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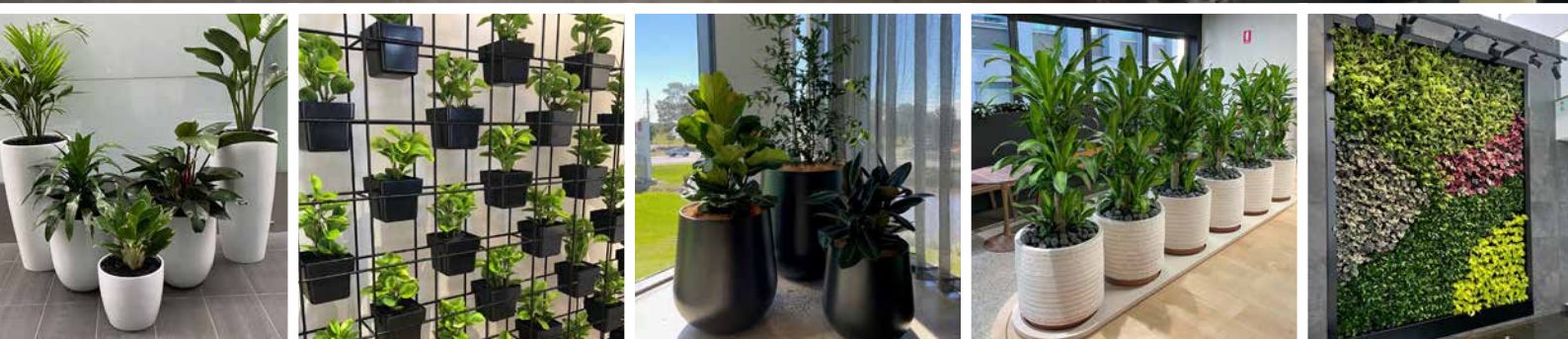


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# From the Editor



The release of the 2023 Intergenerational Report again highlights the necessity for major tax reform to face the challenges of coming decades.

The need for major tax reform has been blatantly obvious for many years but apart from GST successive Governments have been too scared to make major changes and have merely nibbled around the edges.

Major tax reform would involve removing taxes that

are inefficient in their collection or producing major disincentives for sectors of the economy. These would be compensated by increasing taxes that are efficient to collect and do not decrease economic incentives as much.

In the 17th century Jean-Baptiste Colbert said "The art of taxation consists of plucking the goose so as to obtain the most feathers with the least hissing."

Nearly 400 years later, this psychology is as valid as ever.

The problem with all change is that usually the focus is on perceived negatives rather than the positives, particularly when the positives may take some time to come to full fruition.

Successive governments have feared electoral backlash to make the tax reforms needed to allow the Australian economy reach its full potential.

One of the obvious changes would be to look at GST, looking at an increase and perhaps some of the exemptions. PwC Australia released a study in 2020 that increasing the GST rate to 12.5% and

removing exemptions would produce an additional \$40 billion a year in revenue. It is safe to assume that the figure in 2023 would be even higher.

Now like everyone, I would not like to pay additional GST but if this could result in lower direct taxes and the complete removal of some other taxes then the whole package could be attractive and could certainly help the economy.

But both major political parties continually say they will not even consider changes to GST for fear of the electoral fallout.

It would seem that the only way for major tax reform of this type would be if there was some consensus between the major parties of agreed areas of tax reform but this would seem highly unlikely in our adversarial political system.

Back to the 2023 Intergenerational Report which the Treasury says "Its analysis and projections of the key drivers of economic growth will help inform and improve public policy settings to better position Australia for the next 40 years."

The report considers five major forces affecting the coming decades: population aging; technological and digital transformation; climate change and the net zero transformation; rising demand for care and support services; and geopolitical risk and fragmentation.

In a short summary, the Report highlights major challenges to Government finances with lower economic growth, falling tax receipts and increased spending in several areas, particularly in the care economy.

It is clear to everyone that major tax reform will have to happen at some stage and that the earlier we act the better.

But who will make these changes when the major parties won't even properly discuss the topic?

**Garry Hardie**  
*Editor and Publisher*

## Planning a business FUNCTION?

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View the 2023-24 Hunter Business Function Guide for information on venues and supporting services.

**[www.hbrmag.com.au/2023-hunter-business-function-guide](http://www.hbrmag.com.au/2023-hunter-business-function-guide)**



## Holistic managed IT provider launched

Recently founded Managed IT services provider FordhamIT is bringing a new approach to traditional managed services. Focusing on client relationships, they believe building a strong rapport with businesses and their people is the key to providing quality IT support and solutions.

"We want to become a familiar face to our clients, and we do this through our regular site visits to get to know the team and any questions they may have. You really can't provide a quality service if you don't know the business or their team," said Jarrod Fordham, Director of FordhamIT.

"Through immersing ourselves in a client's business, we get to know how their team works, their day-to-day operations, and goals as a business.

"We want to ensure clients feel confident their IT asset is protected and ensure the best user experience possible."

Jarrod Fordham and his team founded FordhamIT in early 2023 to research and implement the best solutions for their clientele.

Although new to the scene, the Newcastle-based company is already helping locals decrease downtime due to their personalised approach to preventing issues.

"I always found that the better relationship I had with the client, the easier it was to work with them to improve their IT," Fordham says.

"If you don't build a relationship, then the client gets a different person every time and they have to explain themselves over and over to new people. It makes them avoid calling and they become less satisfied with the service."

FordhamIT doesn't just focus on the big picture, they also handle all aspects of support by collaborating closely with their clients. They help them plan for future infrastructure, systems, and software upgrades to keep ahead of the ever-changing IT landscape.



This future planning allows clients to manage cost and plan for growth and expansion, while limiting the risk of equipment failure.

"The goal is to allow clients to work uninterrupted and save them time. When teams do need support, a dedicated account manager will be available to solve issues and answer questions," Jarrod said.

"Our account managers learn your business inside and out, and are able to provide expert solutions based on this knowledge. There is no need to go through multiple levels of support, with FordhamIT you go straight to the top."

A solid foundation of cybersecurity is crucial to the operation of business, and FordhamIT work with their clients to establish the fundamentals. Once a baseline is set, they help clients continually improve and strengthen their security posture and reduce their threat surface.

While software and technical controls are essential, equally important is creating a culture of cybersecurity, as people are the first line of defence against cyber threats. With their clients in mind, FordhamIT ensures the clients they work with understand how to identify, stop and report threats, and foster "a culture of cybersecurity" in the workplace.

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## New direct flights between Narrabri and Newcastle

Local airline FlyPelican commenced a new direct service between Narrabri and Newcastle on 25 August. This new route reflects the airline's commitment to connecting regional communities and offers passengers a fast and convenient way to travel between the two destinations.

The Narrabri to Newcastle service will initially operate two times a week, providing essential connectivity for both business and leisure travellers.

FlyPelican's CEO Henry Murcott says there is strong demand for a service to connect essential workers.

"We're thrilled to introduce this new service, a direct reflection of the increasing demand and our dedication to serve regional communities. It will provide convenient travel for FIFO workers, the agricultural sector, and Hunter New England Health professionals.

"The introduction of this route allows greater opportunity for people in the west to fly to Newcastle Airport and connect seamlessly onward to other destinations."

Newcastle Airport's Executive General Manager of Aviation Business Development and Freight Andrew Warrender welcomed the new addition to FlyPelican's route map.

"Connecting Narrabri to Newcastle is a great example of how FlyPelican continues to keep regional communities connected.

"Residents of Narrabri can now enjoy swift access to Newcastle's vibrant culture, beautiful beaches, and thriving business scene. Similarly, Novocastrians can explore the unique offerings of Narrabri, including its rich agricultural heritage and scenic beauty."

FlyPelican will offer Narrabri passengers a seamless onward connection to Canberra and Sydney and will automatically check through luggage to the next aircraft.

## Bathers Way South Newcastle Beach project set for completion

Work will recommence on the upgrade of Bathers Way at South Newcastle Beach following the appointment of a new head contractor by City of Newcastle (CN). The Newcastle project was one of hundreds across New South Wales and Victoria impacted when building contractor Lloyd Group entered voluntary administration in March.

Executive Manager Project Management Office Robert Dudgeon said while the on-site performance and eventual departure of Lloyd Group put CN in a difficult position, the upgrade to Bathers Way will now be completed with the appointment of Daracon Group whose work on the nearby Newcastle Ocean Baths' upgrade has been delivered on time and on budget.

"City of Newcastle has been frustrated and disappointed by Lloyd."

Daracon has brought on additional staff to ensure both the Bathers Way upgrade and Newcastle Ocean Baths project are resourced appropriately and delivered successfully, with the Baths on track to re-open for swimming in Summer while South Newcastle is planned for completion in May.

The Bathers Way, South Newcastle Beach upgrade features a shared path from Shortland Esplanade to King Edward Park, improvements to parking, landscaping, lighting and accessibility, the installation of fitness equipment, shade, seating and viewing areas, as well as a new café/kiosk and accessible amenities.

The project also includes a \$1.6 million upgrade to the skate park with wheelchair-accessible skate bowl and terrain park, which will complement the advanced-level facilities at Empire Park and provide a unique drawcard to promote ongoing visitation and activation of this area.

Around \$8.6 million has been invested to date into this project, delivering new sea walls, expanded promenade and kiosk, as well as the preservation of the site's 115-year-old stone arches in consultation with the National Trust.

"The estimated cost for Daracon to complete the project is just under \$11.5 million, which reflects the increased cost of labour and materials experienced nationwide since Lloyd Group commenced on site in 2020, and follows the work Daracon have already delivered to address defective works left by Lloyd Group," Mr Dudgeon said.

"We know that the community are keen to see this project completed, as are we, and with Daracon already established on site, we look forward to seeing it progress as quickly as possible, with expectations of the lower promenade being re-opened prior to Christmas and the rest of the project to follow by May next year."

## Newcastle Airport to be a regional hub for maintaining fighter jets

The Federal Government will build an Aircraft Coating Facility at Newcastle Airport to maintain the stealth of Australia's fleet of F-35A Lightning II aircraft.

At Australia's first dedicated coating facility, a specialised paint will be applied to the aircraft to ensure they are virtually invisible to an adversary's radar. This work is vital for Australia's air combat capability.

