR and the HBR email newsletter are also available.

Please email
garry@HBRmag.com.au



RED INSIGHT

Kurt Speirs has commenced as HSEQ Consultant at Red Insight. He has gained practical experience in various HSEQ roles in manufacturing, analytical laboratories, as well as in social. Kurt spent the first four weeks working alongside business owner Monica Toews Brown and the team to be trained to a high degree with all operations at Red Insight.



REVERB MEDIA

Reverb Media has hired former senior finance journalist **Rebecca Thurlow** as a Content Strategist to accelerate growth in its specialist financial services content offering. Rebecca is responsible for providing content strategy and delivery for Reverb Media clients across the financial services and corporate sectors. She brings more than 20 years of experience in journalism, most recently at The Wall Street Journal, where she held various senior roles including News Editor and Senior Reporter.



MASTER PLUMBERS ASSOCIATION

The Master Plumbers Association of NSW (MPA NSW) has appointed **Nathaniel Smith** as its new CEO. Nathaniel brings over 20 years of experience leading and coordinating campaigns for high-profile Companies, Associations and Organisations to the MPA NSW, with high-level experience in Government Relations, Community Relations, and PR consulting at a senior level. He will bring fresh perspectives and strategic foresight to MPA NSW, driving it towards achieving its goals as a leading representative for plumbing contractors in NSW.



DIAMOND IT



MAITLAND CITY COUNCIL

Maitland City Council has appointed **Jeff Smith** CPA GAICD to the position of General Manager. He boasts an impressive 29 year career in the private and public sector. Following other senior local government roles including at Port Stephens Council and Randwick City Council, Jeff was the Director Corporate and Legal of Northern Beaches Council, where he has been since 2019. Jeff will join Maitland City Council under a five year contract from 3 July.



DIAMOND IT

LET US KNOW ABOUT
YOUR **PEOPLE!**

We would be pleased to receive information about your new appointments. Just email around 80 words on the employment plus a high resolution head shot to **editorial@HBRmag.com.au**

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



REFLECTIONS ON TIME, ADVENTURES AND THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF STRATA TITLED INDUSTRIAL UNITS

The timeless adage of "Time flies" holds an even deeper meaning when you come to acknowledge the finite nature of your existence.

Since my previous contribution to the Hunter Business Review in September last year, my life has taken remarkable turns. I have parted ways with the business I dedicated myself to building, embarked on an awe-inspiring voyage to Antarctica and back, spending an entire month at sea.

Interestingly, none of these experiences are related to the realm of property, but hey, I have some great stories.

During this period, one of the projects that commanded my attention was the sale of a older strata title industrial complex located in Redhead. Over the past few years, the demand for strata titled industrial units has reached unprecedented heights. It's reminiscent of a "keeping up with the Joneses" dynamic, where everyone who wants to maintain a certain social status believes they must possess an industrial unit. These units have undergone a transformation, shifting from serving their original purpose as places of business to becoming mere accessories for the affluent middle class to store their stuff.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognise that not all units are the same. If you are considering purchasing an industrial unit, here are some essential tips to keep in mind.

Tip 1: These units vary significantly in both price and size, ranging from 65 sqm to over 800 sqm. Also, big and small users do not mix. Therefore, it is advisable to seek out a complex where most users align with the size requirements that suit your needs.

Tip 2: In the past, older units were typically constructed during a time when land was more affordable. As a result, these units often had larger parcels of land allocated for improved manoeuvrability of vehicles, both large and small. However, as time progresses, the issue of driveway blocking has become a huge headache.

Tip 3: While you may not have control over your relatives, you do have the power to choose your neighbours. Exercise caution regarding the industries in the vicinity of your chosen unit. Assess whether they may cause annoyance or pose any potential risk factors. Additionally, consider whether the dividing walls effectively prevent the infiltration of dust, odours, and excessive noise.

Tip 4: It is essential to pay attention to the power supply for your unit. Take note of how much power is being delivered to your meter and how much is distributed to the unit itself. It is not enough to solely rely on the sub board as some newer units may have a three-phase breaker installed without the corresponding three-phase cable behind it.

Tip 5: Having a high clearance in units does not automatically grant permission to construct a mezzanine. It is advisable to enquire about the original Development Approval (DA) to determine if mezzanines were indeed approved for construction. Many older units may have unauthorised mezzanines that have not been approved by council. In the case of new complexes, the limited space available often results in the council denying approval for mezzanines intended for storage or office space due to insufficient on-site parking capacity.

Tip 6: Non-approved mezzanines can potentially void insurance policies for both the individual unit and the entire complex.

Tip 7: It is advisable to acquire copies of the minutes from the last two Strata Annual General Meetings (AGMs). Review these minutes carefully to assess the expenditure records, sinking funds, and any areas of concern related to maintenance.

