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From the Editor



It has certainly been a rough start to the year for the Australian economy, with drought and bushfires followed by storms and the rise of Coronavirus – the full effect of which is still to play out.

Whilst these have presented major challenges for the nation, one of the longer-term constraints to the growth of the Australian economy in recent years and looking forward has been poor growth in productivity.

This in turn has been a major reason for the low growth in real wages.

The latest Productivity Insights released by the Productivity Commission in February indicated that

labour productivity and multifactor productivity (labour plus capital) in the market sector both fell in 2018-19, the first fall since the peak of the mining boom, by 0.2% and 0.4% respectively. There has now been a continued period of poor productivity growth since the peak mining boom in 2012-13.

So what can be done to help productivity increase? There is not an easy answer, but it involves the government and business in addressing the problem.

Politically, the problem is that it involves longer term measure – an area in which Australia has historically been poor. Most actions by governments are shorter term and the electorate often doesn't reward actions that may take a significant time to provide benefits.

Business has their role to play as well – utilising the latest technology, investing in R&D, general good management practices and other measures – but the government can certainly help by providing greater incentives in these areas and also entering into a dialogue with business to address productivity growth.

Unfortunately, there seems to be little discussion nationally on the issue and we are unlikely to see any significant rise in productivity and wages in the future unless by luck we have extremely favourable external factors fuelling the growth.

Garry Hardie
Publisher & Editor

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Work to start on the University of Newcastle's new home for innovation and creative endeavour

On 21 February Taylor Martin MLC joined University of Newcastle Vice Chancellor, Professor Alex Zelinsky, AO, to announce construction is set to begin on the first building within the University's Honeysuckle City Campus.

The construction contract for the \$25 million project has been awarded to Hansen Yuncken who will bring to life the University's latest development. The building will house the region's new Integrated Innovation Network (I2N) Hub and additional facilities for the expanding School of Creative Industries.

Mr Martin said the NSW Government was committed to boosting the Hunter region's digital research and technology capabilities through targeted infrastructure investment, as demonstrated by the \$4.8 million Restart NSW contribution to the I2N Hub as part of the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund.

"Newcastle and the Hunter region have a highly skilled workforce which supports a diverse range of industries. We are committed to growing that," Mr Martin said.

"The I2N Hub at Honeysuckle is an investment in the future of Newcastle as a city increasingly known for digital research and innovation. This Innovation Hub is going to boost business opportunities, and job growth for the region.

"By partnering with a leading educational provider like the University of Newcastle, this region can continue to attract strong business investment and innovative people," he said.

Hansen Yuncken, who have been awarded the building contract, have a strong reputation in delivering dynamic construction projects in the Hunter Region.

Their successful delivery of the University of Newcastle's iconic NUspace building testifies to their ability to make this first building at the University's Honeysuckle City Campus something special.



Artists Impression

Professor Zelinsky thanked Mr Martin for the NSW Government's investment, and for their partnership with the University and City of Newcastle to bring this next phase of the Hunter Innovation Project to life.

"The co-location of the Innovation Hub with the School of Creative Industries on our Honeysuckle City Campus will be dedicated space for students, academics, researchers and entrepreneurs to work alongside industry, technical specialists, business advisors and investors," Professor Zelinsky said.

"The University of Newcastle wants the whole community – our students, neighbours and regions to take advantage of the opportunities this building will present," he said.

The first building in the new Honeysuckle Precinct of the University's City Campus is due to be complete in mid-2021.



HANSEN YUNCKEN ARE **PROUD** TO BE THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE'S PREFERRED CONSTRUCTION COMPANY ON ANOTHER **WORLD-CLASS** EDUCATION FACILITY FOR THE NEWCASTLE COMMUNITY.

HANSEN YUNCKEN

Lead contractor appointed for Astra Aerolab

The creation of the Astra Aerolab defence and aerospace precinct took another significant step forward in February with Newcastle Airport appointing Daracon as lead contractor for the stage one civil works.

Newcastle Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock says the realisation of the globally significant hub will help position the region at the forefront of international innovation and high-end manufacturing.

"We've seen our region evolve quickly in recent years and we're confident Astra will be a catalyst for further growth and development into the future," he said.

"I'm confident this development will become the pre-eminent space for innovation in aviation, defence and aerospace-related manufacturing, maintenance, research and education in Australia.

"I'd like to congratulate prominent local firm Daracon Contractors on a successful tender application for this first stage of the Astra Aerolab development.

"As leaders on this project, they will manage a contract worth approximately \$13 million. We've additionally signed a number of other contractors, bringing our total commitment to approximately \$18 million to date.

"Stage one includes all the elements required to deliver on the promise of an uplifting experience for both workers and business. Including road pavements, sewer, water, lighting, CCTV, fencing, street furniture, signage, high quality landscaping and street art.

"We will also be ensuring this is a smart, sustainable site, including the installation of smart pole technology, which has

already been adopted by the City of Newcastle, water sensitive urban design and additional fibre optic links to allow connections to our defence neighbours at RAAF Williamtown.

"Wherever possible, construction material will be recycled.

Ultimately, we're aiming to achieve overall precinct sustainability accreditation with our design to create something truly remarkable.

"The \$19.8 million Astra Aerolab development is set to deliver 5,500 new jobs and greater global connectivity for the region," Dr Cock said.

Daracon Executive Manager David Mingay said, "we are very excited to have the opportunity to continue working with Newcastle Airport and commence the civil works for the Astra Aerolab Development."

"We are a Newcastle business, so it is great to be involved in a significant local project such as this. Astra Aerolab will be a great boost to the region, and another step in the ongoing success and growth of the airport," Mr Mingay said.

The NSW Government contributed \$11.8 million to the Astra Aerolab development under the Growing Local Economies program, established under the Restart NSW Fund.

NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro congratulated the Daracon Group on securing the contract to deliver the first tranche of the development.

Expected completion of the stage one works is scheduled for late 2020. The tender is based on a four-contractor panel that will run for three years with Daracon being the first panel member to secure work.

45 students receive Educational Scholarships



Through the support of Mentor Support Network and local businesses, scholarships were presented to 45 students from the lower Hunter, bringing the total number of students supported to 251 since 2008. Those 251 scholarships are valued at almost \$550,000.

The Network (MSN) was established to provide support to young people at risk of dropping out of the education system because of financial issues.

Chair of the voluntary organisation, Jon Chin, said that the 2020 scholarships were presented at a special function at the Newcastle Paceway on February 11.

"The presentation was witnessed by parents, school representatives and a range of agencies and sponsors whose generosity made these scholarships possible."

Mr Chin said most of the 251 students who had received scholarships had pursued their studies beyond what otherwise might have been the case.

"The scholarship provides funds for such things as computers, uniforms and other school related costs that otherwise could force these young people out of the system. It is always such a privilege to hear students talk about their ambitions and how the scholarships make those things possible," Mr Chin said.

Last year Emma Sneddon received a scholarship that not only assisted her through year 10 but will continue to support her through her final two years of schooling.

"I was able to buy a new laptop, senior school uniforms with the scholarship I received. It will also support me with any other financial situations I may encounter during my final years at school," Emma said.

The first scholarships were presented in 2008 to two Newcastle students. This year 17 students from Newcastle, 17 from Lake Macquarie, nine from Maitland and one each from Port Stephens and Cessnock were awarded scholarships.

Fernleigh Awabakal Shared Track

Lake Macquarie City Council will build a 3.5 km shared pathway linking the iconic Fernleigh Track with Blacksmiths Beach following announcement of a NSW Government grant supporting the landmark project.

Detailed design of the Fernleigh Awabakal Shared Track (FAST) will begin immediately, with construction on the southern section expected to get underway in the 2020-2021 financial year. The entire project, including elevated boardwalks skirting the picturesque Belmont Wetlands, could be finished in 2023.

Lake Macquarie Mayor Kay Fraser said the track would fill in a missing link between existing popular pathways in Lake Macquarie and Newcastle.

"The Fernleigh Awabakal Shared Track will create a 27 km continuous walking and cycling route stretching from Murrays Beach to Adamstown," Cr Fraser said.

"It will showcase our City, generate active leisure tourism and help promote healthy lifestyles in the local community."

The NSW Government will contribute \$7.4 million to the project through Round Two of its Regional Growth Environment and Tourism Fund. Council will contribute the remaining funds to ensure the track's completion. The total project cost is estimated to be approximately \$12 million.

Lake Macquarie City Council Deputy CEO Tony Farrell said the project had the backing of local MPs, the RMS, NRMA, Hunter Business Chamber, City of Newcastle, Bahtabah Local Aboriginal Land Council, the Newcastle Cycleways Movement, the Heart Foundation and other peak business and sporting groups.

The track will create the longest continuous footpath and cycleway in the Hunter Region, opening up potential for Lake Macquarie to host major cycling and other fitness events.

Construction will include multiple entry points, an amenities block and a series of public art installations featuring stories and themes depicting the local Awabakal people and their relationship with the environment.

Helipad approved at Trinity Point

The NSW Department of Planning has approved Johnson Property Group's application to install a helipad at its five-star luxury, \$388 million master planned community, Trinity Point. The helipad is expected to be operational within six months.

"We're very happy approval has been given – it will bring the development into line with all other Hunter Valley five-star resorts," said Johnson Property Group's chairman, Keith Johnson. "Trinity Point residents will now be able to reach Sydney Airport quickly and easily, which will add an extra level of appeal to the project for potential buyers."

The announcement came just as Johnson Property Group released the first 24 apartments in Trinity Point's new Polaris building located in the residential community's best position. Waterview and waterfront blocks have also been snapped up with 60% of the blocks sold at the estate already. Premium registered blocks are still available for future residents.





Alliance Labour Solutions founded in 2012 in the Hunter Valley has grown from strength to strength across Australia. Alliance has recently celebrated achieving an amazing milestone for its employees. Since 2018 alone Alliance has transitioned 80 of its hard working casual employees to full time employment with its valued clients operating in the mining sector across Australia.