The new facility is being established in partnership with BAE Systems Australia, which is responsible for the maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade activities for Australia's fleet of 63 F-35A aircraft, which is being expanded to 72.

Establishing the facility will create up to 25 new local ongoing jobs, which will be integral to the larger team of around 360 local workers that already sustain the F-35As at Newcastle Airport.

The design for the coating facility is due to be finalised by the end of this year, with construction expected to start around mid-2024. It is expected to cost more than \$100 million and involve more than 100 local jobs in the construction phase.

To date, only Australian F-35As have undergone maintenance by BAE at Newcastle Airport. The new coating facility will support the maintenance of other F-35A fleets operating in the Indo-Pacific, transforming Newcastle Airport into a future regional hub.

The sustainment and upgrades at Newcastle over the next 30 years will support up to 750 direct and indirect jobs across Australia. So far, more than 70 Australian companies have had contracts contributing to the F-35 program.

In addition to BAE Systems Australia, other companies in the Hunter which have contributed to this success include the Nupress Group and Varley Group.

## New Annual Festival returns to Newcastle

New Annual, the City of Newcastle's art, culture and creativity festival, will be returning 22 September - 1 October.

The vision of New Annual is to put Newcastle on the radar nationally and internationally, as a creative city where exciting, ambitious and accessible contemporary art and culture grows and thrives.

The comprehensive line up of dozens of free and ticketed events delivers a wide spectrum of top-quality entertainment for all to explore.

It will include photography, film, live music, theatre, acrobatics, street dance, food exploration, cultural workshops and more. Attendees can choose a genre or try something new, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

This year there is also a few unusual venues hosting events - a car park for Dance, a gin distillery for a first-time young playwright's play called Spewy and Christchurch Cathedral will host Circa a hauntingly beautiful exploration of what is possible within the human body.

**For the latest list of events at the New Annual Festival visit <https://www.newannual.com/explore/events>**



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Newcastle Offshore Wind



## Next generation, storage and subculture hub

A new concept in storage facilities is coming to Newcastle with the launch of The Bolthole - Islington. The two Newcastle property developers behind the new business venture are on a mission to convert under-utilised urban industrial facilities into luxurious subculture hotspots to meet the needs of local residents and business owners.

Julian Morton and Dave Hughes are planning to open their first Bolthole on a 2,000 sqm site in Milford Street Islington. A Development Application has been lodged with City of Newcastle to convert an existing mixed use industrial facility.

Mr Morton said The Bolthole concept has been eight years in the planning. He said the rapid gentrification and apartment living revolution in the inner city has created a need for such spaces. Pre-existing zoning presents an opportunity to maximise infill development sites.

"The Bolthole is designed for enthusiasts whose businesses or their valuable or sentimental objects, projects or passions have outgrown conventional spaces or can't be accommodated in their downsized living environment," Mr Morton said.

"It is also about creating a space that supports people's business and lifestyle interests as well as creating a community for like-minded people," he said.

The Bolthole - Islington will boast communal spaces including a 400 sqm rooftop lounge, complete with sauna, ice bath, bathrooms, library, BBQ, kitchen and sundeck. In a first for such facilities in Newcastle, there will be a vehicle detailing and wash bay as well as a multi storey, access controlled, car lift allowing people to drive up and into their units. An online concierge style service will allow owners and tenants to book the lounge, professional cleaning services, catering and more at the click of a button.

People will purchase rather than lease the units. The size of the units will be customised to buyers' needs. The facility will have a highly secure personalised security system to protect possessions and respect their privacy.

Subject to Council approval, he is looking to commence construction by early 2024.

Confident that demand for the units will be strong, Mr Morton and Mr Hughes are already planning a second Newcastle facility. They are also looking to take the business to other markets such as the Queensland's Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and to New Zealand.



## Hume Community Housing purchases multiple villas in East Maitland

Hume Community Housing has announced the purchase of seven villas in East Maitland. The sale represents an important move by the community housing provider to preserve social housing in a region experiencing one of the tightest rental markets in NSW.

The sale was a rare opportunity to purchase a full line of properties centrally located close to shops and amenities. The seven single-level, 2-bedroom attached villas were held by a private owner and head leased to Hume, who managed tenancy of the properties. The villas have provided long-term social housing to local families over many years.

According to Hume's CEO Brad Braithwaite, the decision to purchase was important in that it would retain desperately needed social housing stock, rather than see the properties lost to the private market.

"We want to help solve the housing crisis by contributing to the supply of affordable rental housing, particularly in the Hunter. Tonight, seven households are sleeping soundly in the knowledge they will retain their tenancies under Hume and will not be adding to the growing line of people waiting to secure a rental they can afford."

According to a recent Real Estate Institute of NSW's (REINSW) Vacancy Rate Survey, the Hunter region saw declines in the number of available residential rentals over June with the vacancy rate dropping by 0.3% to 2%. The problem is compounded with an estimated 35.2% of Maitland residents reported as experiencing rental stress. "It is a perfect storm, and with the ongoing cost-of-living pressures more families are approaching organisations like Hume in desperate need of housing support, that's why every property we can safeguard for social housing matters."

The villas, built in 1998, are earmarked to undergo a program of repair and maintenance. "These homes, along with another 400 plus homes in the Hunter region that Hume manages, are currently receiving upgrades. Our goal is to provide housing that is safe, secure and that people are proud to call home," said Braithwaite.

## Agreement reached for new Intercity fleet

The NSW Government has reached a vital agreement to get the full complement of New Intercity Fleet trains on the tracks in the shortest possible time.

Transport for NSW and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) have signed a deed on a final operating model for the new electric Mariyung trains, which will run on the Newcastle and Central Coast, Blue Mountains and South Coast Lines.

This deed aligns the New Intercity Fleet operating model with that of the Waratah fleet, and subject to approval by the Office of National Rail Safety Regulator, it will allow the new trains to enter passenger service in the most efficient way.

Following last year's agreement between government and unions to modify the fleet, Transport for NSW has now confirmed the final scope and detailed design of the modifications and submitted an order with RailConnect to deliver the changes.

Meanwhile, a process has begun to transition the operation of the Mariyung trains and the majority of intercity passenger services, crew and stations from NSW TrainLink to Sydney Trains.

This transition will take advantage of the scale within Sydney Trains to help improve access to resourcing, crew availability and training that supports getting the new trains into service as soon as possible.

The New Intercity Fleet will set a new standard of travel for commuters who make approximately 26 million journeys a year on the electrified intercity network. The improvements include wider, more spacious two-by-two seating with arm rests, tray tables, and high seat backs, charging ports for mobile devices, dedicated spaces for luggage, prams and bicycles, and modern heating and air conditioning.

They will also open up greater options for travel for people with disabilities and mobility issues with dedicated spaces for wheelchairs and accessible toilets.

A timeline for the introduction of the New Intercity Fleet will be finalised with operations expected to commence in 2024.



## Growth continues for Banlaw

Hunter-based success story Banlaw has experienced 50% growth across their business in just two years and are keen to continue this trajectory by adding business leader Kevin Young to their board of directors.

Banlaw CEO Bill Clifton says the success has come on the back of the acquisition of R&R Murphy which created a one-stop shop for managing resources across mining, transport and defence industries.

"Our target industries have traditionally been mining and rail, but our increased capability means we are able to diversify into port handling and commercial marine as well as the waste and recycling industries.

"We are innovators at our core and new industries means the opportunity to develop new products to help businesses work smarter which keeps our workforce engaged and motivated."

"Continued growth is also great news for local jobs. We have seen our staff increase by 19% in the last 12 months – we now have a team of 135 up from 113, with the biggest jump in our local operations from 105 to 124 staff."

To help support growth in the business, Banlaw has appointed experienced leader Kevin Young to their board.

"Kevin is a well-known name in both the Hunter community and beyond having led large organisations working in complex environments. His extensive experience spans strategic planning, corporate governance, regulatory relationships, safety, infrastructure, sustainability, community engagement, industrial relations, culture, and business transformation – all of which are essential to guide our business through this continued period of growth and innovation.

"Many will recall Kevin as the Managing Director of Hunter Water. From here he took the same role at Sydney Water and is currently the Deputy Chancellor of the University of Newcastle."



Kevin has been named four times by the Institution of Engineers Australia as one of the Top 100 most influential engineers in Australia.

This announcement follows the recent release of Banlaw's latest innovative product – HubMate – a tool that eliminates spills, dramatically reduces service times, and keeps equipment operators and maintenance teams safe.

"We design and create these products in-house and they are having a direct impact on the bottom line of our customers. The HubMate product is proving popular because it is making fuelling heavy machinery more efficient and safer to do, which is great news for both businesses and employees alike."



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[banlaw.com](https://banlaw.com)



## Maritime Autonomy and SME Collaboration Precinct

Work is underway to develop a masterplan for Thales Australia's Carrington site on the Newcastle foreshore to establish a sovereign Maritime Autonomy and SME Collaboration Precinct to support the Royal Australian Navy's (RAN) Mine Countermeasures and Military Survey Capability SEA1905-1 program, should Thales be selected - injecting over \$40 million in the local Hunter economy in the first five years, and creating over 100 new jobs.

For over 30 years, the Carrington site has been critical in supporting the RAN's Huon class MHC vessels and mine warfare capability. With the RAN's MHCs scheduled for gradual retirement from service in the future, the Carrington site development, supported by Thales Australia's DISP Level 3 classification, will establish an Australian eyes-only dedicated home for the development and deployment of a sovereign maritime autonomy capability, helping advance and accelerate the RAN's Mine Countermeasures and Military Survey Capability, SEA1905-1.

Building on Newcastle Harbour's distinguished, century-long maritime heritage, the new Maritime Autonomy and SME Collaboration Precinct will realise Thales's long-term commitment to supporting the RAN's maritime autonomy ambitions in the Hunter region – with Carrington the ideal location for the capability as it enables rapid access to both shallow and deep water for trial teams.

The Thales development at Carrington will also expand the company's world-leading technology and autonomous capability footprint, with Maritime Autonomy Centres already operating in both the UK and U.S – the Carrington development in Australia completing the capability triangle to enable the pooling of technology, expertise and industrial effort between the three countries.

The purpose-built facility will also support collaboration across research institutions, SME partners, and key industrial partners to establish future sovereign technology pathways for the development and integration of autonomous vessels in support of Australia's nuclear deterrence capability.