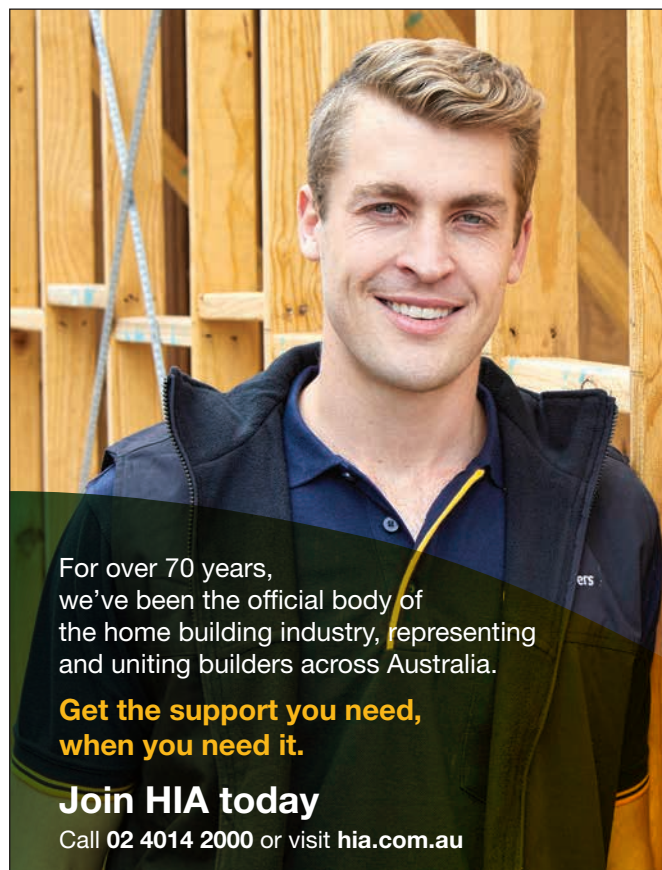
Tip 8: Take the time to research and analyse the prices of properties in the surrounding area, breaking them down on a cost per square meter basis. Typically, these prices should range between \$1,850 and \$4,300 per square meter, with variations based on factors such as the property's age and location.

The Newcastle economy is currently experiencing overall positive performance, particularly with a strong demand observed in the industrial sector. However, there is a noticeable emergence of larger buildings in the market, which were scarce just a year ago. It is worth noting that industrial land pricing has undergone a significant transformation, transitioning from the sublime to the ridiculous if you can find a block.

The commercial office space sector is a cause for concern, particularly in size ranges like 500 sqm 750 sqm, where there is currently an oversupply with a three-year inventory available. This situation puts landlords in a challenging position, as they will need to prepare for the possibility of holding onto vacant spaces or taking more assertive measures in offering lease incentives to attract tenants.

The commercial industrial investment sector continues to demonstrate its strength, as evidenced by a recent sale I facilitated. This particular transaction achieved an Australian record for Open Negotiation, reaching an impressive sale price of \$9.83 million. The sale garnered significant attention, with a total of 161 inquiries and a notable presence of seven bidders.

As time is already flying through another year if you have anything you need to sell or lease, please do not hesitate to give me a call 0400 000 947.



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HUNTER SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT UP FOR ANOTHER NATIONAL AWARD

A social and affordable housing development in inner city Newcastle is now in the running for two national housing awards after it was named as a finalist in the Property Council of Australia's 2023 Innovation & Excellence Awards.

The seven storey, 16-unit complex, in Wickham is competing with four other projects from NSW and the ACT for the national Best Affordable Housing Development Award.

Home in Place CEO Australia Lyndall Robertshaw said it is pleasing to see an affordable housing project in regional NSW, built through a unique partnership, recognised.

She said the current housing crisis means there needs to be more innovative partnerships and more investment in affordable housing projects built in regional NSW and other parts of Australia.

"Affordable housing developments are designed to reduce rental housing stress for key low income workers by providing homes that are close to jobs, services and transport," Ms Robertshaw said.

"This development is in the inner city rather than suburban fringes, right near the harbour foreshore and the Newcastle Transport Interchange," she said.

The homes were built under a unique partnership between the NSW Government, City of Newcastle, and Home In Place. It was one of nearly 500 properties, across 19 Hunter and Central Coast sites, that Home in Place delivered as part of the NSW Government's Social and Affordable Housing Fund. Council contributed to this project using funds it managed from the Federal Government's Building Better Cities program.

Local businesses were involved in its design and construction supporting local jobs. The project was designed and planned by architect CKDS and town planner Barr Planning. North Construction & Building, was the project builder.

"Clever design maximises the potential of the small 410m² site while ensuring quality living. The views from the rooftop garden area are amazing."

"The project was delivered on time and on budget."

CKDS received a special commendation for its design of the project in the Residential Architecture – Multiple Housing category at the recently held 2023 Newcastle Architecture Awards.

Winners of the Property Council Awards will be announced at a gala awards dinner in Sydney in August.

Ms Robertshaw said this is not the first accolade for the development. Its environmental credentials were recognised when it won the GreenSmart Sustainable Home of the Year at the 2022 Housing Industry Association's Hunter Awards.

"The complex has an impressive 7.5-star Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) rating, which importantly helps our tenants to save on power bills as well as benefitting the environment. Some properties achieve an 8.4 star rating. The use of preformed concrete tilt panels, 5-star rated efficient water fittings and fixtures, low energy LED lighting, commercial grade glazing on all windows and doors, and solar energy to supply hot water and feed back to the grid are just some of the green features of this development."

As a winner of the Hunter award, Home in Place is in the running for the 2023 HIA National GreenSmart Awards to be announced in Melbourne in August.

Home in Place is a Tier 1 community housing provider which manages more than 7,000 social housing, affordable housing and disability housing homes in NSW, Queensland, Victoria and New Zealand.

FOR SALE BY ONLINE AUCTION

BIDDING OPEN FROM MONDAY 19TH JUNE 2023



INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT

Lot 3/ 69 Munibung Rd, Cardiff

- Industrial strata unit tenanted by Newcastle Car Audio on a 3 year plus 3 year Lease
- Situated at the front of a small complex with great exposure to Munibung Road.
- Current net income of \$40,738 pa (approx)
- Net lettable area of 306m² (approx) plus 5 car spaces with a current DA to increase size to 530m² (approx) with 6 car spaces
- Affordable investment in sought after location and with upside potential.