Alliance Labour Solutions is active across a range of industries throughout Australia and is predominately focussed on the Pilbara Region in WA, Bowen Basin in QLD, South Australia and the NSW Hunter Valley.

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Regional support drives Newcastle Airport to another record

The Hunter, Northern NSW and Central Coast have once again thrown their support behind Newcastle Airport, with 1.284 million passengers travelling through the airport in the 2019 calendar year – a new record and a 1.5% increase on 2018.

Newcastle Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock said it was very encouraging to see year-on-year growth as the airport strives to connect its region to more destinations, both domestic and international.

"I think our recent growth is very much a reflection of our region," Dr Cock said.

"Newcastle Airport is part of a strong, vibrant and diverse regional economy with a real propensity to fly. It's also a great place to visit for those living interstate and overseas.

"As a result, we've seen airlines start to approach us recently with a view to connecting our region to new international destinations. That's a great sign for local people wishing to travel and fantastic for the visitor economy, which has done it tough in recent months.

"Our airport also offers a relatively stress-free environment, with fewer queues and a sense that your holiday or work trip can start a little earlier than what it might at a busy airport like Sydney.

"Importantly, we think there is a lot of potential growth yet to be realised. We have a bold vision for the airport, which includes improvements to both the runway and the terminal.

"This upgrade will unlock billions of dollars in economic potential and represents a once in a generation opportunity for a region with a greater GDP than Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory," Dr Cock said.

The record 2019 calendar year included the airport's busiest ever month in October, when 118,896 passengers passed through the airport.

Council and Hunter Water join forces for pioneering pathways program

Lake Macquarie City Council and Hunter Water have joined forces for a Hunter-first program aimed at providing better career pathways for university graduates.

The program's first intake includes four new graduate employees – two Communications and Engagement Officers and two Civil Engineers. Each will rotate between the two organisations, spending 12 months at one before transferring to the other to complete the two-year program.

"The hope is that these graduates will be able to incorporate knowledge and practices they have learnt into both our organisations," Lake Macquarie City Council Workforce Planning Coordinator Belinda Leck said.

"As two of the region's largest employers, we want to be industry leaders when it comes to innovation and job opportunities for the younger workforce.

"We're always looking for ways to attract and retain younger employees to stop the 'brain drain' away from our region to capital cities."

Hunter Water Head of People and Culture Ian Pike was equally excited about the new program.

"Employment is also an enabler of growth, and Hunter Water is proud to partner with Lake Macquarie Council to deliver employment opportunities for the next generation of professionals," Mr Pike said.

Throughout the program, graduates will collaborate with other program participants, sharing knowledge of each organisation's workplace practices.



Larger premises for chartered accountants

Palfreyman Chartered Accountants is a small business specialist located in the picturesque Wine Country region of Cessnock.

The Palfreyman team has recently secured larger premises in the former Kearsley Chamber's building on Vincent Street, Cessnock. The move comes after substantial growth in the last number of years, with an intention of continuing to support holistic service delivery to our local and National business communities. The new office, filled with extensive history from our region's past, boasts vibrant character perfectly suited to our positive service culture our clients know and trust.

In the lead up to the move, Palfreyman Chartered Accountants were honoured with a number of accolades. Their Principal, Simone Palfreyman, was named one of one hundred international "game changers" in the 2020 International Finance Monthly Game Changers Awards; while the Firm was awarded the "Best Specialist Small Business Accounting Firm – Australia" in the international Corporate Excellence Awards and the "Best Practice Operator – Australia" in the ACQ5 Country Awards 2020. The team were also winners and finalists in the 2019 30 under 30 Accounting Awards, bringing home the "Wellness Advocate of the Year" award.

Hunter United merger with IMB Bank

Chair of the locally based Hunter United Employees' Credit Union, Jann Gardner, says its members and the broader community will benefit from its merger with customer-owned IMB Bank.

On 5 March five members overwhelmingly (95%) voted for the merger at a special general meeting held at Hunter United's head office in Broadmeadow.

Ms Gardner says the merger will create more competition in the local banking sector, broaden Hunter United's offerings and expand its community support in the Hunter region.

She says merging with a strong, like-minded organisation in IMB, allows Hunter United to better meet the challenges of increased competition in the banking sector as well as meet the increasing costs of operating and responding to regulatory change.

"The merger will offer our members an expanded range of products and services while protecting our customer-owned way of banking," Ms Gardner says.

"We can bring the new banking services and channels, that we know our members want, more quickly and effectively," she says.

"Longer contact centre opening hours, more branches and ATMs, business banking, enhanced digital payments, and the removal of many account fees and transactional fees are just some of the benefits our members will receive."

IMB Bank chair Noel Cornish, says the two organisations are a great fit with similar history, values and strong relationships with local communities. Mr Cornish says that, like Hunter United, the Illawarra-based IMB has its history forged in steel.

"Together, we want to be the leading customer owned financial institution in NSW," Mr Cornish says.



"We look forward to expanding our community programs and investment, including our Community Foundation, in the Hunter region," he says.

Hunter United will continue to operate locally under its own brand from the merger date of April 1, 2020.

There will be no job losses as a result of this merger and staff entitlements will be preserved. The merger has received regulatory approval.

Hunter United has approximately 10,000 members, assets worth \$335 million and five local branches. Illawarra based IMB has more than 198,000 members, assets worth \$6 billion and 48 branches located in Sydney, the ACT, Illawarra and South Coast and a branch in Victoria.

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Cessnock Council committed to financial sustainability

Cessnock City Council is committed to continuous improvement and ensuring the best value for money for rate payers, with a number of projects progressing well under the Financial Sustainability Initiative.

The long running initiative is aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Council's operations through identifying projects that focus on four key objectives; being to reduce costs, increase revenues, improve value-for-money and strengthen Council's governance framework.

Since the start of the program in 2015 Council has made some huge savings.

Council's Director of Works and Infrastructure, Justin Fitzpatrick-Barr said this initiative has brought about significant changes in the way we operate, allowing Council to achieve more within existing budget allocations.

"Through this initiative Council reduced its annual NSW State Waste Levy liability at the Cessnock Waste Management Centre by \$2.4 million in the 2019 financial year. Council identified an opportunity to make operational changes that would increase recycling and divert material from landfill. This lowered the amount of waste going into landfill, all of which attracts the Waste Levy."

"This project has been a huge success, not only has it lowered the NSW State Waste Levy cost, it has lowered the local impact on our environment and afforded valuable employment opportunities"

Another highlight includes changing the way we manage our plant and fleet. After implementing findings following a review of an existing process Council has realised cost savings in the order of \$310,000 per annum in relation to the hiring of heavy plant and equipment. This project has also provided two new full time positions within Council.

A number of projects are currently being progressed under this initiative and Council looks forward to sharing the results with the community. The implementation of these projects is currently being managed and monitored through Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

CareFlight Launches New Patient Transport Vehicle

Patients from regional areas will have a safer ride to specialist health services with the launch of CareFlight's new Patient Transport Vehicle (PTV), following a \$128,000 grant from the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation.

Since 2018, CareFlight has been providing patient transport service to provide patients from regional areas across northern NSW access to tertiary health services that are not available regionally. The new vehicle also features CareFlight's first fully electric stretcher beds, providing more efficient and comfortable transport for patients with decreased mobility. The vehicle will mean 3,000 patients each year can reach specialist medical services at John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle that aren't available in their local community.

CareFlight CEO, Mick Frewen said the PTV will significantly improve access to health services for patients from regional areas in Northern NSW, without the added burden of lengthy travel times.

"We transport patients with all levels of need, including serious cardiovascular problems, obstetric complications and severe burns, as well as people injured in car, motorbike and farm vehicle accidents," Mick said.

"Often private or public transport isn't a viable option for people with serious medical requirements. Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation's generous support will make obtaining the best medical care more accessible for thousands of regional and rural people," he added.

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation Director, Jennifer Leslie said CareFlight's PTV aligns with the Foundation's objective to ensure people have access to the health and well-being services they need, regardless of their postcode.

The vehicle will provide the transport link between CareFlight's air ambulance planes and John Hunter Hospital. The vehicle will be based at CareFlight's Newcastle Airport facility.

A free online mentoring program

TAFE NSW will run the \$7 million Women in Business program. The program will give participants access to training topics such as creating a business plan, keeping your business cyber-safe and leveraging social media.

The program will connect participants with a range of resources and support services provided by the NSW Government. This includes advice from leading Australian entrepreneurs, events and workshops.

The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data has revealed more than a third of Australia's small businesses are headed by women, with 12.1% of the nation's 5.9 million female employees now their own boss.

Minister for Women Bronnie Taylor said the NSW Government wants to ensure that women-led businesses have the best possible opportunity to succeed.

"The Women in Business program will ensure entrepreneurial women across the state are supported, regardless of where they live," Mrs Taylor said.

"It also allows businesswomen to select the resources that best suit their needs, at a time that is convenient to them."

Register and find out more about the Women in Business program at www.tafensw.edu.au/womeninbusiness



Over \$1 million allocated to help Singleton bushfire recovery

The Singleton local government area is set to benefit from a \$1.225 million funding boost, with Council to roll out locally-led community and economic recovery initiatives in the wake of bushfires.

Singleton Council resolved to allocate grant funding from the National Bushfire Recovery Agency to a range of projects including infrastructure upgrades, programs to boost the visitor economy and business resilience, as well as ratepayer assistance subsidies.

Council's General Manager Jason Linnane said the funding boost would further enable Council to drive rapid, targeted recovery initiatives.

"We know that getting this grant funding on the ground is absolutely vital for our community's capacity to recover from these devastating bushfires," he said.