Troy Stephen, Vice President, Underwater Systems, Thales Australia and New Zealand said, "Newcastle, and the Hunter region, have been a stalwart of the RAN's mine countermeasure capability from the time of construction of the first Huon class MHC vessels by ADI in the nineties, through to today, with MHC maintenance and support continued to be carried out at Carrington.

"As Newcastle has evolved into a modern metropolis, the RAN's Mine Countermeasures and Military Survey Capability will also undergo rapid advancement and a significant technological step-change into autonomy under SEA1905-1. Carrington, the home of the MHC, is the ideal location to develop and deliver the next generation of sovereign mine warfare capability for the RAN, providing the ideal test and evaluation environment whilst generating significant investment in local SMEs and jobs in the region."



## Hunter Safety Awards calls on applications

The Hunter Safety Awards will be returning for its eighth year with applications for the 2024 awards officially open.

After another successful award ceremony held in 2023, the event returns to recognise businesses and individuals within the region who go above and beyond safety requirements to demonstrate best-practice and innovative approaches to WHS.

The importance of workplace health and safety in the Hunter Region has been amplified this year after the devastating news of a fatal workplace accident on the site of the John Hunter Hospital redevelopment in Newcastle.

Following an incident at the worksite adjacent to the hospital, emergency services were summoned when a 20-year-old man became trapped. NSW Ambulance paramedics promptly treated the man before transferring him to John Hunter Hospital in a critical condition, but unfortunately, he later succumbed to his injuries.

Founder of the Hunter Safety Awards, Sarah-Jane Dunford spoke about the accident and the importance of raising awareness.

"Accidents at the workplace are more common than we think, and sometimes result in horrific outcomes, including the recent incident at the new John Hunter Hospital redevelopment site.

"Our thoughts are with the man's family and friends and is a timely reminder as to why we're dedicated to safety and providing a platform for those who have made safety their number one priority," Sarah-Jane said.

Eligible local businesses and individuals are invited to submit their applications, demonstrating how they have integrated work, health, and safety into their core business practices.

Each finalist will automatically be considered for the prestigious WHS Business of the Year award, recognising ongoing commitment to safety in both their award applications and day-to-day operations. The Hunter Safety Awards welcomes back several sponsors, including AGL as the major sponsor for the seventh consecutive year.

AGL's General Manager of Liddell and Bayswater, Len McLachlan, expressed pride in supporting the best in safety within the Hunter region.

"Safety of our people, community, and customers is one of AGL's core values," Len McLachlan said.

"We are excited to celebrate those who are leading the way for a better future of work, health, and safety in the Hunter."

The Hunter Safety Awards offers 13 award categories, each recognising excellence in various aspects of WHS.

The event will be held on Friday 15 March 2024 at the Newcastle Exhibition Centre (NEX).

Submissions for the awards are now open, and all entries must be submitted by 5:00 pm on Monday 13 November 2023. The criteria can be viewed at <https://www.huntersafetyawards.com.au/awards/download-criteria>





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## Hunter Business leaders crowned

The region's leading businesses were crowned at the annual Business Hunter Awards celebration, held on 25 August. Bringing together a diverse assembly of 550 guests, the awards acknowledged individuals and organisations that have made a remarkable impact on the region's business landscape.

Business Hunter Acting CEO, Sheena Martin said the event highlighted the vital role businesses play in driving economic growth, innovation and other important outcomes for the region.

"The awards honour those who have redefined success through their exemplary contributions. It's clear from the finalists and winners showcased tonight that we are on an incredibly bright trajectory," said Ms Martin.

Nineteen winners were selected from a cohort of 130 finalists. Ms Martin said the awards had attracted a record number of entries, with applications up 30% on last year.

"It's reassuring that a growing number of businesses have success and achievement to share, despite the challenging environment many find themselves operating in, with pandemic after-effects and unfavourable economic conditions biting hard. It's indicative of the tremendous resilience, innovative spirit, and capacity for problem-solving that exists within the region," said Ms Martin.

The awards included a new category this year - Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion, with MGA Thermal claiming the inaugural trophy.

"In addition to celebration and recognition, our awards are a platform for thought leadership and capacity building. Adding the Diversity and Inclusion award this year leans heavily into that idea. MGA Thermal realised they needed to value Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion early on in their journey, and their awards success reflects that commitment," said Ms Martin.

The major award, Business of The Year, was awarded to Camplify who also took out the Excellence in International Business award and Camplify CEO Justin Hales was awarded Outstanding Business Leader.

"Camplify's rapid growth and international footprint is an exemplar for the region. Despite their growth, their HQ remains here, proving to others on a similar trajectory that you can scale and stay here," said Ms Martin.

The Hi-Vis Group was a double winner on the night, taking out both the Excellence in Large Business award and the Excellence in Innovation award.

Business Hunter President, Lauren Eyles presented the President's Award to Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service former CEO, Richard Jones OAM.

"The recent tragic accident in the Hunter Valley reminds us of the importance of this service, and the many lives that it touches. Under Richard's leadership, the service has grown from a small operation to a highly professional charity, delivering world class aero-medical and rescue services. It's fitting to recognise and celebrate his achievements to date," said Ms Eyles.

The full list of winners included:

**Hunter Water Love Water** - Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group

**Excellence in Micro Business** - LH Agenda

**Excellence in Small Business** - SAPHI

**Excellence in Large Business** - Hi-Vis Group

**Outstanding Community Organisation** - Singleton Neighbourhood Centre

**Excellence in International Business** - Camplify

**Outstanding Start-up** - Hey Zomi

**Excellence in Innovation** - Hi-Vis Group

**Excellence in Sustainability** - Imaginelle

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**Employer of Choice (under 20 employees)** - The Marketing GP  
**Employer of Choice (over 21 employees)** - Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator

**Outstanding Local Chamber** - Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry

**Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion** - MGA Thermal  
**Contribution to the Region** - PKF Sydney & Newcastle

**Outstanding Employee** - Dean Reid, Aussie Ark

**Kristen Keegan Young Business Leader** - Kiraley Martin, LMCC


**President's Award** - Richard Jones OAM, Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service

**Outstanding Business Leader** - Justin Hales, Camplify  
**Business of the Year** - Camplify


The Business Hunter Awards are delivered with support from major partner, the University of Newcastle, as well as AGL, CPA Australia, EDF Renewables, Enigma, Glencore, Hunter Water, IMB Bank, Newcastle Herald, Newcastle Permanent, NSW Minerals Council, Maxim Business Advisors, Port Authority of NSW, Port of Newcastle, Quarry Mining, Skildare, Spirit Super, Umwelt and Whiteley Corporation.



# BUSINESS HUNTER




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## Lockheed Martin Australia selected as Strategic Partner for AIR6500

Lockheed Martin has been selected by the Department of Defence as the strategic partner to steward AIR6500 Phase 1 (AIR6500-1).

AIR6500-1 will provide the Australian Defence Force (ADF) with a Joint Air Battle Management System (JABMS) that will form the ground-breaking architecture at the core of the ADF's future Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) capability. This first-of-its-kind system will provide greater situational awareness and defence against increasingly advanced air and missile threats, as well as give the ADF increased levels of interoperability with the United States and allied partners.

"We are honoured to be selected as the trusted strategic partner to lead and deliver this important sovereign capability, in partnership with Australian industry, to the Australian Defence Force," said Stephanie C. Hill, executive vice president, Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems.

"Australia's AIR6500-1 program is truly transformational. It will set the blueprint for future military Joint All-Domain Operations across the globe."

She added, "This critical capability will allow the ADF to leverage information from across all domains at greater speeds, with better accuracy and at a greater scale than it is capable of today."

Since 2015, Lockheed Martin Australia has been highly dedicated to supporting ADF's vision to transform into a fully integrated and IAMD capable force through AIR6500-1.

"Lockheed Martin is deeply committed to being the ADF's trusted, long-term sovereign partner for AIR6500-1. To deliver on this key strategic national endeavour, we are leveraging our vast experience delivering battle-proven Integrated Air and Missile Defence systems and harnessing the full might of Australian industry to build a sovereign 21st Century Security capability trusted to defend Australia and its national interests now and in the future," said Warren McDonald, chief executive, Lockheed Martin Australia and New Zealand.

"This approach will ensure Australian small to medium enterprises have 'box seats' in the global supply chain. The Integrated Air and Missile Defence sovereign technologies being created in Australia today will be exported to the world in the future – unlocking a \$83 billion export market for Australia's defence industry."

Lockheed Martin Australia has advanced a sovereign AIR6500-1 system solution that has been built from the ground up in Australia by Australians to safeguard Australia's national security. To-date, Lockheed Martin Australia has:

- Validated more than 130 Australian small to medium enterprises as potential partners.
- Awarded contracts to more than 10 leading-edge companies such as Leidos Australia, Consunet, Consilium, C4I, Silentium, Penten, Lucid Consulting Engineering, and engaged with prime contractors, Raytheon and Boeing, during the risk reduction phase to develop an agile, integrated AIR6500 solution.
- Committed AUD\$74M to establish the nation's future IAMD ecosystem to accelerate collaboration between academia, industry, Defence, and allied partners on IAMD capabilities. The IAMD ecosystem is expected to create more than 400 direct and 1,000 indirect local jobs.
- Invested over AUD\$100M into AIR6500.
- Grown its sovereign workforce to over 200 Australian staff now dedicated to AIR6500.
- Invested over AUD\$10M to upgrade its Endeavour Centre to engage, explore, test, design and problem solve together with the ADF and industry through innovation, war gaming, exercises and more.

McDonald added, "We recognise a team approach is vital to the success of AIR6500-1 in building a sovereign Australian IAMD

capability, therefore moving forward on program execution the majority of the program workshare will be allocated across Australian industry."

## Ampcontrol launches new training centre

Ampcontrol has officially launched the Ampcontrol Training Centre in Tomago to showcase commitment to developing the skills and competencies of our people as we lead the global energy revolution.

The Ampcontrol Training Centre is a dedicated training environment at the Corporate Head Office which simulates the operation of our leading technological products within a controlled environment. It signifies the largest single investment in training infrastructure to support capability development within the Ampcontrol workforce and adapt to changing needs.