Bidding Open from 11am, Monday 19th June
Auction to Conclude 2pm, Tuesday 20th June



MULTI TENANTED INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT

10 Ayrshire Cres, Sandgate

- Anchored by NSW Ambulance on a 5 year plus 5 year Lease
- Frontages to both Ayrshire Crescent & Rural Drive
- Current net income of \$142,540 pa (approx)
- Future growth potential
- New roof and guttering throughout
- Combined net lettable area of 1,295m² (approx)
- Ample hardstand areas

Bidding Open from 11am, Tuesday 20th June
Auction to Conclude 2pm, Wednesday 21st June



TENANTED FABRICATION WORKSHOP

80 Seventh St, Boolaroo

- Tenant on 5 year plus 5 year Lease
- Workshop of 1,480m² (approx)
- Current net income of \$128,696 pa (approx)
- Land area of 3,470m² (approx)
- 600 amps of power
- 7 metres height to the eaves
- 8 and 10 tonne overhead cranes

Bidding Open from 11am, Wednesday 21st June
Auction to Conclude 2pm, Thursday 22nd June

For further details or an inspection contact:

DAVID ROGERS admin@dowlingcommercial.com.au | 02 4969 8000

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Glencore kicks off recruitment for 2024 apprenticeship program

Glencore will add to the hundreds of mining graduates, apprentices, and trainees across its Australian operations as recruitment for their 2024 apprenticeship programs kicked off on 17 May.

As one of the nation's largest mining companies, Glencore offers best-in-class programs for school leavers, university graduates and people of all ages looking for a well-paid and rewarding career in one of the country's most vital sectors.

"What we do matters, and we are proud of the contribution our business makes to Australia," said Cassandra McCarthy, Head of Corporate Affairs for Glencore in Australia.

"Last year Glencore provided work for over 18,000 people and contributed \$20 billion to the national economy.

"Glencore has a world class coal business and our eleven coal operations across the Hunter Valley and Mid-West New South Wales are accepting applications until 18 June 2023.

"We have welcomed almost 800 people into the coal and minerals sector including, 192 graduates, 403 apprentices and 188 trainees currently working across Glencore's Australian operations.

"Our programs allow people to build exciting careers guided by some of the best in the business, all while earning a very good wage.

"Glencore is offering opportunities in electrical, auto electrical, diesel fitting, fitter welder, radio technician, boilermaker, mechanic, fitter turner, and refrigeration trades.

"Our in-house program rotates apprentices across multiple operations and is tied to a direct career path within the Glencore business."



Brianna Thirlwall, Auto Electrical Apprentice

Second-year Electrical Apprentice at our Ulan West Underground Coal Mine, Maggi Zeck said "My tradespeople are great. I have had a really fantastic experience working with them. I think I get to work with some of the best trades people in the country.

"Working underground with the crews is fantastic. I'd heard about the camaraderie underground. It's something new you really can't fathom when you're new but once you join in with the crews, it's amazing. I haven't experienced anything like that before."

GLENCORE



Glencore Coal Apprenticeship Program 2024

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Applications now open. Apply at:

glencore.com.au/apprenticeships

Applications close Sunday 18 June 2023.

Advancing careers. Advancing everyday life.

HSC students sign up for early entry

High school students will have access to more support for their HSC, with the University of Newcastle launching an Early Entry Program that will offer students new resources, mentorship and peer support, once they have submitted an application to study at the University.

The Early Entry Program will allow year 12 students from NSW and the ACT who are completing the Higher School Certificate or International Baccalaureate to apply for early entry.

Vice Chancellor, Professor Alex Zelinsky AO said, "We know the HSC can be a really challenging time for some students. We want to reassure students that there is a place for everyone at our University."

"Our Early Entry Program will be sector leading and will give students access to a range of support including student mentors, HSC tips and webinars, past exam papers and invitations to VIP University of Newcastle events.

"We hope our new Early Entry Program will help students to feel more confident and supported during the HSC.

"We know that students can benefit from talking to someone who has been through the experience before, so mentors will contact applicants to provide support and advice throughout the year.

"Applicants will also have access to Leadership Programs and free University preparation courses (NUprep) with early offer recipients encouraged to complete at least one course."

Elmore Vale mother, Sonya Cameron, said early entry would help to ease the stress her daughter Chelsea was feeling with the HSC and give her certainty that she would be able to remain at home while she studied at university.

continued on page 20

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"Chelsea already knows that she wants to be an Occupational Therapist, so early entry for her is not just about getting into university but securing a pathway to her preferred profession," Sonya said.

"She's worked hard the past couple of years and early entry into University of Newcastle will mean she's less concerned about having to apply to different universities and she can just concentrate on doing the best she can in the HSC."

Chelsea explained how an early offer would help to relieve some of the pressure of the exams.

"Receiving an early offer will alleviate some of the pressure associated with the HSC exams and allow me to maintain a healthy life balance through the exam period.

"It will help me to approach every exam with confidence and reassurance – with less pressure placed on the exam I will be able to concentrate more on achieving the best score and outcome for the HSC."

Year 12 students can apply for early entry by visiting www.newcastle.edu.au/early. Entry will be determined based on Year 11 results plus completion of the HSC. Students will receive offers in September just ahead of HSC exams (previously offers commenced in November).



How to get the right training to stick

Sam Robinson
LKS Quaero

We've all been to training that didn't end up being useful – or heard a comment from someone else about a similar experience. There's the training that seems okay at the time, but is never thought of again. There's the course that feels like a compliance tick box exercise (even if it's useful). Then there's the training people need but don't get. And there's training that does get scheduled that isn't helpful. The key is getting the right people the right training and getting it to stick.

Matching training to needs

Whether you're looking to fill a skill or knowledge gap for an individual or team, running a learning needs analysis is the clearest way to see the gaps. Those gaps need to be matched

against the objectives of individual roles and the organisation so that you can be set up to get the development that is targeted and useful. I've seen too many organisations seek out training without articulating specifics about what needs to be achieved, and unfortunately they don't reap useful results. This doesn't just track for technical skills.