"That's why Singleton Council has decided on a course of action that will most benefit our community. This funding will dramatically increase Council's ability to deliver timely projects to support local business and industry recovery, community resilience and overall wellbeing."

Mr Linnane said a significant portion of the funding had been allocated to address the economic loss suffered by Singleton's tourism industry.

"Current predictions indicate the loss to the Hunter Valley wine and tourism sector will be approximately \$122 million for the period from November 2019 to June 2020 and could impact up to 670 jobs.

"Council has therefore allocated \$100,000 to the Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Alliance and a further \$50,000 each to the Broke Fordwich and Around Hermitage Associations towards multi-faceted marketing campaigns to rejuvenate the local visitor economy by letting people know that the Hunter Valley is open for business and ready to welcome tourists.

"Council is also seeking additional funding from the state government's Bushfire Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Program to further support the Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Alliance destination marketing program."

Council has also allocated funds towards community development programs, asset management and infrastructure renewal.

"A further \$125,000 has been directed towards social programs in partnership with local organisations to build community capacity and resilience, including community connect events and positive education programs in schools," Mr Linnane said.

"We are also addressing infrastructure issues to safeguard us in future fire events, including replacing the Payne's Crossing Bridge in partnership with our neighbours in Cessnock, and investigating the design for a replacement of the Putty Valley Road Bridge Culvert."

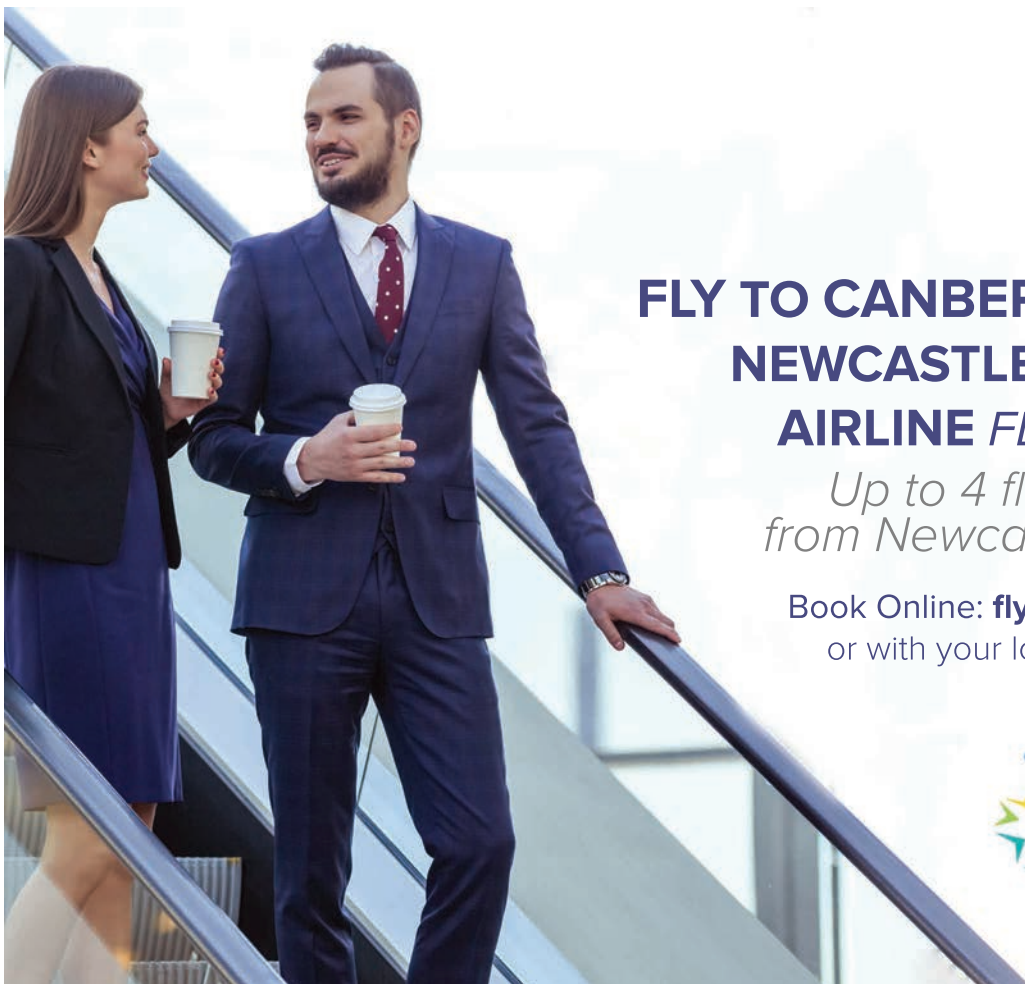
\$10 million Tourism Recovery package

The \$10 million Tourism Recovery package encourages more holiday destinations in NSW with the launch of its campaign, Now's The Time To Love NSW, promoting travellers to book a getaway.

The travel boost for NSW will help fire-affected businesses rebuild and promote their services, and fund new events to support local communities.

Minister for Jobs, Investment and Tourism Stuart Ayres said the campaign taps into the outpouring of public support from the bushfires and prolonged drought.

"Recovery will take time and the NSW Government is here for the long haul. This \$10 million will provide immediate help and set up long-term support for the industry to help businesses get back on their feet," Minister Ayres said.



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Lake Mac's stars celebrated

Flying ace Matt Hall has been named Lake Macquarie's Sports Star of the Year for his outstanding performance on the world stage.

The veteran pilot, who took out the Red Bull Air Race World Championship in September, was among the high achievers recognised for their excellence at Saturday night's 2020 Lake Mac Awards.

"My passion for aviation started here in Lake Macquarie, and now, all these years later, this award has made it all worthwhile to represent the City doing something I'm still passionate about," Hall said.

Lake Macquarie Mayor Kay Fraser said the awards highlighted the achievements, dedication and tireless work of people in the local community.

"The Lake Mac Awards demonstrate the breadth and depth of talent and passion in our City," Cr Fraser said.

"I want to congratulate not only this year's winners, but all finalists and nominees – and everyone else in our community who works behind the scenes to make it a better place."

This year's awards were expanded to include 11 categories, including two new awards recognising achievements in arts and creative production.

Fishing Point contemporary abstract and impressionist artist Tracy Thomas took out the Lake Mac Artist and Creator Award following ongoing success in Australia and overseas.

Thomas, a former winner of the International Emerging Artist Award whose work has featured on the side of a building in Dubai, said she was honoured to receive this latest accolade.

"I hope this award brings more awareness to arts in the community," Thomas said.

"I want to inspire other people, and especially young mums, because we really can achieve great things."

Rhonda Finlay, who has dedicated countless hours to a range of initiatives assisting Aboriginal welfare and education, as well as Wangi Lions Club, received the 2020 Ambassador Award.

Cr Fraser, who presented the award, noted the years of effort Ms Finlay had put into Lake Macquarie's community.

"What an incredible woman, and a very fitting ambassador for our City," Cr Fraser said.

Cerebral Palsy Alliance volunteer Amelia Coleman took out the Young Citizen of the Year Award for her work with children with and without disability.

Judges couldn't separate rising athletics star Ashlyn Blackstock and soccer prodigy Riley Pockett, with both sharing this year's Rising Sports Star Award.

"The fact we had joint winners in two categories this year really shows how difficult it was for the judging panel to make its decision," Cr Fraser said.

"Across the board, we were all impressed with the quality of entries and the stories behind each one."

Northern NSW Football CEO David Eland was among the other winners, with his work growing his sport and building its profile earning him the Sports Leader Award.

Road upgrades to begin on Honeysuckle Drive

The western end of Honeysuckle Drive will be under construction in March, as the Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC) commences works to straighten, rebuild and improve access to the precinct.

The works form part of HCCDC's \$55 million investment in infrastructure and public domain improvements across the western end of Honeysuckle.

HCCDC Acting Chief Executive Valentina Misevska said that the works were an important step in the long-term improvement of the Honeysuckle precinct and were necessary for the final staging of the area.

"Honeysuckle is changing, and we are working to help facilitate the final chapter of Honeysuckle's transformation by delivering a significant package of infrastructure works.

"Straightening Honeysuckle Drive and rebuilding Cottage Creek bridge will decrease the risk of future flooding as well as create better safety in the precinct," said Ms Misevska.

"As with any construction, it will create some localised disruption for vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist movements for a short period."

HCCDC is working to minimise disruption as much as possible by diverting traffic through the Throsby temporary car park in Honeysuckle west and shifting the dedicated pedestrian and cyclist path towards the harbour.

"Safety is our number one priority and we are focused on maintaining safe access during construction, which is likely to continue until the end of 2020," said Ms Misevska.

To accommodate the changes, HCCDC's temporary Throsby car park will be reconfigured over the coming weeks. New spaces are being created adjacent to Hannell Street, to offset the closure of some spaces in the eastern section of the carpark, resulting in a net loss of around 80 car parks across the Throsby temporary car park during the works.

"We will put signage up around the car park and during construction as necessary. We will also maintain up-to-date information on our website and Honeysuckle Facebook pages, and we encourage people to keep informed as much as possible."

As part of the significant infrastructure upgrades, HCCDC is also continuing to undertake seawall works along the Honeysuckle waterfront, which will ultimately underpin an attractive waterfront promenade.



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LET'S TALK WITH KRISTY HEDLEY

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

I am the Managing Director of the Hedweld Group of Companies and my main role is to oversee the business operations and strategic direction here at Hedweld.