"Our people are our biggest asset. When we looked at what skills were needed in the new world of renewable energy, we found the biggest need was to adapt existing skills. With the launch of the Ampcontrol Training Centre, we can grow our own and ensure our people develop the skills they need for us to meet market needs," said Rod Henderson, Ampcontrol Managing Director & CEO.

"The Training Centre is an investment in our people. We want to help and support all our customers to decarbonise so we can make global net zero a reality. One of the ways we can do this is through future-proofing our workforce through professional development," said Mr Henderson.

The equipment within the Ampcontrol Training Centre has been set up to represent an operating model of products. People can see how these products work and to fault find, test, and obtain additional knowledge on the products, allowing Ampcontrol to remain competitive in the market.

The 2024 Ampcontrol Apprenticeship intake has recently closed with a record number of applications and placements across New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia. The Training Centre will be key in providing hands-on training opportunities for our apprentices and trainees.

"In today's rapidly changing world, it's more important than ever to have a workforce that is at the forefront on the latest skills and knowledge. The capabilities industry needs most have evolved, but methods of building those skills has not. We are focusing on developing our people through sustaining skills and linking learning to business performance," said Leigh Stefanszyn, Ampcontrol Executive General Manager – People & Engagement.

"We see this facility as an opportunity for us to offer more pathways to our people, attract the next generation of innovators and creators, and continue to provide long term career progression for our people. This positions Ampcontrol to lead the global energy revolution," said Ms. Stefanszyn.





# COMING EVENTS.....

**19 September 2023, 7.15 am – 8:45 am**

**nfp connect**

**September Breakfast**

Venue: Soul Hub Newcastle

<https://www.nfpconnect.com.au/event/2023-sept-breakfast/>

**22 September 2023, 5:30 pm – 9:30 pm**

**Newcastle Business Club**

**90th Celebration 2023**

Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club

Cost: \$140 - \$160

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

**27 September 2023, 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm**

**PSWIB**

**Port Stephens Women in Business Networking Event**

Sunset & Vine

<https://www.pswib.com.au/events#!event/2023/9/27/port-stephens-women-in-business-networking-event>

**10 October, 14 November &**

**5 December 2023, 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm**

**Newcastle Business Club**

Newcastle Business Club Luncheon

Venue: Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club

Cost: \$75 - \$85

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

**12 October 2023, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm**

**Business Hunter**

**Business Hunter Innovation Series**

Venue: Fort Scratchley

[www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-innovation-lunch-series](http://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-innovation-lunch-series)

**13 October 2023, 12.30 pm – 4:00 pm**

**HMRI**

**Lunch, Learn and Leadership Luncheon**

Venue: Earp Distilling Co

Cost: \$195

<https://www.hmri.org.au/events/lunch-learn-and-leadership>

**20 October 2023**

**HMA, Inc**

**2023 Hunter Manufacturing Awards**

(applications close 18 August)

Venue: NEX

[www.hma.org.au](http://www.hma.org.au)

**20 October 8:30 am – 21 October 2023 4:00 pm**

**ActionCOACH and BGB**

**Business Excellence Summit**

Venue: Chateau Elan at The Vintage Hunter Valley

Cost: \$952.22

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/business-excellence-summit-tickets-653629793307>

**21 October 2023, 6:00 pm – 11:00 pm**

**HIA**

**HIA – CSR Hunter Housing and Kitchen & Bathroom Awards**

Venue: Nex

Cost: Members \$230, Non Members \$460

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/housing-awards-hunter-nsw/2023/hia-housing-awards-newcastle-oct21>

**24 October 2023, 7.10 am – 8:45 am**

**nfp connect**

**October Breakfast**

Venue: Soul Hub Newcastle

<https://www.nfpconnect.com.au/event/2023-oct-breakfast/>

**27 October 2023, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm**

**Business Hunter**

**Business Hunter Infrastructure Lunch Series**

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

**3 November 2023, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm**

**Business Hunter**

**The Business Hunter Energy & Resources Lunch**

[www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-mining-lunch-series](http://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-mining-lunch-series)

**21 November 2023, 7.10 am – 8:45 am**

**nfp connect**

**November Breakfast**

Venue: Soul Hub Newcastle

<https://www.nfpconnect.com.au/event/2023-nov-breakfast/>

**5 December 2023, 10:30 am – 4:30 pm**

**Newcastle Business Club**

**2023 AGM**

Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club

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

## ARE YOU ORGANISING A COMING BUSINESS EVENT?

We would be pleased to receive basic information as above for consideration for inclusion in a coming issue of **HBR**. Advertising opportunities in **HBR** and the **HBR** email newsletter are also available. Please email [garry@HBRmag.com.au](mailto:garry@HBRmag.com.au)



#### WEBBER ARCHITECTS

Webber Architects has announced the appointment of Associate Director, **Kristine Piggford**. Kristine is an Interior Designer with over 20 years' national and international experience delivering projects from concept to handover across a variety of sectors and in multi-stakeholder environments. Kristine is currently leading the Interiors for Residential, Commercial, Hospitality, and Education projects at Webber.



#### PKF

**Chris Weatherall** has been promoted to Executive Director/Partner at PKF Sydney and Newcastle. Since joining the Corporate Finance team at PKF in 2019 as a Senior Analyst, Chris has consistently showcased his outstanding expertise and dedication. His substantial contributions to mergers and acquisitions, and capital raising deals have played a pivotal role in steering the team towards success, making him an invaluable asset to the firm.



#### PKF

PKF Sydney and Newcastle has promoted **Greg Grant-Smith** to the position of Executive Director/Partner. The promotion is a testament to his dedication and commitment to consistently achieving remarkable outcomes for both the Corporate Finance team and the broader firm. Commencing his journey with PKF in 2018 as an Associate, Greg has effectively engaged in an array of mergers and acquisitions, and capital raising transactions, showcasing his exceptional proficiency in generating outstanding results.



#### BANLAW

Banlaw has appointed **Kevin Young** to their board. His extensive experience spans strategic planning, corporate governance, regulatory relationships, safety, infrastructure, sustainability, community engagement, industrial relations, culture, and business. Many will recall Kevin as the Managing Director of Hunter Water. From there he took the same role at Sydney Water and is currently the Deputy Chancellor of the University of Newcastle. Kevin has been named four times by the Institution of Engineers Australia as one of the Top 100 most influential engineers in Australia.

## LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR PEOPLE!

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

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





## Reimagined Hunter festival an incubator for innovators

The Hunter Innovation Festival has announced a new-look lineup of events for its 2023 program, with the previous one-day format now extending beyond Newcastle and covering an exciting three-week program.

The festival will include an Innovation Roadshow, covering Muswellbrook, Singleton, Port Stephens, Maitland and Lake Macquarie from October 9 to 13, a one-day Conference and Exhibition in Newcastle on October 19, and an Action Summit to develop an actionable project plan with measurable outcomes on October 27.

Hunter Innovation Festival Chair, Alex Brennan, said it was important the festival showcases the talents of the entire region, not just in Newcastle.

"We have people right throughout the Hunter and across all industries – from manufacturing and mining to aerospace and agriculture – making brilliant regenerative changes.

"A lot of the time they don't even realise how innovative they are until an opportunity like the Hunter Innovation Festival comes along and they have a moment to reflect and listen to their peers.

"The festival aims to inspire businesses, innovators, and investors, sparking conversations and facilitating collaborations that lead to innovative outcomes for the region. Ultimately, we want the Hunter to be recognised as a knowledge sharing economy inspiring new age ideas and inspiring productivity," Mr Brennan said.

The Festival launch in August was aptly held in front of a Port of Newcastle electric vehicle and one of two hybrid mobile harbour cranes, the first of their type in Australia.

"Port of Newcastle is proud to be the platinum sponsor of this year's Hunter Innovation Festival. It's the people, and the innovative and vibrant culture we have in the Hunter region that will drive the success of exciting projects like our clean energy precinct, deepwater container terminal and offshore wind. We are really excited to be part of an event that brings those people together so that we collaborate to create a thriving Hunter community," said Port of Newcastle's Chief Commercial Officer, Simon Byrnes.

Other sponsors include: Gold Sponsors Out of the Square, the University of Newcastle and City of Newcastle; Silver Sponsors AGL, ICT and Phillips Ormonde Fitzpatrick; and Bronze Sponsors Dantia, Yokogawa, Hall & Willcox, Hunter Water, Ampcontrol, AusIndustry, Robotic Systems and Newy Tech People.

The one-day conference and exhibition at Newcastle City Hall on October 19 will feature a line-up of presenters and exhibitors from government and industry, with topics ranging from attracting and retaining talent, transitioning to renewable energy, and using technology and innovation to solve global and local issues.

Australian business and finance leader and Executive Chairman of Yellow Brick Road Home Loans Mark Bouris AM, NSW Modern Manufacturing Commissioner Lisa Emerson, and 2021 Newcastle Citizen of the Year and 2023 NAIDOC Person of the Year, Professor Kelvin Kong, will lead the keynote sections of the conference, each addressing topics that are certain to spark discussion and collaboration.

Hunter Innovation Festival Chair Alex Brennan says the festival is thrilled to bring together three such outstanding people who have each accomplished incredible personal and professional achievements across diverse sectors.

"We're excited to have such a high calibre of speakers headline this year's event. Mark Bouris AM has been at the forefront of Australian entrepreneurship for decades having established Australia's second largest non-bank mortgage lender Wizard Home Loans, while Lisa Emerson is the first ever Modern Manufacturing Commissioner for NSW and Australia. We're also thrilled to have Professor Kelvin Kong attend. He is no doubt one of the Hunter region's most outstanding individuals who will bring a wealth of insight into the future of medical research in our region and across the nation more broadly," Mr Brennan said.

Mark Bouris AM said he is excited innovation to cover topics ranging from leadership, success and resilience.

"The growth of the Hunter region is clear, as one of the country's largest regional economies. Within this, the innovation and development of complex industries, such as medical research, technology, and education, all contribute to the communities continued growth. It will be interesting to hear first-hand about this development and what factors have attributed to these advancements, whilst looking ahead to the future of the region.

"The Hunter Innovation Festival presents some amazing opportunities to learn about new emerging technologies and their effect on our commercial landscape and relevant industries, and it is also an opportunity to showcase the amazing level of innovation within the region. On top of this, I am a serial learner, and love learning about new innovations and technological advancements, and it is especially interesting to see this in a regional community," Mr Bouris said.