Leadership skills aren't always well understood, but it's time well spent to understand someone's leadership development needs before embarking on leadership training. LKS Quaero runs Leadership Capability Assessments that determine the strengths and areas of development for individuals' leadership capabilities – something that's often missed or put in the too hard basket when promoting or recruiting.

It's also a question of getting the right people doing the right training. It's too bad when someone who would jump at the chance to advance their skillset doesn't get a training opportunity, while a person who does get the opportunity doesn't understand why they've been nominated for something that isn't the right fit. Sometimes where this falls down is poor communication between the part of the organisation that needs the training and the part responsible for organising the training – so make sure everyone is across what needs to happen.

Getting leaders involved

In my organisation, we say that leadership creates the culture that creates the results – good or bad. Our consistent experience is that people get the most out of training when they get the right support from their leaders. When leaders are involved in celebrating people's achievements, giving them opportunities to apply their learning back at work, and providing the time, space, and advice necessary to learn, people get the most out of their learning (and so do their organisations).

Embedding learning

If the right training is in place and people are being supported by the leadership, the final piece of the puzzle is making sure the learning is embedded day to day. For safety matters in particular, it can't be something that lives in a procedure that never gets picked up. It's got to be reinforced through facilitative systems, visible symbols (like organised workplaces and consistent responses to good or poor performance), and positive behaviour that's effectively modelled and required by leaders. If people are encouraged to keep using their learning, they'll do it, and the reverse is also true. Refreshers are a great way to keep the skills sharp, whether formally in refresher courses or in informal communities of learning among people who have undertaken the training.

Developing your people needs to start off with the right training that is then consistently reinforced. With the right training provider and positive leadership support, both individuals and your whole organisation will reap the benefits.


For more information on our training offerings and Leadership Capability Assessments, contact LKS Quaero at enquiries@lksquaero.com or 02 4910 4048.


Sam Robinson is Managing Director of LKS Quaero. He works in leadership development, change management, organisational structure, and culture. Sam helps leaders to succeed by connecting people, relationships, systems, and structures. He has worked across the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors.



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Partnering with Hearing Australia to deliver effective workshops

Hearing Australia were looking for workshops designed to their equip leaders with the skill, tools and strategies to have effective crucial conversations with their staff.

Many organisations' leaders are appointed to positions due to their technical skill, work ethic and passion. However, once we place these people in these positions, employers often fail to provide them with some of the key skills of leadership, including providing effective feedback to their people.

Hearing Australia was prioritising continuous improvement in communication between leaders and their people. That's where Leadership & Performance Partners stepped in to deliver training on 'Crucial Conversations' in the workplace.

Hearing Australia is the nation's largest provider of government-funded hearing services for children, young adults under 26, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, pensioners and veterans.

With over 600 locations across Australia, they provide world-leading hearing solutions, easily accessible to all, with the mission of making a difference to individuals' lives and the lives of their families.

The challenge

Prior to Hearing Australia contacting Leadership & Performance Partners, they were developing an Emerging Leaders Program across their locations to support the leaders at these sites to improve their leadership capabilities and team performance.

Lack of communication, or poor communication of a leadership team can negatively affect the workplace. Effective communication is an important skill for leaders to ensure high productivity; quality; and team morale.

Hearing Australia needed a workshop for their Leaders at their sites across Australia on how to effectively communicate and have the skills to confidently hold 'Crucial Conversations' with their team.

The prep

After the initial conversation with Hearing Australia, Leadership & Performance Partners began working closely with key stakeholders to understand their business and the strategic outcomes they were trying to achieve. They also got to understand and appreciate the day-to-day challenges faced by their leaders.

It was important to take the time to develop realistic case studies and scenarios that could be used as role plays during the workshops.

These case studies and scenarios greatly assist participants in understanding the strategies and tools provided and improving their confidence in delivering 'Crucial Conversations'.

Delivery of the crucial conversations workshops

After working in collaboration with Hearing Australia and understanding the unique requirements of their Leaders Leadership & Performance Partners developed our 'Crucial Conversations' workshop.

They were able to deliver the workshops across Australia, some virtually, with most of the workshops being face to face.

The workshops covered the following areas:

- Identifying how crucial conversations range from providing positive feedback, coaching and mentoring conversations to more difficult and challenging performance discussions.
- Understanding the challenges of crucial conversations for leaders and team members.
- Dealing with the emotional responses of staff when delivering feedback.
- The importance of preparation and planning.
- Using such tools as:
 - The Empathy Tool
 - The Iceberg Model
 - Intent vs Outcome
 - The Achieve Model
- The FEB Model – for providing positive feedback
- The 4 I's – having effective performance discussions
- Case studies and role plays

The result

The Hearing Australia team were incredibly happy with the workshops and the improved confidence and skills of the Leaders and Managers resulting from attending them.

Each participant of the workshop was able to take the training on board, improve their communication and ability to provide feedback, and excel as a leader.

The engagement and feedback we received has been extremely positive. Multiple comments included:

"It was engaging, the facilitator kept everyone contributing".

"This workshop was very relevant. As a new manager it was 100% useful"

"The facilitator was amazing and demonstrated the importance of planning and dealing with facts and specifics when having difficult conversations".