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

My working career at Hedweld started when I was 15 years old. I asked my father, Ian Hedley if I could have \$50 to go to the Singleton Show and he told me that I would have to work for the money. So I did. I started getting off the school bus at Mount Thorley and working for an hour or two every afternoon. My usual jobs were filing, data entry and archiving (jobs that I am happy to say we no longer have to do due to modern technology and cloud storage.) I worked most school holidays in the business and when I left school, I decided to further my education at University. I completed a Bachelor of Business majoring in International Business and Information Systems at Newcastle University in 2012. When I left University, I applied for the Global Market Development position at Hedweld and I sat through a lengthy job interview with the GM and the Managing Director (who was my father). I think I got more questions thrown at me then any interview in the history of Hedweld but I did eventually get offered the position and that's where my full time career at Hedweld began. Over the years I have been involved in many parts of the business and have travelled extensively around the world to visit our agents, distributors, key customers and to work on developing new markets. I have really enjoyed the roles and teams I have been a part of, and I am now looking forward to my next challenge, taking on the role of Managing Director and leading Hedweld into a second generation family business.

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

I love to travel. If I have any leave available to me, I will be off exploring the world somewhere. I'm not a huge city person so most of my travels are based around nature and exploring the outdoors. Even when I'm not at work you're likely to find me outside. I enjoy hiking, taking the boat out for a wake surf or playing touch footy on a Monday night with my friends.

4. Where do you find inspiration?

My inspiration truly does come from my parents. My father has the most creative and innovative mind. He is constantly looking for a better way of doing things and no challenge is ever too big. In fact, if you tell him it can't be done, this gives him more reason and fight to find a solution and make it work. The passion he has, motivates and inspires me every day and truly makes me believe that anything is possible. My mum on the other hand is the most caring and generous person I know. She is always putting others first and is always there whenever anyone needs her. I have two amazing parents and I truly do look up to both of them.

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

Living a balanced lifestyle. At the time that I was told to make sure that I was living a balanced lifestyle I wasn't really sure what that meant because at the time I was too busy working. But after a while you start to burn out and I now see why it is so important to be healthy, fit, take the time to be with friends and family and most importantly have some 'me' time.



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

Most people don't know that I had my student pilots' licence and was flying solo before I had my car licence. I did Aviation as part of my HSC and was flying around the Hunter solo before I could even drive myself to the airport. And I am also actually very scared of heights but when I am behind the controls in a plane, I feel very comfortable and never feel afraid of how high I am. I unfortunately never finished my private pilots' licence due to work and study commitments, but it is something that I would like to pick back up and complete in the future.

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

This is a question that I am quite passionate about. I was born and bred here in the Hunter and I am an active member of my local community. Although I am far from anti-mining, I feel like we are too reliant on the coal industry in the Hunter. The global downturn had a huge impact on our community, jobs were lost, business was down and some businesses didn't even survive. It's not the first downturn the Hunter has experienced but it was one of the worst and I would like to see a united plan moving forward to encourage other industries into the Hunter so that we are not so reliant on a single industry. It's not about not supporting the mining industry, it's about being as supportive and inviting to other industries. The more diverse and resilient our local economy is, the better we will be able to pull through the hard times in the coal industry. And after all, like it or not, the coal one day will eventually dry up in the Hunter region and we need to be putting in plans now for our future.

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

Bulga Tavern hands down!

9. Do you have a favourite sport or team?

I am a huge DJR Team Penske fan. I love motor racing and enjoy going to the Newcastle 500 every year.



MONICA CLARE RECRUITMENT

Monica Clare Recruitment has welcomed **Jenny Newell** as Team Manager. Jenny is a Recruitment Specialist with over 15 years' experience in the Human Resources industry, covering both Generalist HR and Recruitment roles. She brings strong connections and local knowledge, having partnered closely with clients throughout the Hunter region over the past 10 years.



PROSPERITY GROUP

Prosperity has appointed **Raffi Tenenbaum** as Director of Taxation Services. Raffi has more than 20 years' experience in the tax profession across Big-4 firms, mid-tier accounting firms and the Australian Taxation Office. Raffi's expertise covers advising Australian and foreign businesses on taxation issues; business structuring and restructuring; mergers and acquisitions transactions; expanding business operations overseas and tax due diligence.



PKF

PKF has promoted **Kym Reilly** to Partner. Kym has been with PKF for 11 years, and over this time has been a constant bedrock of support for her team, clients and the partners. An outstanding auditor, in 2019, Kym spoke at the Hunter Business Development Forum about women in professional services and her journey to the top.



MCG QUANTITY SURVEYORS

Anthony Booth has joined MCG Quantity Surveyors as National Business Development Manager. His aim is to help develop, build and strengthen relationships with accountants, financial planners, mortgage brokers, conveyancers and real estate professionals ensuring that they have the best tools available to maximise clients deductions, educate and inform investors, increase customer service levels along with improving their own knowledge on the benefits of using a quantity surveyor.



HUMMINGBIRD ELECTRONICS

Hummingbird has appointed **Scott Montgomery** to the newly created role of Mining and Industrial Sales Manager. Scott was previously REDARC's Area Sales Manager for Western Australia. Scott will now be responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with customers across Australia. He will also be tasked with implementing strategic business plans and identifying opportunities in this sector. Scott is a qualified Auto Electrician with close to 25 years' experience working closely with various automotive distributors before commencing at REDARC.



PKF

Christina Manfre has been promoted to partner at PKF. Christina has developed an excellent rapport with clients, referrers and everyone at the firm. She is highly active within the National PKF Business Advisory Services Committee helping shape and mould the way PKF Australia delivers services to clients.



THE MUTUAL BANK

Maitland Mutual Ltd (The Mutual Bank) has appointed **Debbie Mirisch** to its Board of Directors. Debbie brings over 25 years of accounting, business and leadership experience to the role. She is the Owner/Director of Biz Synergy a local bookkeeping and internal accounting firm. With an extensive career in accounting and finance Debbie leads a team of accountants and bookkeepers at Biz Synergy in providing clients solutions to pain points. Debbie joins existing Board members Trevor Robinson, Bruce Arnott, Melinda Smith and Steve Meyn.



NEWCASTLE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation has announced the appointment of Newcastle Permanent CEO, **Bernadette Inglis** as a non-executive Director to its Board. Bernadette holds a Master of Business Administration, a Bachelor of Business degree and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She looks forward to connecting with grassroots organisations using her skills and experience to help enable the work of not-for-profits addressing disadvantage and marginalisation.



PKF

Baidy Laffan is now a Partner at PKF. Baidy, a local Novocastrian, has been trail blazing the franchise market with a new look at internal audit and underpaid wages. She has an impressive list of national and international clients, testament to her unique take on how to tackle the wages issue and her creativity, commitment and hard work that ensure she sees results. Baidy is passionate about diversity and inclusion and has helped create and Chair's the PKF Diversity and Inclusion Committee.



ALLIANCE LABOUR SOLUTIONS

Jessie Rimington joined Alliance in January 2020 to assist with WA allocation and admin needs. Jessie is able to fulfil any task that requires meticulous attention to detail effectively and efficiently. Through Jessie's determination, zeal and perseverance, she is proving to be a great asset to the Alliance team.

Employees behaving badly – Dismissal for derogatory comments

Brooke Murphy
Butlers Business Lawyers

Employers may consider dismissal in cases where employees make derogatory comments against customers or other employees. However, it is important that employers do not act too hastily and without proper consideration of the unfair dismissal provisions of the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth). To avoid liability for unfair dismissal from an employee entitled to this protection, an employer must ensure that they have a valid reason for a dismissal and afford the employee procedural fairness. Recent cases have considered fairness of terminating employees for derogatory comments and disrespectful conduct.

In the case of *Coffey v QBar Darwin Pty Ltd* [2017] FWC 4312, an employee was summarily dismissed for calling their supervisor a 'racist bitch' in front of another employee and customer. The Fair Work Commission found that this was not a valid reason for dismissal. Conduct that is merely unprofessional or inappropriate may not, on its own, be enough to warrant summary dismissal for misconduct.

In the case of *Gibbens v The Commonwealth of Australia* (Department of Home affairs) [2018] FWC 4150, an employee was dismissed for being discourteous, unprofessional and rude to customers, and making racist comments. During a 19 month period, four customers made complaints against the employee for disrespectful conduct. The employer did not warn the employee that further instances of inappropriate behaviour with customers could result in the termination of his employment. The Commission found that while there was a valid reason for the dismissal, the dismissal was unjust due to a lack of procedural fairness.

In the case of *Taylor v StarTrack Express T/A Star/Track* [2018] FWC 3909, an employee was dismissed for habitually using terms and phrases which were racist, degrading and disparaging towards their co-workers. When confronted about their behaviour by their employer, the employee tried to defend his behaviour as 'just comedy.' Following an investigation, the employer advised the employee that they had breached workplace policies and did not meet the standards of appropriate workplace behaviour. For these reasons the employee was dismissed. The Fair Work

Commission upheld the fairness of this dismissal. The commission found that the employer had a valid reason to dismiss the employee, and the employee was afforded procedural fairness.

What is 'fair' depends on a variety of circumstances. As can be seen in the cases above, employers may have varying levels of success in defending the dismissal of an employee for making derogatory statements. It seems that the Fair Work Commission are taking allegations of racism seriously. In the case discussed above involving an employee of StarTrack Express, the Commission stated that "a line is crossed when race or ethnicity is included in any communication with co-workers."

It is important that employers err of the side of caution and seek advice before seeking to dismiss an employee for making derogatory comments. Conducting an investigation can allow the employer to confirm the truth of the allegations, including the opportunity to seek feedback from other employees. The employee must be given an opportunity to respond and warned of the potential consequences of their behaviour appropriately. If dismissal is not appropriate, an employee can be placed on a documented performance management plan for a reasonable period of time.

It is important that the employer's response is proportionate. As can be seen in the cases above, a one-off comment may be treated differently to a repeated course of conduct. The employer should also consider the seriousness of the comments, and the effect these statements may have on other staff or customers.

For more information please contact Butlers at enquiries@butlers.net.au or call (02) 4929 7002.



Brooke Murphy works with a variety of individuals, professionals and small to medium businesses with a range of commercial transactions including sales of business, leasing, and shareholders agreements. She is passionate about obtaining the best possible results for clients, and understands the importance of practical, straightforward advice.



