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HUNTER BUSINESS REVIEW
Connecting & informing business people

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Sam Barry, General Manager

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Congratulations!

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HELMORE
 LAWYERS

We're celebrating the promotion of six of the Hunter region's finest talents, joining our senior ranks with effect from 1 July 2025. These promotions are a testament to the hard work they have each put in to reach this career milestone and to the wealth of amazing talent we have in our firm.

**Alex Caldwell**

Partner, Property, Environment & Planning

Alex is a property lawyer with a primary focus on property development, land and water acquisitions and sales, and complex land access and tenure arrangements for mining projects and other major infrastructure.

**Matthew O'Sullivan**

Partner, Banking & Finance

Matthew is an experienced banking and finance lawyer across a range of industries and the full range of debt products, with a focus on business banking, real estate finance, leveraged and acquisition finance, food & beverage, construction, project and infrastructure, and asset finance.

**Sarah Hovanyecz**

Special Counsel, Corporate & Commercial

Sarah is a highly experienced corporate and commercial lawyer with over 10 years' experience. Sarah is recognised for her in-depth knowledge and experience advising on a variety of corporate and commercial matters including specific expertise for large-scale transactions.

**Caitlyn Read**

Special Counsel, Projects & Government Commercial

Caitlyn is a construction and infrastructure lawyer with experience advising clients on the tendering and procurement, contract negotiation and delivery of major projects.

**Richard Howard**

Senior Associate, Corporate & Commercial

Richard is a skilled commercial lawyer with significant legal, corporate governance and leadership experience across manufacturing, medical, not for profit, hospitality and maritime and logistics sectors.

**Jacqueline Vial**

Senior Associate, Projects & Government Commercial

Jacqueline is a construction and infrastructure lawyer. She assists clients throughout all project phases, including tendering and procurement, contract negotiation, project delivery, contract claims and administration and dispute resolution.

From the Editor



The cost of housing in Australia has been an increasingly important issue for many years and has been dealt with by successive governments by largely piecemeal measures.

Measures such as First Home Buyer Bonuses are welcome by recipients, but also result in increased demand and therefore result in increased prices.

The cost of new housing is basically down to cost factors, including the array of taxes and charges, and simple supply and demand.

Each year we seem to fall further and further behind new

housing targets, resulting in even more cost pressures.

It is good to see some significant announcements in recent weeks to help improve the supply side, although it is a complicated issue and will require continued initiatives by Government and dialogue with community and industry.

ASIC has commenced a review on the requirements of superannuation funds to disclose stamp duty payments under RG. Superannuation funds are a major investor in new housing and this measure has the potential to add tens of thousands of new builds.

The Federal Government is looking at freezing further changes to the National Construction Code to encourage more investment. Interestingly, the ALP opposed this measure taken to

the last election by the opposition, but it is encouraging that they have listened to industry and changed their view.

They are also looking at a national artificial intelligence plan to cut environmental red tape, and reforms to clear a backlog of 30,000 housing approvals currently being assessed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act.

The NSW Government has also announced a tender for an AI tool to streamline assessments of state-significant housing, with a goal of reducing average approval times well below the current eight and a half months.

These measures are all welcome and it is encouraging that Government appears to be listening to industry but more action will be required.

It is hopeful that Governments will continue to be open to new ideas to address the housing shortage.

Garry Hardie
Publisher and Editor

ON THIS MONTH'S COVER

Matt Hall and Daniel Ricciardo at Sea Cliff Bridge near Wollongong. Matt Hall Racing was the major winner at the 2025 Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards. For further details see page 8.

Photograph courtesy of Andy Green, Red Bull Content Pool



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Rezoning announced for Broadmeadow Precinct

New planning controls will enable up to 3,200 homes to be built on government-owned land at the Broadmeadow Precinct, including 5-10% affordable housing, while supporting up to 2,350 new construction jobs.

The Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC) will be the Delivery Co-ordination Agency and will support the transformation of the precinct into a vibrant community with great services and access to entertainment and sporting facilities.

The rezoning will preserve significant heritage sites and

deliver new public and green spaces, as well as new pedestrian and transport links to connect to surrounding areas, including Broadmeadow Train Station.

Rezoning of the first four government-owned sites within the Broadmeadow precinct marks the beginning of the most significant urban renewal project to be undertaken in Greater Newcastle and will occur progressively over the next 30 years.

The Broadmeadow Place Strategy approved earlier this year and jointly delivered by the NSW Government and the City of Newcastle, will guide new development in the precinct.

HCCDC will now prepare an infrastructure delivery plan for the rezoned land, in collaboration with the City of Newcastle and other relevant State Government agencies.