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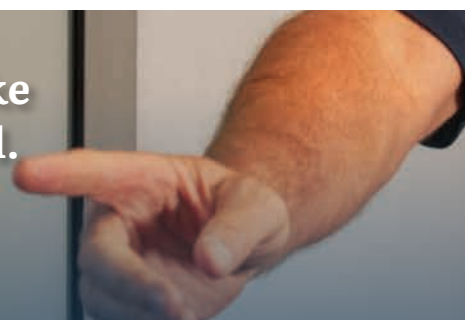
- Crucial Conversations
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- Situational Awareness
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- Change Management
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Lake Macquarie female students take on trade pathways

In May, 15 female students commenced the Girls Can Too program at the Central Coast Community College's Lake Macquarie Trade Training Centre.

The Girls Can Too program is a NSW Government Regional Industry Education Partnerships (RIEP) initiative designed to provide female students in years 9, 10 and 11 the opportunity to explore traditionally male-dominated career pathways.

The foundation of the program involves training and work experience across a number of trade areas, including electronics, fabrication, construction, automotive, and electrical.

Central Coast Community College Trades Training Co-ordinator Richard Sellick says the program is the perfect stepping stone for young women looking to explore trade careers.

"The Girls Can Too program encourages female high school students to try a trade and discover the benefits a hands-on career pathway can provide," Richard said.

"The Central Coast Community College is proud to support this program, with 15 students currently enrolled at our new Trade Training Centre situated at the Business Growth Centre in Gateshead.

"Our trainers are equipped to give students an overview of a number of trade areas, including electrical, automotive, fabrication, and more. This allows the students to explore the range of hands-on careers available to them and find something they enjoy.

"We also provide the students the opportunity to visit local employers to get insight into trade industries and what it's like working on-site."

Brooke, a student currently undertaking the program with the College, said that the program has expanded her interest in a trade career.

"My career goal is to pursue something in the electrical field, and this program has helped build my interest in that," Brooke said.

"I think this is a great program to share with my friends if they want to do a trade but don't know what field they're interested in."

Richard believes the program is a step forward for increasing the number of women in trades and contributing to national skills shortages.

"Vocational education and training pathways are key to developing a skilled workforce for Australia's future, which is why programs like this are so important.

"Increasing female representation in traditionally male-dominated trades expands the pipeline of skilled workers and encourages more people to pursue meaningful careers in trade vocations. The Girls Can Too program contributes to creating this future."

The program is currently being held at the Gateshead Trade Training Centre, with the College set to deliver two more Girls Can Too programs to follow in the coming months.

Central Coast Community College Gateshead Students



Real-world, hands-on experience key to all students' success

Practical and professional experience placements have been a regular feature for students studying engineering, medicine, nursing and education degrees for many years, and the University of Newcastle has announced that from 2023 onwards all undergraduate programs will include a placement embedded in a workplace.

The University's program is geared to providing hands-on work opportunities, which are embedded into degrees to give students an advantage from the moment they graduate. It's expected that more than 7,000 University of Newcastle students will complete professional experience placements each year.

The roll out of work-integrated learning to all degrees is with good reason, with data from the Australian Skills Commission report in 2021 finding that 75% of employers look for experience before considering an applicant, while 40% of roles are given to someone known to the employer.

Newly appointed NSW Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, Member for Newcastle the Hon. Tim Crakanthorp MP launched the expansion of the program with Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alex Zelinsky AO in what was Minister Crakanthorp's first visit to the university since joining the NSW Government cabinet in early April.

Minister Crakanthorp said "There's nothing that compares to on-the-ground the training, and the skills that students are going to gain through these placements are invaluable.

"When each part of our education system collaborates and works with industry the opportunities are numerous. I warmly congratulate the University of Newcastle for launching this program today and their time with me.

"My visit to the University today was all about showing that my focus as Minister will always be on teachers and students."

The University of Newcastle is one of the first institutions in Australia to embed work integrated learning within all undergraduate degree programs. Offering embedded work placements will increase the number of opportunities for students and industry as it is added into every one of the University's 168 undergraduate programs in 2023.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alex Zelinsky said "We are absolutely committed to ensuring our graduates not only have access to study at an excellent university, but also believe in supporting them with a platform to go on to build incredible careers, no matter their area of study. We pride ourselves on teaching and preparing graduates who are ready for work.

"What this means for our students is that they will get the chance to graduate with a degree and take away real experience and build connections with employers in their area of study, which will help them find a job they love when their studies are complete.

"We are fortunate to have a strong network of supportive organisations and businesses that are passionate about providing our students with opportunities for real-world experience. In fact, we are the No.1 university in Australia for industry collaboration, so these connections will be invaluable for our students and industry partners."

Find out more about University of Newcastle work integrated learning student success stories: www.newcastle.edu.au/engage/work-integrated-learning/success-stories

Industry partners and businesses that would like discuss work integrated learning opportunities can connect at www.newcastle.edu.au/engage/work-integrated-learning

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"Townies" helping agriculture industry in emerging skills need

The state's peak farming body has welcomed an increase in the number of "townies" studying agriculture at TAFE NSW Kurri Kurri, saying it will help the industry confront its current emerging skills need.

As the local agriculture industry booms amid strong commodity prices and seasonal conditions, it faces a growing labour shortage to keep pace with demand.

NSW Farmers workplace relations chair Chris Stillard said the new data showing more students from non-farming backgrounds were studying agriculture was a positive for the industry.

"Modern agriculture is a really diverse industry, and we don't just have tractor drivers and stockhands anymore, we've got mechanics and drone pilots and network engineers as well," Mr Stillard said.

"TAFE NSW plays an important role in helping deliver the industry a skilled pipeline of workers into the future.

"A growing global population means a growing need for food, and agriculture is where that food comes from, so you can be outstanding in any field while you're out standing in a field."

Mr Stillard's comments echo similar sentiments earlier this year from Australia's peak farming group, National Farmers' Federation (NFF), which said TAFE NSW would play a critical role in ensuring the industry had the workforce to meet future demand, with the NFF Roadmap outlining its vision to grow the workforce by 25 per cent over the next decade.