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New home approvals remain healthy

Latest ABS figures on new home building approvals indicate that activity across the Hunter continued to perform strongly in 2019, despite a dip from record numbers, reported the Housing Industry Association.

"In total 4,598 approvals were issued for new dwellings across the Hunter during 2019, a decrease of 7% from the decade high recorded in 2018," said Craig Jennion, HIA Hunter Executive Director.

"The performance of new home building approvals across detached new homes and multi-unit approvals both declined in 2019. Detached houses remains the mainstay of the local market although we are seeing more multi-unit developments entering the market. Detached house approvals in 2019 decreased by 10% compared to the previous year, while multi-unit approvals decreased by 2% over the same period.

"Despite the slight deterioration in new home approvals in 2019, it was a solid result considering the headwinds the industry faced. The combined effects of the Financial Services Royal Commission, tighter access to finance, a state and federal election

and falling house prices all weighed heavily on market confidence during the first half of 2019. It was promising to see confidence returning to the market later in the year.

"Much of the heavy lifting for the residential sector continues to occur in the Lower Hunter, with the local government areas of Newcastle, Maitland and Lake Macquarie continuing to be the top 3 locations for approvals, accounting for over 77% of total approvals. Maitland also took out the title of 'biggest mover' increasing their housing approvals by 182 dwellings over 2018.

"Pleasingly, large percentage increases in total dwelling approvals continued to occur in regional locations of the Hunter, notwithstanding off a low base. Gloucester was the strongest, up 71%, followed by Muswellbrook, up 25%, and Dungog, up 10%.

"Looking ahead, we are forecasting residential building activity to soften further in the short term before a gradual pick up in 2021. Pleasingly housing in the Hunter remains affordable for average households and market conditions look set to support continued demand for new homes locally in the near future," concluded Mr Jennion.

Total Dwellings	12 mths to: Dec-18	12 mths to: Dec-19	% change
Cessnock	676	541	-20%
Lake Macquarie	1,431	957	-33%
Maitland	914	1,096	20%
Newcastle	1,373	1,514	10%
Port Stephens	324	291	-10%
Dungog	40	44	10%
Singleton	90	45	-50%
Muswellbrook	9	15	67%
Scone	16	11	-31%
Gloucester	14	24	71%
Great Lakes	46	60	30%
	4,933	4,598	-7%



Mount View Grange first stage complete with strong interest from first home buyers

With construction now complete on the first 60 lots at Mount View Grange, Johnson Property Group is set to welcome new residents to the masterplanned community.

Alongside the completed 60 lots is an upgraded Abbotsford Bridge and the new, improved entry on Abbotsford Street designed to benefit both new residents and the larger community.

Overlooking the Brokenback Ranges in the heart of Wine Country, the 240 ha site north of Bellbird is being transformed into a picturesque, master-planned rural community. When complete, Mount View Grange will be home to around 1650 families and include a 3.11 ha town centre.

Over 75% of blocks have already been sold in Mount View Grange's first 5 stages, with new release Stage 6 blocks still available from 600 sqm to 769 sqm from \$159,888.

This much anticipated release offers premier blocks with expansive frontages located in a boutique corner that's highly

accessible to Bellbird and Cessnock Town Centres as well as Cessnock school.

The release will prove popular with first home buyers taking advantage of the federal government's new look 2020 First Home Buyers Grant, which allows approved applicants to take out a mortgage with a 5% deposit and avoid paying lenders mortgage insurance.

Price capped for homes up to \$450,000 in regional centres like Lake Macquarie, owner occupiers using the scheme to make purchasing their first home more affordable are guaranteed to get more for their investment at Mount View Grange.

Keith Johnson, Managing Director of Johnson Property Group added, "We have had a huge enquiry from first home buyers who thought they would never be able to own their own home and would be priced out of the market, but they have been able to access this high quality, yet entry level priced real estate at Mount View Grange."

Newcastle office market strong

The Property Council of Australia's latest Office Market Report shows that Newcastle is one of the strongest metro office markets in the country with an overall vacancy rate slightly decreasing to 7.2%.

The drop in vacancy was due to positive demand and withdrawals indicating Newcastle continues to be a strong, emerging regional office market.

"Newcastle has a strong office market with a growing population and local economic growth. Over the period measured, 11,900 sqm of space was added showing there is still a strong supply pipeline," said Property Council Hunter Regional Director Anita Hugo.

"With another 15,000 sqm in the pipeline for 2020 and another 8,200 sqm in 2021, we can expect a positive trajectory of growth in the Newcastle office market reinforcing a healthy local economy."

"More specifically, A Grade office space recorded a substantial vacancy decrease, which indicates that there is strong positive demand for quality office stock in the city, supporting further investment and growth of businesses across Newcastle."



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61-65 Denison Street (Suite 3)

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ALAN TONKS 0474 744 422

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WICKHAM



42 Union Street

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8 Garnett Road (Unit 2)

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Lease: \$29,500pa + OGs + GST

PAUL TILDEN 0425 302 772

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HAMILTON



79-81 Beaumont Street (Shop 5 & 6)

This premise is located on Hamilton's Iconic Eat Street amongst an established food scene, ideally suited to a restaurant or takeaway.

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CHANGES TO MODERN AWARD ANNUALISED WAGES

**Elizabeth Radley & Fiona Hancock
Moray & Agnew**

From 1 March 2020 employers who pay annualised salaries in accordance with modern award provisions need to ensure their arrangements comply with new model 'annualised wage arrangement' clauses.

These new clauses have replaced previous annualised salary provisions in numerous modern awards and further changes will be implemented in more modern awards at a later date.

Employer obligations

The model clauses expand employer obligations in relation to employee notification and record keeping, as well as wage reconciliation for employees paid a modern award annualised salary. Among other things, employers need to inform employees of the 'outer limit' of penalty rate hours and overtime hours they may work in a pay period before being entitled to further payment under the award.

Implementing the changes

Employers should:

- Review existing contractual annualised salary arrangements to ensure compliance with the new requirements and vary the terms of the arrangement where they do not comply
- Review and update employment contract templates to ensure compliance with the new requirements
- Ensure record keeping practices are in place which record breaks, start and finish times and hours of work performed

outside 'outer limits', and have these records acknowledged by the employee each pay or roster cycle

- Review annualised wages payable for award-covered salaried employees to ensure that employees are paid all entitlements owed to them, had their salary been calculated under the provisions of the relevant modern award.

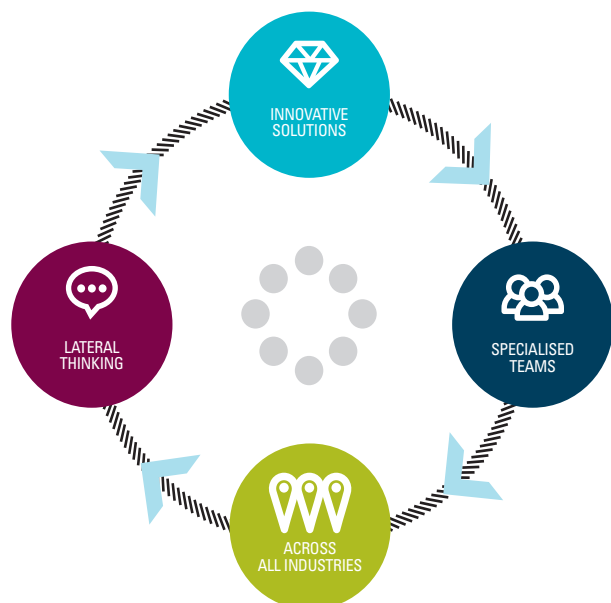


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Awards affected

The Fair Work Commission has released four different model clauses, with clauses 1 and 3 effective from 1 March 2020.

- **Model clause 1** affects awards that cover employees who work relatively stable hours:

- Banking, Finance and Insurance Award 2010
- Clerks – Private Sector Award 2010
- Contract Call Centres Award 2010
- Hydrocarbons Industry (Upstream) Award 2010
- Legal Services Award 2010
- Mining Industry Award 2010
- Oil Refining and Manufacturing Award 2010 (clerical employees only)
- Salt Industry Award 2010
- Telecommunications Services Award 2010
- Water Industry Award 2010
- Wool Storage, Sampling and Testing Award 2010.

- **Model clause 2** will apply to the Hospitality Award 2010 (managerial employees, commencing on a date to be confirmed).

- **Model clause 3** affects awards covering employees who work highly variable hours and/or significant ordinary hours of work that attract penalty rates:

- Broadcasting and Recorded Entertainment Award 2010
- Local Government Industry Award 2010
- Manufacturing and Associated Industries and Occupations Award 2010
- Oil Refining and Manufacturing Award 2010 (non-clerical employees)
- Pharmacy Industry Award 2010
- Rail Industry Award 2010
- Horticulture Award
- Pastoral Award 2010
- Health Professionals Award 2010 (supervisory and

managerial staff, commencing on a date yet to be confirmed).

- **Model clause 4** will apply to three awards that require the annualised wage to be a minimum percentage amount above the relevant base award weekly wage rate specified in the award:
 - Restaurant Industry Award 2010
 - Marine Towage Award 2010
 - Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2010 (non-managerial staff).

For further information please contact Elizabeth Radley, Partner on (02) 4911 5490 or email eradley@moray.com.au, or Fiona Hancock, Special Counsel on (02) 4911 5458 or email fhancock@moray.com.au



Elizabeth Radley



Fiona Hancock



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LEADING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Shirley Dalton

According to leadership expert, John Maxwell, "Leadership is about becoming the type of person others trust to take them where they want to go." It's not about forcing or persuading people to do what YOU want them to do. That's called bullying.

Here's an analogy to explain what I mean.

Imagine you're the captain of a ship and your next voyage is from Sydney to the Caribbean. You're responsible for recruiting the crew. You have to come up with potential reasons why crew members would want to join your ship.