Professor Kong will be discussing the field of healthcare and how it is experiencing a transformative shift through continuous innovation, and the profound impact this innovation has on health - spanning from advanced medical technologies and treatments to novel healthcare delivery models.

"I'm looking forward to discussing the synergy between technology and medicine, and how breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, telemedicine, genomics, and medical devices are enhancing diagnostic accuracy, personalising treatment plans, and improving patient outcomes," Mr Kong said.

Hunter iF will announce the full conference schedule imminently, featuring speakers from Hunter based companies who are leading the way in the technology, renewables, manufacturing and innovation space.

"Innovation isn't just about creating new things, it's about applying what you have learnt in different ways to achieve different outcomes than you have before. We have put together a diverse and engaging line up of speakers that will inspire, challenge and motivate the crowd to do just that," Mr Brennan said.

**For the latest information and tickets for the Hunter Innovation Festival visit <https://hunterinnovationfestival.org/>**

*Hunter Innovation Festival keynote speakers Mark Bouris, Professor Kelvin Kong and Lisa Emerson*



## DA consent for first two buildings at Astra Aerolab

Just a month after Prime Minister Anthony Albanese turned the first sod on Newcastle Airport's \$110 million terminal expansion, the airport has marked another major milestone with the planning approval for development applications (DA) of the first two building projects on Astra Aerolab.

Two multi-tenanted buildings, a hybrid office/industrial office and a central hub office, designed to accommodate SMEs, startups and education and training facilities will be constructed with works likely commencing in early 2024. Zone security is incorporated into base building specification for both projects allowing for zone 4 security if designed by the end users.

The milestone follows closely on the heels of the Federal Government's commitment to invest \$100 million in partnership with BAE Systems Australia at Williamtown on Astra Aerolab, showing a firm statement of confidence in the Hunter Region and the Precinct.

Newcastle Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock said the vision for Astra Aerolab is to be the world's most uplifting defence, aerospace and innovation precinct and to cement the region as a leader in the aerospace industry.

"We are creating something here at Williamtown that is totally unique," he said.

"Astra Aerolab is a place where world-leading defence, research, aerospace and industry partners will converge to innovate, push boundaries, embrace new technologies and develop the jobs for the future.

"With our International Terminal Expansion now under construction, we are excited to enhance the Hunter Region's global connectivity by providing opportunities through freight, international connections, creating thousands of jobs and strengthening our existing direct networks.

"That's why we've put so much effort in developing a business park environment that is designed to drive high performance and help the transition of our region. We are leading the way when it comes to diversifying, and we are proud to be part of that.

The first development consent at Astra Aerolab is for an office industrial facility of 3,200 sqm. This building can be adapted to 1,300 sqm of office space for a single user, or four suites of circa 250 sqm each and two 1000 sqm industrial assembly areas. The facility has storage areas and some car parking on site, with additional tenant and visitor parking provided in the common user car park close by.

The second development consent is for a multi-tenanted seven level 5,700 sqm office building designed for small and medium-sized enterprises, education and training facilities and is ideally suited for startup entrepreneurs.



On offer are five contiguous office floors of approximately 800 sqm of space that can be easily subdivided. The bottom two floors will have retail, food and beverage outlets and common facilities for the amenity of all tenants and the Astra community.

Newcastle Airport's Executive General Manager, Property, Rob Green, says the two DA approvals are a significant milestone for the precinct and a demonstration of Newcastle Airport's commitment and advancement of the Astra Aerolab.

"We are development ready, with all the statutory approvals in place, the roads and enabling infrastructure already built, and a construction contractor panel in place.

"We are well advanced with several built to order projects for Defence Primes, but we know that for Astra to reach its potential it needs to accommodate a range of industry segments including SMEs.

"That's why we are progressing these two multi-tenanted buildings, the approved hybrid office/industrial building and the central hub office. With close alignment to Defence, building security to meet the requirements for Defence work is incorporated into the base building specifications and design.

"It is envisaged that construction will commence early next year for completion in 2025," Mr Green said.

Innovation and sustainability are at the core of Astra Aerolab's built environment, and the vision for the precinct is fast becoming a reality with Stage 1 leasing opportunities now available. Astra Aerolab invites you to become part of a journey that redefines the possibilities of the aerospace and defence sector.

You can express your interest at [enquiries@newcastleairport.com.au](mailto:enquiries@newcastleairport.com.au) or visit [www.astraaerolab.com.au](http://www.astraaerolab.com.au)

## Drones used to thermally detect koalas

Conservation scientists from the University of Newcastle are using heat-detecting drones to capture data on koala populations in Port Stephens LGA.

More than 130 survey sites in Port Stephens LGA will be studied. Over the next few months, each site will be surveyed three consecutive times to accommodate variables and capture an accurate picture of the koala population.

Using the data from the survey sites, scientists will be able to create a model to better predict koala numbers across vast landscape. The thermal drone technology is also able to detect other species including wallabies, possums and gliders.

Camouflaged in tall treetops, koalas are notoriously difficult to detect. Traditional methods such as acoustic recordings to identify koala calls or spotlighting with head torches are labour intensive, costly and limited in accuracy.

Research leads, Dr Ryan Witt and PhD candidate Shelby Ryan

from the University of Newcastle said drones are a cheaper and more efficient way to find koalas. In a previous study, Dr Witt and his team searched a particular location on foot at night with spotlights and found on average one koala every seven hours. When searching the same location using thermal drones, the team found an average of one koala every two hours.

The data will provide clues on how to best manage koala populations. Early survey data has so far revealed a concerning absence of koalas in the Tomaree Peninsula area, with the population localised to just one area.

The research team is inviting private landowners of large blocks in Port Stephens to get in touch to discuss the potential for their land to be surveyed as part of this study. Please email [ryan.witt@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:ryan.witt@newcastle.edu.au).

This project is delivered in partnership with FAUNA Research Alliance, Taronga Conservation Society Australia, Hunter Water Corporation, WWF-Australia, and Port Stephens Council who received grant funding from the Australian Government.



# UPLIFTING OPPORTUNITY

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## Hunter Water and the Aquawatch Mission – monitoring and forecasting water quality from space

Hunter Water is partnering with the CSIRO and the SmartSat Cooperative Research Centre to form the AquaWatch mission to develop a comprehensive national inland and coastal water quality information service.

The mission aims to help safeguard freshwater and coastal resources and grow Australia's space capability by combining data from innovative water-based sensors with satellite remote sensors to monitor and forecast the presence of algae in drinking and recreational water sources.

Hunter Water's Grahamstown Reservoir near Newcastle is one of multiple sites participating in the national pilot program. Using additional pilot sites in the ACT and Victoria, CSIRO aims to grow the program into an integrated system to provide holistic aquatic ecosystem information or a 'weather service for water quality'.

Andy Olrich leads the Hunter Water Continuous Improvement and Innovation team, and James Van Der Helm is a water scientist with Science and Research at Hunter Water.

"It's really exciting we are using our national space program to help drive better ways of managing water quality in our rivers and coastal water resources," said Mr Olrich.

"It's cutting-edge space technology and water science coming together for the benefit of potentially millions of people here and around the world."

Mr Van Der Helm explained the mission centres on monitoring for the presence of algae, which seriously impacts water quality.

"When conditions are favourable for algae to accumulate in the water at sufficient concentrations, the algae can release colours, as well as taste and odours, into the water," said Mr Van Der Helm.

"By detecting certain colours, combined with data and algorithms, we can monitor current algal conditions and forecast or predict the likelihood of an algal bloom occurring."

Everyone needs and deserves access to clean, safe drinking water. As the world moves towards an uncertain climate future, Hunter Water is at the forefront of trialling innovative tools to manage our most precious resource.

"The system has the potential to provide cost-effective water quality monitoring that can be deployed across the globe," said Mr Van Der Helm.

The technology includes an innovative Australian-designed and made camera system as part of the monitoring process.

As Hunter Water pumps water from the Williams River into Grahamstown Reservoir CSIRO and Hunter Water will add another floating sensor in the Williams River this September. After the two-year trial, Hunter Water will keep the equipment and data, and staff will integrate the system into existing monitoring and visualisation programs.

"We see this as a fantastic addition to our suite of current innovative projects. We can leverage the latest technology as we continue to meet future challenges and provide high-quality services for our valued 600,000 customers and the communities we serve," said Mr Olrich.

**To find out more about this trial, please contact Andy Olrich at [andrew.olrich@hunterwater.com.au](mailto:andrew.olrich@hunterwater.com.au) or James Van Der Helm at [james.vanderhelm@hunterwater.com.au](mailto:james.vanderhelm@hunterwater.com.au). You can also search "CSIRO AquaWatch" or head to <https://www.csiro.au/en/about/challenges-missions/aquawatch>**

## Water is life

### Keeping innovation flowing for a sustainable water future

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[hunterwater.com.au](https://hunterwater.com.au)





## Industry partnering: Innovative David should look to cooperate with corporate Goliath

**Reid Farrell**  
SWS Lawyers

At a time when innovators and startups across Newcastle and the Hunter Valley are lauded for their achievements, many people in the industry can appreciate that developing new innovations and bringing them to market is no simple task and, considering the current economic climate, it's a task that is getting increasingly more challenging. Many Hunter startups attempt to grow organically or seek out venture capital investment exclusively. However, it is well documented that the extent of organic growth can be limited (e.g., due to the level of debt available to the business, the level of entrepreneurial spirit in the business, the financial performance of the business, etc).

The concept of industry partnering (in broad terms and in the scope of startups) is the idea of involving another business or businesses with a startup in order to bridge a gap (when + how) when it comes to funding. Industry partnering as a concept can take many forms, but joint ventures are often overlooked despite representing a clever, adaptable, and functional solution for both startups looking for funding and corporates looking to develop new technology. A joint venture allows two or more parties to join forces without a permanent relationship, usually to accomplish a specific goal. Typically, joint ventures are not on the day-to-day agenda for a startup when they should be considered. That being said, a joint venture plan needs as much, if not more, planning as other key strategies for business growth.

Startups need not only be innovative with their research and development, but also with their business plans and go-to-market strategies. The key upside for a startup when partnering with a large corporate obviously includes receiving necessary funding and critical cash flow, but can extend to often overlooked benefits such as receiving industry expertise, business strategy advice, access to untapped or inaccessible markets, mentoring, and other key resources. For this reason, it may be behaving young startups that are not seeking funding to also investigate potential joint venture options.