TAFE NSW Kurri Kurri Head Teacher of Agriculture, Horticulture, Conservation and Land Management, Stuart Murphy, said many of his students came from non-farming backgrounds.

"There used to be a perception that only those from farming backgrounds entered the agriculture industry but that has well and truly changed," Mr Murphy said. "During the pandemic, we saw a strong increase in our region of people coming from the big cities seeking a sea- or tree-change, and many learners are simply seeking a career on the land instead of in an office.

"With this growth comes strong demand for skilled workers, and TAFE NSW is proud to be training our future agricultural leaders, ensuring they have the practical skills and experience to help the industry thrive."

Kurri Kurri Diploma of Viticulture student Christ Hunt, 49, started working in the wine industry after serving in the Defence force from the age of 16.

"I've been working in the Hunter Valley wine industry for a few years now and this has given me many of the practical skills, but I didn't have formal qualifications to take my career to the next level," he said.

"TAFE NSW is helping me learn the business side of things, like workplace health and safety, biosecurity, recruitment of staff and contractors – I had some exposure to these things, but my Diploma has shown me that it's about so much more than just working in the vineyard.

"I'm also getting hands-on experience with the skills I'm most passionate about like field operations and making wine in the cellar alongside a winemaker.

"This training has led to a broader scope of work and higher responsibility in my current job, and my Diploma qualifications will allow me to start my own viticultural consulting business. TAFE NSW is really allowing me to chase my dream job," Mr Hunt said.

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Natural Resources Minister visits Mt Arthur Coal Mine

Minister for Finance and Natural Resources Courtney Houssos toured the Mt Arthur Coal Mine in May and met with Chairs of the Royalties for Rejuvenation Expert Panels to discuss future opportunities for coal-mining regions.

Minister Houssos said the NSW Government will deliver its election commitment to establish authorities that will support local communities as they diversify to new and emerging industries.

"I've seen first-hand the scale of the operation at Mt Arthur and understand how important these local jobs are for the region," Minister Houssos said.

Minister Houssos continued: "As the mine's closure date nears it will be crucial to find ways to partner with the mine's workers, use existing infrastructure and skills and achieve a balance of social, environmental and economic outcomes for the site's next chapter. This is going to take a sustained effort from Government and industry."

The Minister met with the Expert Panels. They discussed the challenges for local communities, and opportunities to create new jobs, drive new investment and activate opportunities for future workers.

"There are great opportunities in NSW. The NSW Government is listening and committed to collaborating with local communities, industry and workers to develop bespoke plans for these regions," Minister Houssos said.

"The NSW Government will use the convening power of government to find innovative solutions which harness the opportunities in renewable energy and drive future investment in the regions."

The NSW Government will work with the Federal Government to coordinate with the recently announced Net Zero Authority.

"By working with communities to find localised solutions, NSW will be able to support regional communities and economies to access new employment, skills and harness the opportunities that are presented by the industries of the future," Ms Houssos said.

Minerals industry contributes record company tax and royalties

The Australian minerals industry made record company tax and royalty payments in 2021-22, contributing \$63 billion to federal, state and territory governments, an increase of \$21 billion on the previous year.

That total contribution is the equivalent of paying for the entire Medicare scheme or the Childcare subsidy for two years.

Minerals have helped propel the economy forward, boosted economic opportunity and freedom, and enabled the governments to invest in the things that really matter: families, communities and vital services like hospitals, schools, childcare, aged care and infrastructure.

The latest Ernst & Young Royalty and Company Tax payments report, commissioned by the MCA and released in May, shows that in 2021-22 the sector contributed \$39 billion in company tax (a third of all company tax paid in Australia) and \$24 billion in royalties.

Over the 10 years to 2021-22, Australian minerals have contributed 21% of Australia's GDP growth, \$295 billion in company tax (\$168 billion) and in royalties (\$127 billion) underpinning Australian government revenue year in, year out.

The record tax and royalty payments come off the back of \$389 billion of capital investments the industry made since the start of the mining boom.

Australia's vulnerability to competition for this investment from resources-rich economies will only grow as they seek to seize the opportunity to supply the minerals and metals needed to achieve global net zero emissions.

Investment should be placed at the centre of government's policymaking to attract a significant proportion of this investment that will create tens of thousands of new regional jobs and business growth.

Workplace relations, tax, environment, climate change and energy policies that impose unexpected costs on the mining industry threaten the capital investment that underpins its contribution to the economy and the global efforts to decarbonise.





Catalyst Project Consulting has announced the successful completion of the CSR Metford Mine Closure project on behalf of CSR Limited. In March 2023, CSR Limited achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first mining lease holder in NSW to fully complete the mine closure process on Crown land, to the satisfaction of the Mines Department. This involved relinquishing the mining leases, relinquishing the Crown Leases, and satisfying Council's Consent.

An outstanding aspect of the project was the negotiation with NSW Health to repurpose part of the site from industrial/commercial use to open space, enabling the construction of the New Maitland Hospital. Extensive revisions to the Mine Closure Plan and collaboration with stakeholders enabled Council consent for the hospital project.

This remarkable project, the first of its kind on Crown Land in NSW, showcases mine closure excellence and sets a new environmental standard in the mining industry. Over an 11-year period, CSR Limited in collaboration with Catalyst Project Consulting transformed the former PGH Brick Works in Maitland, including the Fieldsend and Metford Quarry sites into a beautiful and self-sustaining natural reserve for the benefit of the local community.