Here are some common reasons:

1. The destination appeals to them.
2. They've sailed with the skipper before and trust the skipper.
3. They want a job.
4. No other ships are hiring at the moment.
5. Some of the crew members are their friends and mates and they enjoy sailing with them.
6. Joining this ship means a promotion.
7. They have the opportunity to learn.
8. They have free passage.
9. They can sail part way and disembark along the way.
10. It's a brand new ship on a maiden voyage, full of adventure and possibility.
11. They've only ever sailed on this ship and they feel comfortable with it and know the ship and how it operates, inside out.

What others can you think of?

Just like the crew, people join you and/or your organization for THEIR reasons NOT yours.

Thinking about your people, which of the reasons above apply to them?

If you want to become a great leader you must know yourself and your people. When you know them you can help them achieve what they want and in so doing, get what you want.

The best boss I ever had was Kip McGrath. Kip knew people. Within a very short time he worked out that I was ambitious and passionate about learning and developing myself. Kip was impressed with my ability and wanted to retain me for as long as he could, so he made me an offer I couldn't refuse.

He offered to train and mentor me over 3 years if I agreed to stay for 5. During that time my salary would almost triple as I achieved our agreed milestones. Win Win. The other amazing thing was that there was no contract. It was a handshake and a commitment. We both valued integrity and each other's word.

Working with thousands of people over the past 30+ years in various leadership roles, running my own business and graduating with degrees in Psychology and Education has enabled me to understand what it takes to become a successful leader of an efficient, productive and profitable organization, what I call the Leading Yourself and Leading Others Success Path (<http://bit.ly/LeaderSuccessPath>)

The three main areas to focus on are:

1. Developing People
2. Developing Processes
3. Developing Possibilities

Each of these can be further divided into 3 subsections:

1. Know Yourself, Know Others, People Skills
2. Smooth Operations, Role Clarity, Documented Procedures
3. Clear shared vision, Manifestation of Vision, Clearing Obstacles

To be a successful leader you need to master all 9 areas of the Leading Yourself and Leading Others Success Path, starting with Knowing Yourself.

One of the quickest ways to become aware of yourself and others is to complete a personality profile. Think of it like learning another language. If you were going overseas to a non-English speaking country, would you invest a little time learning some of the language and culture before you went? You wouldn't want to accidentally offend anyone, would you? Yet so few people invest any time learning the language of their own or others' profiles.

Great leaders know themselves, they know their people and they have developed great people and communication skills. They also create operations that run smoothly, have clear role descriptions and documented procedures. Lastly, they have a vision that they clearly share with their team and use techniques to ensure they manifest their vision and their goals and are vigilant in removing any obstacles that prevent them from manifesting their vision, including of course, limiting beliefs and poor mindset.

To find out where you are on the Leading Yourself and Leading Others Success Path go to <http://bit.ly/LeaderSuccessPath>.

For more information contact Shirley on 0402 281 146 or visit www.ShirleyDalton.com



Alignment and Executive Leadership Coach, **Shirley Dalton**, works with organisations and individuals who want to achieve their highest potential, to achieve extraordinary levels of clarity, communication, leadership, energy and innovation by tapping into the next generation of mindset and personal growth technologies. Shirley is also the Founder and Creator of the Leading Yourself and Leading Others Experience and online membership.

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Alex Brennan
ASR Recruitment

Recruiting talent in the modern, globalised economy is a difficult task. The advent of social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram have created more channels to connect with talent; the need to create sophisticated strategies to attract talent; and have delivered many more avenues for talent to source multiple, concurrent competing job offers.

In this complex environment, by utilising the best techniques, you are able to maximise your chances of securing the best talent available to you at any given time.

One of those techniques is to ensure that your recruiter, either internal or external, has an adequately extensive network extending to all of the various channels available to you. You should ask them about their talent sourcing strategies and expect that they will respond with a comprehensive methodology involving advertising, social media and most importantly, networking with existing clients and candidates to seek referrals, as the best talent is not often actively seeking work. They are gainfully employed and being well looked after by their current employer. A good recruiter will sell the opportunity and attract them away, at least for an initial interview. After all, what have they got to lose?

The other and arguably most important technique is to manage the recruitment process professionally, with speed and with purpose. Start by having a clearly defined job description and a clear understanding of exactly what you are trying to achieve by hiring this person. What are the technical and behavioural characteristics that will ensure their success in the role? How will you measure their success? How will you reward it?

Always respond quickly to any application, whether they are suitable or not, and treat each candidate with the dignity and respect that they deserve as a human being. If the candidate shows potential,



Alex Brennan is the Founder and Managing Director of ASR Recruitment. ASR is his fourth start-up recruitment business. He has qualifications in Business and Journalism from the University of Technology, Sydney, combined with a trade qualification as a Stonemason.

engage them. Once you feel confident that they might be successful, sell the opportunity to them. Pique their interest, because they will almost certainly be considering more than one opportunity.

Move candidates through the recruitment process quickly. Provide feedback promptly, give valid reasons for why they have missed out, or what they could have done better. This will ensure they speak positively about your business in future. Treat them poorly and they will not.

Once you have completed the process, be decisive. Make a decision quickly following final interviews and make an offer immediately. The more time that passes between a final interview and an offer, the greater the chance of losing them.

Recruitment is a simple process. People wish to be treated with respect and professionalism. Think of the times you have had a poor experience as a candidate. I'm certain the employers would have been slow to respond and poor communicators, who left you feeling anxious with a lot of questions left unanswered.

Don't be that kind of hiring manager. Do your preparation. Define your target. Execute the process quickly and purposefully. Treat each person you interact with well. Your team will grow faster and your reputation even faster than your team.

For further information please contact Alex on (02) 4063 2449 or via ab@asr.com.au



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EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM ALLOWS BUSINESSES TO TRIAL CANDIDATES BEFORE HIRING

The HVTC Skills Highway PaTH Industry Pilot Program (HVTC Skills Highway) is a unique opportunity for businesses to find, train and trial a potential candidate before giving them a job - all at no cost.

HVTC is collaborating with the Central Coast Community College to help more young people transition into employment across the Hunter Valley and Central Coast, with a focus on Engineering, Electrotechnology, Community Services and Business Services.

HVTC understands how difficult it can be to find and retain quality staff, so they will be working closely with JobActive providers to source a pool of potential candidates who are actively looking for career opportunities.

Skills Highway is delivered in three key phases: prepare, trial and hire.

The Program provide eligible participants with relevant skills training to prepare them for the workforce. It will then match each business to a suitable candidate for a work experience placement, where they will have the opportunity to trial them in the workplace before deciding to hire them.

Participating businesses will receive \$1,000 to help with the costs of the work placement and the business decides to hire them, they may be able to receive a \$10,000 wage subsidy for eligible participants.

Benefits for participating businesses include:

- **Hassle-free recruitment:** HVTC will find potential candidates for each business using their innovative and comprehensive recruitment tools
- **Customised training:** HVTC will provide tailored skills training that is relevant to each business and industry
- **Trial before hire:** Businesses can trial a potential employee to make sure they're a good fit for their business.

By investing in stronger training and employment pathways, the goal is to help more young people transition into long-term career opportunities while making it easier for businesses to find and keep the right person for the job.

The wider benefits of the program include:

- Upskilling participants to enable progression to fulltime employment and reducing the reliance on benefits
- Building confidence in participants and their families to achieve brighter futures
- Assisting employers in building a pipeline of skilled workers and maintaining higher retention rates of qualified staff, building workforces for the future
- Contributing to the closing of skills gaps in industries and our local communities
- Developing skills in participants to allow greater choice and contribution to the economy
- Growing local businesses



Funding has been provided by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment through the Youth Jobs PaTH Industry Pilot initiative.

HVTC Skills Highway PaTH Industry Pilot Program

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you find, train
and trial a potential
employee before
you hire
them

Register your
expression of
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<http://www.hvtc.com.au/Employers/skills-highway>

Funding has been provided by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment through the Youth Jobs PaTH Industry Pilot initiative.

Visit <https://www.employment.gov.au/youth-jobs-path> for more information



WHY THE HELL WOULD ANYONE WORK IN HR?!

Ty Brennock
Monica Claire Recruitment

This is a question I have both asked myself sometimes, working in a HR function, but also considered in dealings with clients and candidates alike, both in HR and dealing with HR. And I think I have come up with an answer.

Managing Human Resources is a vital and oft overlooked component of a successful business, especially when striving for success in the medium-to-long term. Sure, short wins can be made by even a disregard for the human capital in the workplace, but it certainly won't carry forward very far.

HR cop the heat from people not abiding to the "don't shoot the messenger" rule. An employee deals with HR when:

- they have a payroll issue (not paid overtime),
- they are being performance managed or an issue has arisen (cigarette breaks > actual work),
- they are dealing with an issue with another employee, be it a subordinate not performing or a co-worker conflict (boss bullies you because you didn't make out with her at the EOFY party),
- they are made redundant (recent merge with Chinese mining monster), and
- they are recruiting and see them as red-tape (internal notice, ad in the Herald and on SEEK, when you know a guy from your old work who would kill it).

These all create headache that we then labour over and whine about. So, I totally get the "Argh, bloody HR!" feels. But we also deal with HR when...

- we get a bonus,
- we want to reward the team,

- we have cool ideas for the well-being of the staff,
- we go on maternity leave and then transition back into the business,
- they review our great performance, and
- they recruit an awesome new addition to the dynamic and operation of the team.

What I'm saying is, HR's function isn't to be the messenger of bad news, or to be blamed for the bad news it really isn't the source of. HR's function is three-fold; to create a happy workforce, a productive workforce, and a fair workplace.

And that's why someone/I/you want to work in HR... the challenge. HR fight the good fight. These are professionals who are passionate about making sure there is a solid and healthy balance between great results on the faces of workers as well as on the balance sheets.