Assuming industry partnering can serve a potentially clever avenue for startups to grow and prosper, the flip side of the coin is looking at how a joint venture is also a way for larger corporations to operate nimbly and achieve cutting edge developments at a fraction of the expense of performing the work "in house." With the right partnering arrangement, a corporation can access much needed new technology or complementary technology without having to reallocate resources from their own research and development departments (if such a department exists), without having to hire, train and develop new staff, and with results coming potentially more quickly and on a more cost-effective basis due to a driven startup team that stands to share in fruits of their own labour. This also serves as a superior solution to purchasing the startup with "fully-fledged" technology as a purchase involves restructuring, additional costs, and the technology may end up developed without the specific needs of the corporation in mind.

Of course, the key element is linking startups with corporates where the resulting joint venture can be symbiotic, and where the companies can share similar values, goals, and vision. At present, that may not always be very simple or straightforward. However, assuming both startups and corporates, with an appreciation for the benefits associated with an industry partnership start to canvass for a matching partner, the pool of potential matches within Newcastle and the Hunter Valley starts to expand.

Once a good fit between a startup and corporate is found, there are a number of key considerations for both parties with respect to a successful joint venture. For example, the parties must agree

to fair ownership, contribution, and control with respect to a joint venture. With the right advice (and effective legal documentation) an appropriate structure can be created from which the new joint venture can flourish.

There are many complex legal and taxation issues to work through and a joint venture is not for everyone, but in many cases, a joint venture can offer benefits and simplicity in a way that organic growth and venture capital funding simply cannot. It is also imperative professional advice is obtained, which will often involve a lawyer, accountant and financial adviser working together to design and implement the optimal transaction and funding structure.

SWS Lawyers has a client base that ranges from individuals to startups and from family-owned businesses to ASX listed companies. They routinely advise clients on a diverse range of commercial matters from business structures and industry partnering to commercial advice and M&A transactions. SWS also regularly delivers informational seminars to industry groups, universities, and peak bodies. They have a reputation for valuing all clients and always providing the highest level of service.

***If you are interested in learning more about business structuring or are otherwise in need of corporate or commercial legal advice, please contact Richard Suturs or Reid Farrell on (02) 4040 9640 or [info@swslawyers.com.au](mailto:info@swslawyers.com.au).***





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## Nurturing Newcastle's STEM innovators



Bradken is proud to continue its support of the University of Newcastle's HunterWiSE STEM education program for local high school girls, fostering innovation and skill development for young minds and helping to inspire the next generation of female leaders in STEM. 2023 marks Bradken's third consecutive year partnering with HunterWiSE and Lambton High School to help encourage young female students to pursue STEM-based subjects. It's a core demonstration of how Bradken lives its motto of delivering an optimised future.

Speaking on the importance of this relationship both as a business leader and a father of a school-aged daughter, Mark Hurley, Executive General Manager for Bradken's Marketing and Technology business, said Bradken's continued support of the HunterWiSE school program was important to show young girls the kinds of STEM careers that are possible.

Bradken's support for HunterWiSE is one part of a global program focussed on STEM and reflecting its international footprint.

"Bradken's role in being part of a sustainable society is central to our culture and what we deliver for our customers," Mr Hurley said.

"Over the past few years, we've been working to increase female representation across our business because we know that having a diverse workforce brings a rich array of perspectives, ideas, and problem-solving approaches that allows us to innovate and grow.

"But in the pursuit of a more diverse and gender balanced future, it's essential to recognise that future generations of young professionals won't aspire to careers or achievements they don't see represented in their surroundings.

"When young girls don't see enough female engineers, scientists or technologists, it can have a limiting effect on their aspirations, leading them to believe that certain jobs aren't meant for them. That's not something I want for my daughter or any young woman on the verge of deciding what career path they want to follow.

"Bradken's support of the HunterWiSE program gives us the opportunity to show these girls a different view of what their futures could look like – they can see it represented in our team of incredibly talented women working as Metallurgists, Engineers, Product Designers and Digital Technology Specialists.

"With any luck, we might even see a few of these faces back at Bradken again in the future taking on graduate roles."

Dr Karen Blackmore, HunterWiSE co-founder and Associate Professor at the University of Newcastle's School of Information and Physical Sciences, said she was thankful to Bradken for its ongoing support.

"Industry partners such as Bradken play a crucial role in HunterWiSE activities by providing girls with valuable opportunities for hands-on STEM experiences. These experiences help to break down some of the stereotypes and barriers that have historically discouraged girls from pursuing STEM careers," Dr Blackmore said.

"As a stalwart sponsor, Bradken has provided these experiences to more than 50 female high school students since 2020.

"The exposure to real-world applications and interactions with

STEM professionals can ignite their passion for STEM and reveal exciting career pathways they may not have considered."

Run over 10 weeks, the HunterWiSE Schools outreach program provides female Year 8 students, from schools across Australia's Newcastle and Hunter region, the opportunity to work alongside STEM academics and student mentors from the University of Newcastle and engage with industry sponsors to solve local community issues whilst developing their STEM skills.

## Female Founders to get start-up boost

Female-led business start-ups in the region will have the opportunity to turbo-charge their start-up thanks to a free Female Founders Program to be run by the University of Newcastle's I2N.

The program, which opened for applications at the start of August, will support a minimum of 10 female-led founders from the Hunter and Central Coast regions with training workshops, tailored mentoring and support through I2N's network.

Siobhan Curran, Assistant Director, I2N says the program, which is supported by the NSW Government, will help women who are currently under-represented in the entrepreneurial space to accelerate their innovation and learn the skills to create a successful start-up idea.

"Around 32% of our I2N program participants are female founded businesses. While this sits above the industry average of 20%, we want to see this figure rise and level the playing field for female innovators and entrepreneurs in the region.

"It's a great opportunity for local women who have that spark of an idea to give their for-profit or social enterprise start-up a boost and see where it can take them."

Participants will take part in workshops to help them to understand their value proposition and the market for their business. They will learn how to get traction as a start-up and gain the business skills to help them model cash flow projections and structure their business as it grows – critical skills for a new business venture.

"The Female Founders Program will boost the volume of female led businesses in our regional ecosystem, creating positive economic and social impact," Ms Curran said.

Warwick Dawson, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Industry and Engagement explained the University's role, being uniquely positioned to support, connect and grow innovation in the region.

"Our University, through I2N, is incredibly proud to facilitate the



Female Founders Program, which provides a boost to the volume of female led businesses in our regional ecosystem.

"The Female Founders Program will help grow a vibrant and connected innovation ecosystem that will generate mutually beneficial relationships between entrepreneurs, innovators and the people who support them."

Central Coast based start-up founder, Lisa Winn, is a previous participant in Female Founders Program.

She created lhydrate, a saliva-based personal hydration test that replaces intrusive blood or urine tests and explained how the program helped her to build her network and develop a start-up mindset to help her business idea succeed.

"It's different when it's your own endeavour, it's harder to be objective, so you need to surround yourself with a network of people that understand where you're at and where you're going.

"I had so many 'ah-ha' moments throughout the program, things I may have encountered in my corporate career but have a completely different application in start-up. The advice I've had and connections I've made through this program have been incredible."

Applications are now open with the program commencing in October. Women who are interested in joining can apply now by visiting [www.newcastle.edu.au/ffp](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/ffp)

## New business to help leverage AI Technology

In a landmark move to bolster technological innovation within Newcastle's business landscape, Joshua Leask has launched Newcastle AI. As Managing Director, he will oversee the firm's mission to assist small and medium-sized businesses in leveraging AI technology. The firm will also focus on automating business workflows, a timely solution when finding skilled staff has become a hurdle.

"I am truly excited about this new venture. Newcastle AI will provide bespoke AI solutions tailored to the needs of local businesses, and I believe we're well-positioned to make a positive impact in the region," said Mr Leask.

In collaboration with Dantia, the firm has announced three free educational events in Lake Macquarie, scheduled for September, October, and November—the latter aligning with National AI Month. These events underline Newcastle AI's commitment to fostering AI education and awareness in the community. Information on the events can be found by following Dantia on social media.

This initiative resonates with the broader trend of technological adoption and places Newcastle AI as a central figure in the region's development. The balance of technological innovation, education, and community engagement makes Newcastle AI a promising sign of a technologically progressive future for Newcastle.



## Empowering growth and innovation: Dantia's impact in Lake Macquarie

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, the role of organisations that foster growth and innovation is more critical than ever. Dantia, Lake Macquarie's economic development company, is a catalyst for empowering individuals and businesses to flourish. One of Dantia's drivers is Dashworks.

Dashworks is a flexible workspace designed to cater to the unique needs of innovators, creators, and doers in Lake Macquarie.

Dantia Chief Operating Officer Jill Stewart said Dashworks had provided a supporting environment for small businesses in Lake Macquarie for nearly a decade, building a leading innovative community.

"When the right environment is provided, entrepreneurs, start-ups, professionals, creatives, and product developers can thrive, resulting in a collective boost to the entire community," she said.

"By offering a flexible workspace designed to cater to the unique needs of innovators, creators, and doers in Lake Macquarie, we not only support the diverse needs of professionals but also encourage cross-pollination of ideas, resulting in the generation of fresh insights and innovative solutions."

Dashworks has established itself as a dynamic hub where ideas come to life and connections are made.

Dantia's dedication to fostering an environment of growth and innovation aligns with this year's Hunter Innovation Festival key themes of emerging technologies, innovation infrastructure and circular economy following the recent launch of the Circular Economy Living Lab (CELL).