The transformation of the 53-hectare Metford Brick Works site involved demolishing the factory, including heritage conservation, extensive remediation (processing over 900,000

m³ of material), and removal of waste from the 3.5ha ecologically sensitive water body. Catalyst Project Consulting implemented innovative solutions for efficient excavation and sorting, resulting in significant reductions in off-site disposal. Implementation of innovative remediation techniques realised a saving of \$80 million when compared to traditional excavate and dispose approaches.

The rehabilitation process involved sub-soil amelioration to create organic topsoil, extensive landscaping including hand planting of 259,000 tube stock of native tree, shrubs, and grasses. Extensive monitoring and reporting was undertaken to demonstrate to stakeholders that the rehabilitated landform was stable, free of contamination, self-sustaining, and non-polluting. The innovative report regime was so successful that the Mines Department considered adopting it as the minimum standard for mine closures.

The success of the CSR Metford Mine Closure project can be attributed to the close collaboration between CSR Limited, Catalyst Project Consulting, and the various project stakeholders. Managing a project involving both Crown Land Leases and Mining Leases required coordination with multiple government bodies. The Department of Industry (Crown Lands) acted as the landowner, while the Department of Resources & Energy (Mines) granted the mining lease. Maitland City Council provided consent for the works and the final landform, and the Resource Regulator Division of Resources and Energy ensured compliance with mining safety and environmental obligations. Other government entities, including NSW Fisheries, ARTC, NSW Health, SafeWork NSW, and Queensland EHP, provided their expertise when required. The innovative approaches adopted for both rehabilitation and remediation represented the confluence of expertise from over 40 consultants and contractors.

The CSR Metford Mine Closure project stands as a testament to the successful restoration of a once-vital part of Maitland's economy. Through collaboration, expertise, and innovation, CSR Limited and Catalyst Project Consulting have set a new benchmark for mine closure in Australia.



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Port of Newcastle commits to global hydrogen partnership

Port of Newcastle has joined forces with ten global energy enablers to commit to the Platform Zero Global Partnership for Hydrogen Innovation - a collaborative global partnership to support hydrogen innovation.

CEO Craig Carmody and Chief Commercial Officer Simon Byrnes, who are visiting the Netherlands for the World Hydrogen Summit, signed a Memorandum of Understanding under supervision of the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, to accelerate the renewable energy transition with Platform Zero, Port of Rotterdam, the City of Rotterdam as well as key Universities and Innovation Hubs from around the world.

"We are delighted to be collaborating with such a strong cohort of leaders in this space and to be a leading voice for our sector and region as the only Australian Port represented among these global energy industry enablers," Port of Newcastle CEO Craig Carmody said.

"This partnership is another milestone of our diversification strategy. It puts Port of Newcastle at the table alongside like-minded global leaders in the sector, enabling us to work together to develop and scale innovative hydrogen technologies and overcome key bottlenecks to enable the hydrogen and clean energy transition and trade pathways.

"As we work to bring our Clean Energy Precinct to reality, the benefits of this virtual global innovation hub will be exponential, allowing our Port and Region to learn from international Ports, researchers and clean energy producers, whilst contributing to the development of the Innovation Road Map that will enable a global hydrogen economy," he added.

Chief Commercial Officer Simon Byrnes said that partnerships like these will be key to the future enablement of a scalable clean energy trade pathway at Port of Newcastle.

"Within the Platform Zero partnership, universities will contribute through developing the relevant new technologies and solutions, where Ports, like Port of Newcastle, and innovation hubs, will develop infrastructure to support storage, transportation and scaling of innovative hydrogen technologies that enable the clean energy transition."

"As the designated NSW hydrogen hub, we are at the forefront of creating a new economy - one which faces many technological challenges in order to make it scalable, economical, reliable and safe. So, collaborating with other innovators who are developing and scaling new technologies will be the key enabler for a hydrogen economy."

Platform Zero founder Mare Straetmans said he was proud to bring together ports, universities and innovators from Australia, Brazil, Chile, Portugal, UK and the Netherlands to commit to accelerate innovation for green hydrogen.

"Australia is a critical partner in the development of a green hydrogen economy. By sharing knowledge and best practices on innovation ecosystems for hydrogen, these ten organisations from around the world will share, scale and support hydrogen innovation and each contribute to the global acceleration of this economy," he said.

With further membership expected in the future, the 10 companies to date who have signed the partnership agreement alongside Port of Newcastle are Port of Rotterdam, HunterNet Newcastle, Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources (NIER), Erasmus University Rotterdam, Imperial College of London, Complexo do Pecem, Gemeente Rotterdam and Wicked Acceleration Labs.

Port of Newcastle was also recognised as a finalist at the World Hydrogen 2023 Awards in the Port of the Future Award category, with the Netherlands Port of Rotterdam being named this year's winner at the Awards ceremony held in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

As a finalist at the pinnacle event for world hydrogen, in esteemed company, Port of Newcastle has reaffirmed its commitment toward a cleaner, greener future through its work in helping drive hydrogen and clean energy production in the Hunter region.

The Port was named one of four finalists for the Award, which recognises ports who have current hydrogen projects in place that have made a significant contribution to the crucial role of becoming a hub for hydrogen development and sustainability, alongside Denmark's Port of Esbjerg, Port of Roenne, and the winner, Port of Rotterdam from the Netherlands.

"Although we did not win the category, the fact the world's largest coal port is sitting alongside such progressive ports as a finalist at the World's Hydrogen Awards, is a clear indication Port of Newcastle's diversification journey is heading in the right direction," Port of Newcastle CEO Craig Carmody said.

"We have been exporting energy for over 200 years, and through our Clean Energy Precinct, we will ensure that our region continues to do so sustainably for another 200 years.

Origin approves construction of Eraring battery

Origin Energy has taken a final investment decision on the first stage of a large-scale battery at the Eraring Power Station, committing to an investment of approximately \$600 million.