That's why the hell I'd work in HR.

For more information please contact Monica Clare Recruitment on (02) 4967 5236 or visit www.monicaclare.com.au/



Ty is a highly experienced recruitment specialist in the marketing, communications and sales industries.



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Westside achieves NSW rehabilitation first

Glencore's Westside open cut coal site in the Lower Hunter has received Government certification for a section of its rehabilitated mined land, a first for the State's coal industry under contemporary mine rehabilitation criteria.

The Government sign-off on 38 hectares of the rehabilitation equivalent to more than 60 football fields means the rehabilitation of these former mining areas has met all rehabilitation objectives and closure criteria set out by the Department of Planning and Environment, the Resources Regulator, and the Division of Resources and Geoscience.

The Westside open cut mine, near Wakefield on the north-western shores of Lake Macquarie, produced coal for domestic power generators between 1992 and 2012.

Westside Environment & Community Manager, Ben Clibborn, said the mine had maintained a very strong focus on progressive rehabilitation during its operations and set a high standard under rigorous criteria being applied to mine closure.

"The focus on progressive rehabilitation throughout the operational phase meant final rehabilitation of the mine was completed in April 2012, just two months after mining finished," Mr Clibborn said.

"The site has been returned to bushland consisting of native vegetation communities that are characteristic of the local environment and landform type.

"Our ongoing monitoring had shown that natural ecosystem functions were returning, with recent surveys identifying 69 native fauna species in the rehabilitation, including 11 threatened species.

"We're very pleased to have reached a point at which this area of rehabilitation has been accepted by Government as meeting completion criteria."

The certification for Westside follows a similar first for coal mine rehabilitation at Glencore's Newlands operations in Queensland's Bowen Basin.

Glencore's Land & Property Manager, Nigel Charnock, said further areas of rehabilitation at Westside were being prepared for sign-off assessment, as well as areas at Ulan Coal operations in the State's mid-west.

"Planning for rehabilitation at all Glencore open cut operations starts as early in the mine life as possible; with our contemporary mines this takes place before first coal is mined," he explained.

"Rehabilitation is then incorporated into daily mine plans and annual plans to ensure the work is adequately resourced, budgeted and delivered.

"These annual plans include targeted areas for disturbance, shaping and seeding for the budget year ahead, as well as forecasts for rehabilitation across the life of mine to minimise the area of rehabilitation required at the end of mining."

Mr Charnock said Glencore's coal operations across NSW and Queensland had again achieved more than 1000 ha of rehabilitation in 2019 with over 1300 ha being seeded, the fourth successive year this ambitious target has been realised.

"But it is not just about quantity. Our site rehabilitation has to be quality as well; that is, capable of meeting an agreed end land use, as is the case with Westside," he said.

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Hunter manufacturer to make and refurbish conveyor pulleys locally



Hunter businesses using belt conveyor systems now have a new local manufacturer and refurbisher of conveyor pulleys.

Brain Industries has launched its new range of custom designed conveyor pulleys including single and dual drive pulleys, non-drive pulleys and deadshaft pulleys.

Brain's managing director, Gillian Summers, said its Newcastle conveyor pulley manufacturing centre will benefit a range of industries.

Ms Summers said Brain's conveyor pulleys are suited to all applications including port facilities, underground coal mines, open cut mines, hard rock mines, coal loading facilities, overland conveyors, tunnelling projects, food and grain handling and quarries.

She said conveyor pulleys are an essential component of belt conveyor systems which is why selecting a quality, Australian made product is essential to ensure conveyor systems' performance and reliability.

"Brain has invested significantly in new equipment so that every engineering and testing activity can be carried out on site to reduce lead times and control quality," Ms Summers said.

Ms Summers said Brain meets the requirements of ISO 9001. Its pulley shells and end discs are made from certified steel plate. Welds are full penetration ultrasonically tested and magnetic particle tested to industry standards. All pulley weldments are thermally stress relieved.

"Our conveyor pulleys are made from high quality Australian materials which means they are built to last and operate in tough conditions," she said.

In a boost for the region's local manufacturing sector, the pulleys will be made at Brain's Newcastle (Carrington) engineering workshop. A pulley refurbishment service will also be based there.

"Refurbishing pulleys locally can save businesses significant time and money, extending the life of important infrastructure."

"Our refurbishment services include: complete pulley strip down and cleaning of parts; removal of old pulley lagging; non-destructive testing of the shaft and shell; re-machining; relagging; re-assembly as well as testing and certification."

Brain also manufactures a range of other conveyor products including pulley lagging and ceramic wear liners.

New partnership to build awareness of mining sector career opportunities

On Wednesday 12 February, Regional Development Australia (RDA) Hunter and NSW Minerals Council (NSWMC) launched their new partnership, PRIME (Pathways to Resource Industry and Mining Employment).

PRIME is a two-year partnership that will see NSWMC leverage RDA Hunter's strong reputation for implementing industry-skilling and workforce development initiatives to increase awareness of the NSW mining industry and its career opportunities.

The new collaboration will assist Hunter secondary school students better appreciate how science, maths and geography subject matter applies across the lifecycle of a mine, and the types of skills and jobs that are required to support a mining

operation. The project will include the implementation of mining-specific content, scenario-based learning activities and real-world problem solving in the classroom.

Stephen Galilee, CEO of the NSW Minerals Council said the organisation is very happy to be working with RDA Hunter to promote the breadth of mining industry career opportunities that exist in the Hunter.

"NSW's mining sector consistently innovates to implement leading edge technology, and international best-practice across its operations. Our aim in developing this project with RDA Hunter is to build a motivated future talent pool by encouraging interest in the diverse and interesting job opportunities available in the industry."

"Mining jobs are secure and rewarding and part of the positive contribution the industry makes to communities in the Hunter and beyond. We're looking forward to building on the work we already do in the region's schools to support young people develop the knowledge and skills needed for a sustained mining-industry career," Mr Galilee said.

According to its Chair, Mr John Turner, RDA Hunter works to support innovation-driven industry development and jobs growth in the Hunter and is pleased to support young people considering a mining industry career.

"The mining sector continues to be a large employer and important driver of economic growth in the Hunter region. We're delighted to be NSW Mineral Council's partner of choice for this new project. We have significant experience connecting Hunter schools with industry to deliver graduates with relevant industry knowledge and skills.

"We're looking forward to working with NSW Minerals Council to hone our model for the mining industry and helping them highlight the career opportunities that will continue to exist in the sector well into the future," Mr Turner said.

Careers Adviser and Learning Support Teacher at PRIME participating school All Saints' College Maitland, Kim Wickham, said of the partnership, "As teachers of young, enthusiastic and energetic learners we know there is no better teacher than 'real-world' life experience and we see great benefit in joining this mining industry partnership to bring that into our classrooms.

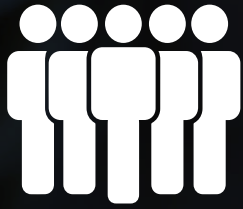
"We know mining is a sustainable employer offering a range of prosperous employment pathways for students with an interest in science, maths and geography. We are genuinely excited about this new project and keen to work with RDA Hunter again. Historically they have helped us develop strong relationships with industry which has enhanced our students' learning and contributed to them being educated citizens of the world."

This year the PRIME partnership will see 20 participating Hunter high schools receive 2 x Oculus VR sets and programs to give students a 'real' mining industry experience; lesson plans pertaining to the lifecycle of a mine; real-world industry challenges set by the mining industry for resolution by student teams; and teacher professional development sessions.



John Turner, Chair of RDA Hunter &
Stephen Galilee, CEO of the NSW Minerals Council

How do you feel about Port Waratah?



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1,030

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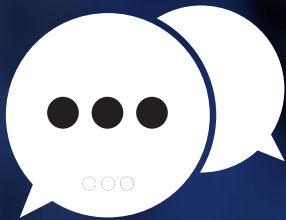


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NCIG to celebrate 10 Year Anniversary

2020 marks an important milestone in the history of Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group. It was ten years ago the organisation officially opened for operations and the foundations of excellence were established for NCIG.

The Ten Year Anniversary is a celebration in which NCIG hope to share with its staff, contractors and the community. Throughout 2020 they will hold a series of celebratory events which will include all the people – past and present - who have shaped NCIG into the organisation it is today.

The celebrations will coincide with the milestones of 2010, such as the first sacrificial coal delivered to site on 17 February, the first ship loaded on 23 March and the practical completion of construction in May.

Alfabs supporting Prostate Cancer Council

Alfabs Mining has dedicated another 10t Torque Titan to a special cause, the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, to raise awareness and encourage men to speak with health professionals about being tested.

The 'Titan' Underground Utility Vehicle is leading the market, with the introduction of new technology and logic.

There are dozens of different coloured ribbons representing each type of cancer. When we think of cancer ribbons, the most common one we think of is the Pink Breast Cancer Ribbon. Alfabs previous Titan RIZZO was painted pink.

Blue is the coloured ribbon representing Prostate Cancer. Alfabs decided on the name The Blue Heeler to collaborate the alignment with The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia

(PCFA) and also the healing time and process in which it takes for the men, women, children, families and friends whom are currently or have previously gone through prostate cancer.

In support, acknowledgment, alignment and awareness for everyone within The Alfabs workplace, families, friends, community, clientele and clientele workplaces, Alfabs is bringing everyone's attention to what prostate cancer is and what it can mean for those affected by Prostate Cancer.

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australian men. With 20,000 diagnoses and close to 3,300 deaths each year. Alfabs wants to encourage all men over 50 years, or 40 years if they have a family history of prostate cancer, to talk to their GP about testing for prostate cancer as part of the regular health check-up.



The Blue Heeler

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Mining pays the way for Australia

The mining industry is helping to build a stronger Australia by paying its fair share of tax.

The latest minerals industry tax survey, conducted by KPMG on behalf of the MCA, reveals the Australian mining industry has a tax take ratio of about 44%, well above the average for all other industries.