## Making a positive impact on the lives of locals in more ways than one

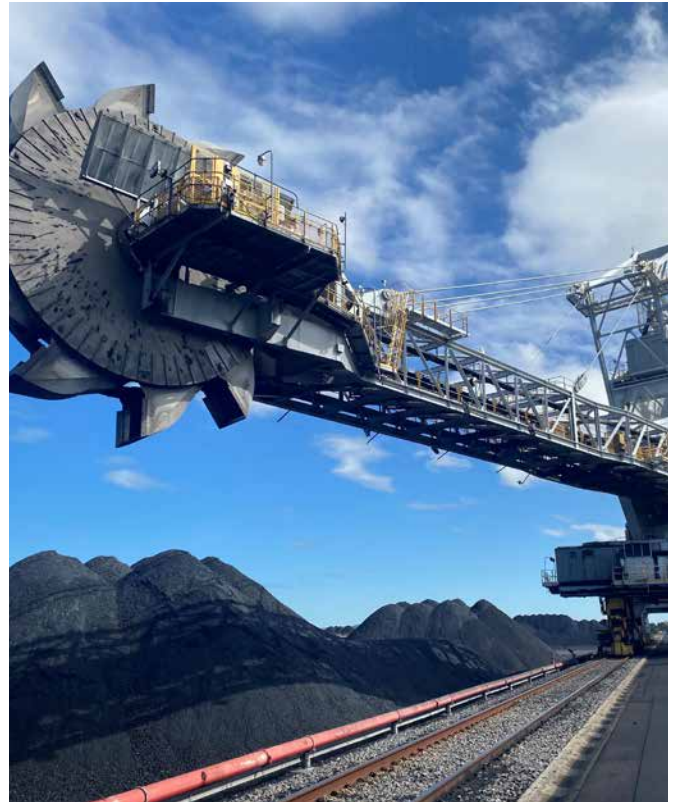
Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group (NCIG) provides a premier coal export service and is an integral part of the Hunter region - helping to generate significant local and regional economic benefit, employing over 100 locals, supporting community groups through targeted grants and caring for the environment with a robust biodiversity programme. While only a young company, NCIG is leading the way on being a responsible and sustainable member of the Hunter region business community.

Reflecting on the variety of ways NCIG enriches and empowers the community, Aaron Johansen, CEO of NCIG said, "I'm immensely proud of our team who consistently place our customers, and the community at the heart of our operations."

"Wherever possible, we seek to add value to our region, be it through additional training beyond the scope of our roles, through our biodiversity programmes that extend beyond regulatory requirements or our Community Support Program which empowers local community organisations."

"While we continue to deliver a premier service to our customers, we're just as committed to being a premier community member within the Hunter region, and that's something I'm really proud of."

One such initiative involves the restoration and ongoing management of wetland habitat which is now being utilised by critically endangered migratory shorebird species. This project involved the reclamation of a 24Ha area within the Lower Hunter River Estuary, and adjacent to the NCIG site, to create a refuge for shorebirds to forage and roost while they are in our region. These shorebirds rely on the mosaic of habitat offered by the Lower Hunter River Estuary to build up their energy reserves to make the long flight back to the northern hemisphere for their summer



period. NCIG continue to monitor and adaptively maintain this habitat to ensure its ongoing suitability for the target species. A long-term study has recently observed that NCIG efforts to actively manage mangroves in this area has positively influenced an increase in the diversity of observed shorebird species and overall abundance. The endangered White-fronted Chat and Eastern Curlew are regularly sighted in this area.

These findings underscore the importance of continued management practices that maintain and enhance the foraging habitat for shorebirds, including migratory species. NCIG is proud to partner with The National Parks and Wildlife Services, the University of New South Wales, the Hunter Bird Observers Club and local community interest groups to care for this area of critical habitat.

Another instance of NCIG creating a positive impact on the community is the recent life-or-death situation that arose when a community member presented at our security guard house with severe chest pains. The community member was on their way to the hospital but with their condition quickly escalating, they stopped at NCIG's wharf facility, hoping someone there would be trained in First Aid.

The NCIG crew quickly enacted emergency protocols, connecting the community member to a defibrillator, and calling an ambulance. The NCIG team members guided the community member through their situation, and when their condition deteriorated, the NCIG team activated the defibrillator and administered CPR as required. The quick thinking and well-trained action from the team saved the community member's life. The community member was rushed to the hospital for treatment and thankfully, survived the incident.

"These are just two amongst many examples that I could share to illustrate just how passionate we are about being active within our region. We're an organisation powered by locals and as we continue to evolve both our service and our expertise, I'm confident that we will continue to lead the Hunter in sustainable and responsible practices," said Mr Johansen.

**To learn more about how NCIG are optimising sustainable operations, visit [www.ncig.com.au](http://www.ncig.com.au)**





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### NSW coal mining supporting highest number of jobs in over a decade

Data from Coal Services Pty Ltd shows there were 24,984 people working in coal mining production in NSW to June 2023, the highest result since June 2012.

The data also shows that in the Hunter - NSW's largest coal mining region - there were 14,584 coal mining jobs in June 2023. This is the second highest number of coal mining jobs in the Hunter region since June 2014.

In the Gunnedah region, the data shows that there were 3,134 coal mining jobs in June 2023, only a slight drop from the coal mining jobs all-time record set in April 2023 of 3,253.

The data shows there are over 300 more coal mining jobs in the Western region of NSW than a year ago at 3,534, and the number of jobs in the Southern region of NSW had improved over the last financial year, recording the second highest number of local coal mining employees for the period of 3,397.

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

"The growth in the number of people in coal mining jobs across NSW in recent years shows that the NSW coal mining industry remains critical to regional communities and the state economy, and also highlights the need to ensure mining communities are supported," Mr Galilee said.

"The strong contribution of the coal sector reflects overall growth across the entire mining industry in NSW, including in metals mining. Metals mining jobs are also at near record levels with nearly 8,000 people working in the NSW metals mining sector based on the latest annual NSW Mining Industry Expenditure Impact Survey," Mr Galilee said.

"These jobs help support regional communities, and are also making a very important economic contribution to the NSW economy."

"The demand for our metals, critical minerals and high-quality coal is expected to grow over the next decade. With the right policy settings we can ensure mining investment and jobs are locked in for the future," he said.

### 2023 Health, Safety, Environment & Community Awards Winners

The winners of the NSW Minerals Council's Health, Safety, Environment and Community Awards were announced at a ceremony in the Hunter on 7 August, recognising the most outstanding innovations and contributions to the mining industry across a range of categories.

The annual HSEC Awards are a highlight of the annual NSW Minerals Council Health, Safety, Environment and Community Conference (HSEC) held in the Hunter.

"Our HSEC Awards are an important part of the Conference as they shine a light on our industry's efforts to deliver better outcomes for our workforce, our communities, and the local environment," he said.

Winners were announced in four categories - Health Excellence, Safety Excellence, Environmental Excellence and Community Excellence.

Mining supply business Ampcontrol won the Health Excellence Award for the development of their new DRIFTEX vehicles. The DRIFTEX vehicles are a new generation of Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) specifically designed for underground mining. The health benefits of the DRIFTEX system are the reduction in diesel fuel emissions within an underground mining environment.

The Safety Excellence Award was presented to Newcrest Cadia Operations for successfully tackling a challenging maintenance task related to replacing failing Stringer Chains on an underground conveyor belt system. The team at Cadia constructed a new Stringer Chain Telehandler with essential

safety features such as electronic crush protection, stability safety interlocks and a modified safety cage.

The Environmental Excellence Award was presented to Aurelia for the company's landmark Recordable Environmental Incident Frequency Rate (REIFR) measure. The REIFR measure goes above and beyond regular data collection and enhances the mine's environmental performance. The incorporation of REIFR measure, has resulted in year-on-year improvements in environmental performance.

Evolution Mining won the Community Excellence Award for their work with the local indigenous community through the Galari Agricultural Company, which helps develop skills in indigenous youth.

Since its inception, Galari has achieved significant milestones, including leasing 1,500 acres of land for livestock production, renovating a farmhouse as a cultural hub, and successfully training and employing Indigenous young people.

"As always, our 2023 award entrants are of a very high standard demonstrating our industry's commitment to improving how we operate and to continue to mine responsibly now and in the future. Congratulations to all our winners and finalists," Mr Galilee said.

### Mining delivers record \$455 billion in export revenue

The Minerals Council of Australia has reported that mining contributed a record \$455 billion in export revenue for Australia in the 2022-23 financial year, highlighting, once again the importance of the industry to the nation's economy, government revenues and regional jobs.

Released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the figure represents two-thirds (66%) of all export revenue for the nation and is a 10.5% increase on 2021-22, which was the previous record year.

The industry's significant contribution to the nation's export earnings cannot be taken for granted.

The country can't afford to miss the opportunity to attract a share of the US\$180 billion per year in global mining investment over the next two decades needed to meet the world's colossal energy transition.

The ABS figures also showed that coal (thermal and metallurgical) export revenue totalled \$128 billion, iron ore \$125 billion, gold \$27.4 billion, aluminium \$14.9 billion and copper \$12.5 billion.

The strongest growth in exports was made in technology metals such as nickel (51%), zinc (30%), copper (17%) with continued growth in coal exports (11%) and a strong result for gold (5%).

Over the decade, the total contribution of minerals, metals and energy commodities to export revenue totalled \$2.7 trillion.





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For more detailed information, let's start the conversation!



## DSI Underground receives EPD for CT Bolts and Domed Plates

DSI Underground Australia Pty Limited has announced their first EPD (Environmental Product Declaration) for CT Bolts and Domed Plates which are verified to be compliant with EN 15804:2012+A2:2019.

The EPD is an independently verified and registered document that communicates transparent and comparable data and other relevant environmental information about the life-cycle environmental impact of a product.

This EPD provides environmental indicators for DSI Underground's CT Bolt and Domed Plates produced at their plant in Bennetts Green.

"The completion of this first EPD is a significant milestone and great achievement for the business and I look forward to verification of further products in the future" said Derek Hird, Regional CEO.

## Gloucester community groups called to apply for funding

Local community organisations in Gloucester, Stroud and District with initiatives that make a positive difference to the local community are being encouraged to apply for funding in the next round of Stratford Coal's Community Support Program. The 2024 Community Support Program is funded by Yancoal Australia and provides financial assistance to local groups working in the areas of health, community, environment, arts, culture, education and training. Stratford Coal Operations Manager, John Cullen, urged local community groups to apply for financial assistance.

"Our Community Support Program gives us the opportunity to assist those locally focused programs and initiatives capable

of making a real contribution to the continued growth and sustainability of the region.

"A previously successful local organisation was the Booral Rural Fire Service station. With funding support from Stratford, they were able to purchase two new mobile Wi-Fi boosters, extending the range of coverage and improving network speeds at the station and nearby Driver Reviver site.

"In the past, Stratford has also donated funds to the Gloucester Junior Magpies Rugby League Club so they could purchase new equipment and uniforms for the players.