Agreements have been executed for the supply and construction of the battery. Stage one involves construction of a 460 MW battery storage system with a dispatch duration of two hours, anticipated to come online in the final quarter of the 2025 calendar year. Origin has the option to increase the battery to 700 MW and four hours dispatch duration in the future.

Origin CEO, Frank Calabria said, "Approval of the Eraring battery is an important milestone for Origin and another significant step in our strategy to lead the energy transition and accelerate renewable energy and storage in our portfolio.

"We are pleased to make this significant capital investment in Origin's first major battery project to support the growth in renewable energy that's occurring across the NEM, together with the expansion of our own portfolio of renewable energy developments."

Origin's head of energy supply and operations, Greg Jarvis said, "Eraring is a strategic site with high quality connection infrastructure enabling us to deliver energy into major demand centres. Development of the Eraring battery is a key next step as we look to transform the Eraring site for the future, given our intention to exit coal-fired generation by as early as August 2025.

"We are grateful for the strong support Origin has received from the local community and other stakeholders, and we look forward to working with our key contractors to deliver the Eraring battery safely and expeditiously, consistent with the conditions of approval granted by the NSW Government," Mr Jarvis said.

The Eraring battery project received initial planning approval from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment in May 2022.

Battery equipment will be supplied by Finnish technology group Wärtsilä, which operates globally, while design and construction services will be provided by Enerven, a subsidiary of SA Power Networks.



HVO helps Mark Hughes in the fight against brain cancer

Staff at a Hunter Valley coal mine have raised \$10,000 to help the Mark Hughes Foundation (MHF) to continue its fight against brain cancer.

Hunter Valley Operations' (HVO) general manager, Dave Foster, presented the funds, on behalf of the mine's staff, to MHF co-founder, Mark Hughes, at a recent training day.

Mr Foster said the money had been raised by staff purchasing hard hats with a specially designed logo.

He said with several members of the HVO workforce having a personal experience with brain cancer, the team wanted to do something practical and visible onsite to support them and others.

"While the HVO workforce have bought MHF beanies, these can't always be worn on-site, so we came up with the hard hat idea," Mr Foster said.

"The project is about raising much needed funds but also raising awareness about brain cancer and the work of Mark Hughes Foundation with our staff and contractors," he said.

Mr Hughes said the money will go towards raising awareness about brain cancer, funding innovative research and providing support to people impacted by brain cancer and their families. He said alarmingly very little is known about brain cancer, its causes or how it can be best treated.

"We're so grateful for the support from HVO and its staff," Mr Hughes said.

"Support like this helps us to fund research by HMRI and other national researchers, and to keep our nurses in the community to help families when they are in the toughest time of their life," he said.

"We are hoping the community will consider supporting our work again this year through our Beanies for Brain Cancer campaign, which includes the NRL Beanie for Brain Cancer Round between June 29 and July 2."



HVO General Manager Dave Foster with Mark Hughes and the mine's special MHF fundraising hard hat

Since Mark and Kirralee Hughes founded MHF in 2013, following Mark's diagnosis with brain cancer, it has raised more than \$24 million. Around 1,200 Australians die from brain cancer each year. Brain cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in children, and adults aged under 40 in Australia. Survival rates have only increased by 1 per cent in the past 30 years.

MHF is one of the charities and causes HVO and its staff support in addition to those supported through its bi-annual community grants, charity truck tray partnerships and workplace giving programs.

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This morning at about 7:45, I was in a long line at a grocery store that opens at 8:00 for senior citizens only. A young man came from the parking lot and tried to cut in at the front of the line, but an old lady beat him back into the parking lot with her cane...

He returned and tried to cut in again but an old man punched him in the gut, then kicked him to the ground and rolled him away.

As he approached the line for the third time he said, "Look, if you don't let me unlock the door you're never going to get in there!"

Restaurant patron: "Waiter, I'd like a bottle of wine."

Waiter: "What year, sir?"

Patron: "What year!!! I'd like it right now."

While I was making farewell visits before moving to a new parish, an elderly member of the congregation paid me the compliment of suggesting that my successor would not be as good as I had been.

"Nonsense," I replied, flattered and a little embarrassed.

"No, really," she insisted. "I've lived here under five different ministers, and each new one has been worse than the last."

Phoning a patient, the doctor says, "I have some bad news and some worse news. The bad news is that you have only 24 hours left to live."

"That is bad news," the patient replies. "What could be worse?"

The doctor answers, "I've been trying to reach you since yesterday."

How many telemarketers does it take to change a light bulb?
Only one, but they have to do it while you are eating dinner.

I was visiting my son the other night when I asked if I could borrow a newspaper.

"Dad, this is the 21st century," he said. "I don't waste my money on newspapers. But if you like, you can borrow my iPad."

I can tell you this: That spider never knew what hit him.

A man came into a hardware store to buy hooks for hanging plants. But there were only two hooks left in the gold colour that he needed.

The young store attendant, trying to be helpful, suggested, "Could you maybe use the silver or the white instead?"

The customer scrutinised him and said, "You're not married, are you?"

A man and a little boy entered a barbershop together.

After the man received the full treatment—shave, shampoo, manicure, haircut, etc.—he placed the boy in the chair.

"I'm going to buy a green tie to wear for the parade," he said. "I'll be back in a few minutes."

When the boy's haircut was completed and the man still hadn't returned, the barber said, "Looks like your daddy's forgotten all about you."

"That wasn't my daddy," said the boy. "He just walked up, took me by the hand, and said 'Come on, son, we're gonna get a free haircut!'"

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"When planning for a year, plant corn. When planning for a decade, plant trees. When planning for life, train and educate people."

- Chinese Proverb

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