Through the substantial tax and royalties the industry pays, mining is building stronger communities and funding the teachers, nurses, police and infrastructure projects on which we all rely.

The survey results, released 10 March, are reconciled to the tax payment data released annually by the ATO. The most recent ATO release in December showed that the minerals industry had 14 entities in the top 30 taxpayers and those 14 entities paid more than \$11.33 billion of company tax, representing almost 22 per cent of the total tax paid by the 2200 large entities on the ATO report.

In addition to the large amounts of company income tax paid, the minerals industry pay significant amounts of royalties to State and Territory governments. In 2017-18 this was estimated to be \$12 billion.

The industry also pays large amounts of payroll tax, fringe benefits tax, land tax, licence fees and local government rates that support local communities and pay for the provision of essential services that benefit all Australians.

The survey demonstrates that notwithstanding volatile commodity prices over the last 7 years, the industry tax take has remained constantly around 44%. This is due, in part, to the fact that even in times of lower profitability, the mining industry contributes to public finances through payment of royalties levied on sales revenue rather than profit.

The mining sector is also the global leader in tax reporting and transparency and Australian mining companies are at the forefront of producing voluntary tax transparency reports. In addition, the industry has actively contributed to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and the Australian Voluntary Tax Transparency code.

Austar Mine Transitions to Care and Maintenance

The Austar mine will suspend production and transition to care and maintenance operations after 31 March 2020. The site is moving to care and maintenance as works within the current mining area reach completion.

Yancoal, the mine owner, said "Our people are at the centre of everything we do, and as production ceases at Austar we are committed to providing support and further career opportunities where possible for the 137 employees on site."

Prior to this decision being made, Yancoal undertook extended consultation with the unions and employees regarding future workforce arrangements. Approximately 44 employees will be retained at Austar to undertake ongoing care and maintenance works at the site.

Yancoal is also committed to providing redeployment opportunities where possible to other operations. In addition, Yancoal has offered voluntary redundancies to all employees.

Mining operations at Austar date back to 1916. In December 2004, Yancoal purchased 100% of the Southland Coal Mine, which consisted of the former Ellalong Pelton and Southland Collieries, and renamed the operation Austar. In 2019, Austar produced what was equivalent to around 3% of Yancoal's saleable coal production.

Yancoal said that it will continue to evaluate mining opportunities to re-commence production at Austar in the future.

Record investment in mining exploration good for NSW economy

Mining exploration in NSW is on the rise with a record level of total exploration spending in the December 2019 quarter.

According to the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, total exploration expenditure in NSW was up 24% from \$72.5 million in the September 2019 quarter to almost \$90 million in the December 2019 quarter - almost double the level for the same quarter in 2018.

"The exploration sector is critical to mining and the long term economic future of regional NSW. Our state has high quality deposits of a wide range of minerals including gold, copper, nickel, cobalt, silver, zinc, lead and coal, providing many opportunities for future jobs and investment," NSW Minerals Council CEO, Stephen Galilee said.

"Many of these minerals are essential for a technology-driven low emissions future, including for batteries, solar panels, wind turbines, electric vehicles, a wide range of medical uses and also for items we use every day like phones, laptops and almost all electrical equipment."

Over \$36 million of NSW exploration expenditure in the December 2019 quarter was for new mineral deposits, representing nearly 12% of Australia's total exploration spend for the period and above the NSW Government target of 9%.

"If we want our mining industry to continue to provide jobs and economic stability in these uncertain times we need the right government policies that support a growing mining and exploration sector in NSW," Mr Galilee said.

Underground blast design software released

Orica has released new blast design and modelling software for underground mining applications, SHOTPlus Underground.

Since its original launch, SHOTPlus has grown to be the mining industry's leading drill and blast software solution around the world. Following successful trials by Orica's technical services teams, the new SHOTPlus Underground blast design and modelling software is designed specifically for advanced underground blast design and complex blasting scenarios.

Orica Global Digital Products Senior Manager, Angelo Labriola, describes the new software, saying "The latest SHOTPlus Underground has been fully re-written and is now the premier blast design package for the underground mining sector."

"Designing, analysing and visualising in 3D has never been easier, ring to ring and hole to hole interactions and overall blast dynamics are at your fingertips, allowing users to optimise and maximise output, benefit and results."

Underground production blasting typically requires geometrically complex ring patterns. Optimising the explosives loading and initiation design and producing clear instructions to blasting crews requires a specialised software solution.

SHOTPlus Underground is designed to meet the discrete needs of underground mining applications, delivering an improved interactive 3D environment and enhanced visualisation as well as Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) tools to allow engineers to identify the most efficient blast design to ensure the required outcome. The new set of features and tools also allows for easy adjustment of blast designs and rapid comparison of different scenarios.



‘Cattle on the rehab land
are performing as well, if not
better, than the cattle on
the non-mined land.’



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IPC approves extension for Glendell Coal Mine

The NSW Independent Planning Commission has approved with conditions a modification to an existing development consent for Glendell Coal Mine to recover an additional 1.97 million tonnes of run-of-mine coal. Mt Owen Pty had sought approval to extend the Barrett Pit at its Glendell Coal Mine, 20 km northwest of Singleton.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's whole-of-government assessment report found the proposed modification would result in:

- a net increase in disturbance area of 4.3 hectares
- a net 0.4 hectare reduction in clearing of native vegetation
- disturbance of one artefact scatter site and partial disturbance of two other sites, and
- no additional noise and dust impacts at sensitive receivers.

The modification application came to the Commission for determination in December, 2019 because the Department received more than 25 public objections during exhibition. The Commission concluded that the application "is in the public interest" and "on balance the benefits outweigh the costs of the Application".

The Commission acknowledged the concerns raised by the community in relation to potential air quality impacts but ultimately found the Application would result in a reduction in terms of air quality impacts at nearby receivers compared to the currently approved operation.

The Commission also addressed concerns from Council in relation to mine closure and final land use, stating that "the development of a final land use strategy is essential in providing confidence to the community that mine closure is being adequately planned for throughout the life the mine".

The Commission agreed that the Applicant must propose a more detailed mine closure plan for its Glendell Mine. In relation to GHG emissions, the Commission noted Glencore's commitment to "an annual thermal coal production cap for its global operations and that coal produced under this Application will be included in that cap... (and) that Glencore has announced a target of reducing Glencore's greenhouse gas emissions intensity by 5% by 2020 compared to a 2016 baseline."

It added: "(T)he Commission is of the view that the minor extension of the Barrett Pit and extraction of an additional 1.97 Mt of ROM coal over an 8 month period will result in a minor increase in GHG emissions which are accounted within the reduction strategy Glencore has in place for its global GHG emissions."

The Commission also agreed with the Department's assessment that there will be "minimal impact" on Aboriginal cultural heritage as a result of the modification but amended the recommended conditions of consent to ensure any further artefact finds are considered by the Applicant in its Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

The Commission stated the conditions of consent imposed are designed to:

- prevent, minimise and/or offset adverse environmental impacts
- set standards and performance measures for acceptable environmental performance
- require regular monitoring and reporting
- provide for the on-going environmental management of the development.

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A wise old gentleman retired and purchased a modest home near a junior high school. He spent the first few weeks of his retirement in peace and contentment. Then a new school year began.

The very next afternoon three young boys, full of youthful, after-school enthusiasm, came down his street, beating merrily on every trash can they encountered. The crashing percussion continued day after day, until finally the wise old man decided it was time to take some action.

The next afternoon, he walked out to meet the young percussionists as they banged their way down the street.

Stopping them, he said, "You kids are a lot of fun. I like to see you express your exuberance like that. In fact, I used to do the same thing when I was your age. Will you do me a favour? I'll give you each a dollar if you'll promise to come around every day and do your thing."

The kids were elated and continued to do a bang-up job on the trash cans. After a few days, the old-timer greeted the kids again, but this time he had a sad smile on his face. "This recession's really putting a big dent in my income," he told them. "From now on, I'll only be able to pay you 50 cents to beat on the cans."

The noisemakers were obviously displeased, but they did accept his offer and continued their afternoon ruckus. A few days later, the retiree approached them again as they drummed their way down the street.

"Look," he said, "I haven't received my Social Security check yet, so I'm not going to be able to give you more than 25 cents. Will that be okay?"

"A lousy 25 cents?" the drum leader exclaimed. "If you think we're going to waste our time, beating these cans around for 25 cents, you're nuts! No way, mister. We quit!"

A young lad was going to an interview to become an apprentice blacksmith.

The Master Blacksmith asked, "Do you have any experience in shoeing horses?"

The young lad replied, "No, but I once told a donkey to go away..."

A guy was cutting with an acetylene torch when suddenly there is a break in the line. The acetylene starts shooting up his arm and a stray spark ignites it. His arm bursts into flame. He starts running around the shop waving his arm around while it's on fire until someone hits him with the fire extinguisher.

After the fire is out and the EMT's arrive, the police are there taking statements from the witnesses. When the officer finishes this, she pulls out her handcuffs, goes over to the burned guy on the ground, pushes the EMT out of the way, and arrests the burned guy.

When she brings the guy to the station, the chief asks her why she arrested this guy when he clearly needs medical attention. The officer responded by saying "He was waving a firearm in public."

After 10 years, the wife starts to think their kid looks strange so she decides to do a DNA test.

She finds out that the kid is actually from completely different parents.

Wife: "Honey, I have something very serious to tell you."

Husband: "What's up?"

Wife: "According to DNA test results, this is not our kid."

Husband: "Well you don't remember, do you?? When we were leaving the hospital, we noticed that our baby had spoiled his underwear. Then you said: Please go change the baby, I'll wait for you here." So I went inside, got a clean one and left the dirty one there."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Train people well enough so they can leave. Treat them well enough so they don't have to."

- Sir Richard Branson



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