"These are just two examples of the fantastic work that has been supported by the program and it's great to see the positive impact it makes to our community," said John.

The program is open for applications until 30 September 2023.



## Glencore NSW coal operations contribute \$8.1 billion to the economy

Glencore's latest Australian economic contribution report shows its NSW coal operations directly contributed \$8.1 billion to the Australian economy in 2022.

In NSW, Glencore has 11 active coal mining operations across the Hunter and Mid-Western Regions and our contribution included:


- 6,320 direct employees and contractors
- \$3.7 billion: Spend on goods and services
- Support for 3,040 NSW-based businesses
- \$3.6 billion: Taxes and royalties to Federal, State and Local Governments

Cassandra McCarthy, Head of Corporate Affairs for Glencore in Australia said "We're proud of our people who make a huge contribution to our success and our ability to make a positive difference in regional Australia and across the country.



# DSI Achieves EPD Milestone

DSI is proud to achieve our first Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for our CT Bolts and Domed Plates produced locally at our Bennetts Green (Newcastle) facility and compliant with EN 15804:2012 + A2:2019.



[dsiunderground.com.au](https://dsiunderground.com.au)



"When mining does well, Australians do well and our economy does well. We should never take that for granted.

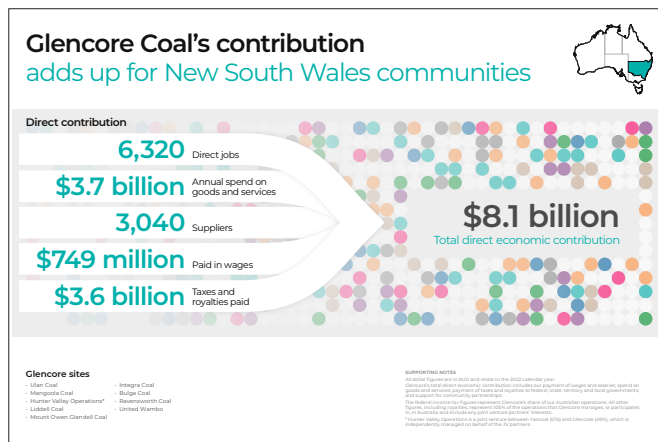
"Glencore has been operating in Australia for more than 25 years, employing two generations of Australian families and continues to make an important contribution to jobs, businesses and the communities where we operate.

"Our Australian coal business is headquartered in the Hunter Valley and is one of the region's largest employers.

"Glencore works with businesses across more than 100 different industries, like manufacturing, transport, construction, finance, public administration, retail, health care, accommodation and food services and wholesale trade. We support Aussie businesses that range from the local coffee shop to the country's leading equipment and mining service providers.

For the full report Economic contribution of Glencore in Australia 2022, go to:

[www.glencore.com.au/who-we-are/our-contribution](http://www.glencore.com.au/who-we-are/our-contribution)



## Port Waratah Coal Services announces new energy contract towards climate action goal

Port Waratah Coal Services will commence a new electricity contract from 1 January 2024 with Origin Energy that includes all electricity requirements and the progressively increasing purchase of renewable electricity.

The renewable electricity will be purchased in the form of large-scale generation certificates (LGCs) to be voluntarily surrendered to the Clean Energy Regulator, increasing from five percent in 2024 to 35 per cent in 2030, in addition to compliance requirements under the Renewable Energy Target.

Port Waratah CEO, Hennie du Plooy, said "Many stakeholders are interested in our emissions profile and as a result we recently developed a Climate Action Plan.

"Our Climate Action Plan identifies our target to reduce our total scope 1 and 2 (market-based) emissions by 50% by 2030 compared to a 2018 baseline and the strategies to achieve this. The new electricity contract which includes the progressive purchase and surrender of LGCs is one of those strategies specifically aimed at reducing our Scope 2 emissions profile.

"Grid purchased electricity comprises 99 per cent of total energy consumed at Port Waratah and is primarily used to operate our plant and equipment. Our other emission reduction efforts are focused on continuously improving electricity efficiency and transitioning to a low-emission vehicle fleet."

Find out more about the Climate Action Plan and role in energy transition through at <https://pwcs.com.au/environment/climate>



Hannah grew up on a farm in northern NSW and has always had a strong connection with the land. She studied environmental science at uni and is now putting that expertise to work in the NSW mining industry.

Like so many others in mining, Hannah is committed to minimising the industry's impacts and restoring land after mining for productive farming and thriving bushland. All for a more sustainable future.

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I asked my wife the other day what she liked best about me....  
 "Is it my firm, trim, athletic, body? My dazzling good looks? Or, perhaps, is it my astounding intellect?"  
 She replied "Your sense of humour, dear."

The drunk staggered up to the hotel reception and demanded his room be changed.

"But sir," said the clerk, "you have the best room in the hotel."

"I insist on another room!!" said the drunk.

"Very good, sir. I'll change you from 502 to 555. Would you mind telling me why you don't like 502?" asked the clerk.

"Well, for one thing," said the drunk, "it's on fire."

David went to a psychiatrist.

"Doc," he said, "I've got trouble. Every time I get into bed, I think there's somebody under it. I get under the bed, I think there's somebody on top of it. Top, under, top, under ... you gotta help me, I'm going crazy!"

"Just put yourself in my hands for two years," said the shrink.

"Come to me three times a week, and I'll cure your fears."

"How much do you charge?"

"A hundred and fifty dollars per visit."

"I'll sleep on it," said David.

Six months later the doctor met David on the street.

"Why didn't you ever come to see me again?" asked the psychiatrist.

"For a hundred and fifty buck's a visit? A bartender cured me for ten dollars."

"Is that so! And just how could a bartender cure you?"

"He told me to cut the legs off the bed!"

Little Johnny was caught swearing by his teacher.

"Johnny," she said, "you shouldn't use that kind of language.

Where did you hear such talk, anyway?"

"My daddy said it," he responded.

"Well, that doesn't matter," explained the teacher. "You don't even know what it means."

"I do, too!" Little Johnny retorted. "It means the car won't start."

The man was in no shape to drive, so he wisely left his car parked and walked home. As he was walking unsteadily along, he was stopped by a policeman. "What are you doing out here at 2 a.m.?" asked the officer.

"I'm going to a lecture." The man said.

"And who is going to give a lecture at this hour?" the cop asked.

"My wife," said the man.

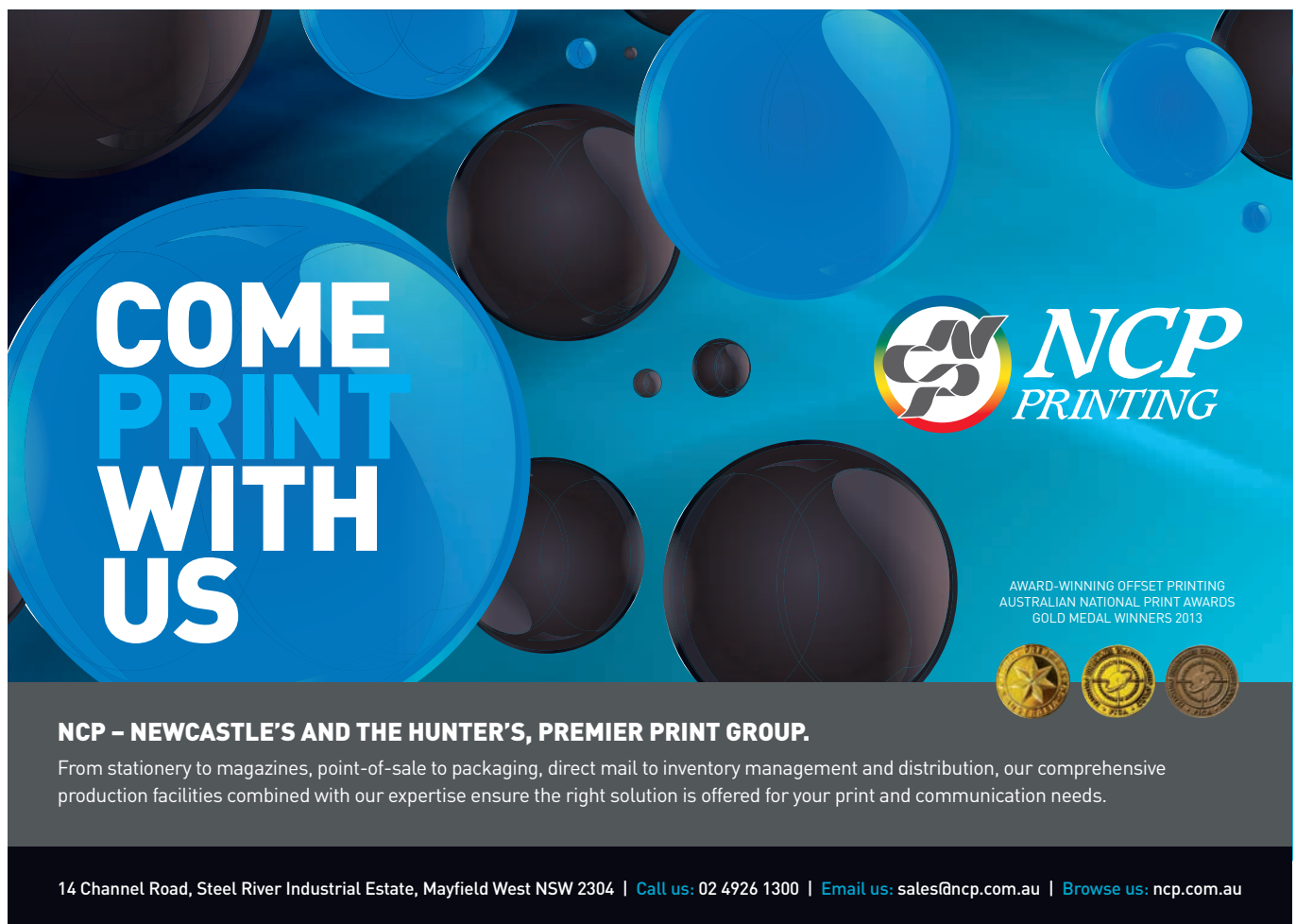
A man walks into a doctor's office and says, "Doc, you gotta help me. I think I'm invisible!"

The doctor says, "I'm sorry, I can't see you right now."

### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination."

- Albert Einstein



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