Member for Newcastle Tim Crakanthorp said "With new pedestrian links, green spaces, and better transport connections to places like Broadmeadow Station, this renewal will breathe new life into this area of Newcastle. Locals will be able to live, work and play in a community that's vibrant, sustainable, and well-connected.

"This project will create thousands of jobs for our region, both during construction and over the long term, bringing new energy and opportunity to Broadmeadow. It's about investing in our future and creating a thriving, connected community."



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Kongsberg moves into temporary office to support growth

Kongsberg Defence Australia has moved into a new temporary office in Newcastle as the company continues to expand its operations to deliver capability for the Australian Defence Force.

This milestone marks another step in the company's growth strategy for the Hunter region, supporting the construction of its new state-of-the-art missile manufacturing and maintenance factory at Newcastle Airport's Astra Aerolab precinct. The factory will be Kongsberg's first missile production facility outside of Norway.

John Fry, Managing Director said, "This is an exciting milestone for Kongsberg Defence Australia. Our new Newcastle office allows us to scale up our workforce, strengthen our local presence, and work more closely with suppliers and the community whilst we build the Kongsberg Missile Factory."

Keiran Joseph, Hunter local and Director People and Culture, Kongsberg Defence Australia, said the move also represents a significant opportunity to attract home-grown talent and continue to build our brand.

"Our expansion in Newcastle is about more than an office space – it is about our people, our culture and our brand. This office provides a collaborative environment for our growing team while also opening doors for skilled locals to be part of a global company delivering world-class defence capability for Australia."

Construction of the Kongsberg Missile Factory is due to be completed by the end of 2026, creating more than 100 jobs and supporting many more through its local supply chain.

"Kongsberg's investment in the Hunter region reflects our long-term commitment to delivering a sovereign guided weapons capability in Australia," Mr Fry added.

"This new temporary office ensures we are ready as our operations continue to grow."

Alliance Labour Solutions expands to Alliance Group

Since its establishment in 2013, Alliance Labour Solutions has built a reputation for offering quality recruitment/training and labour solutions.

The business has now expanded further to include facilities management services. With this strategic move it has also been rebranded to Alliance Group to better reflect the breadth of service offered.

Alliance Group now offers four types of service solutions designed to support and boost business operations:

- Facilities Maintenance – to schedule cleaners, ground staff and trades to keep your indoor and outdoor spaces clean, tidy, functional, comfortable, safe and efficient.
- Mining Services – to access skilled technicians, engineers and operators trained to troubleshoot, maintain and repair complex mechanical systems safely.
- Labour Hire and Recruitment – to scale up, optimise team use, meet project demands, fill permanent roles or hire for specialised tasks, such as shutdown management.
- Mine Site Induction Management – to manage the site induction and training paperwork, streamlining the process and ensuring workers are always ready and compliant.



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SPEAKING UP FOR BUSINESS



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Carrie's Place launches Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

Carrie's Place Domestic Violence & Homelessness Service has proudly launched its Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), marking a strengthened commitment to justice, equity and reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The launch event, held at Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council, celebrated the organisation's deepening connections with local First Nations communities, and its intention to embed cultural respect and awareness into every level of service delivery.

Building on the organisation's first RAP launched in 2022, the new Innovate plan affirms Carrie's Place's core values of diversity, inclusion and respect - and its vision to support meaningful change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the region.

As part of this collaborative approach, Carrie's Place commissioned a bespoke artwork from local Aboriginal artist Jess Hopcroft of Dhiyaan Art.

The Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan outlines actions to: build cultural awareness; increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and clients; and develop respectful partnerships that recognise the strength, knowledge and richness of the world's longest-surviving cultures.

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Local businesses celebrated at Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards



Matt Hall Racing took out top honours at this year's Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards.

Matt, a former RAAF fighter pilot and Red Bull Air Race World Champion, took out the Business of the Year category at ceremony at Belmont 16s on 8 August, recognising the contribution his Pelican-based Matt Hall Racing has made to the local tourism economy.

The company also won the Outstanding Visitor Experience award.

Lake Macquarie Mayor Adam Shultz, who presented the top gong, said Matt's company exemplified the kind of innovation, bravery and contribution to the community that had transformed the city's business industry over the past 20 years.

"Matt Hall Racing not only showcases our amazing city to countless tourists from outside the Hunter Region and overseas," Mayor Adam said.

"It also demonstrates what can be achieved when you put down business roots here in Lake Macquarie and dare to dream big."

Despite all the thrills of piloting aerobatic aircraft, Matt Hall said he got the biggest buzz from supporting local jobs and nurturing the careers of his staff.

"In the end, that's what business is about," he said.

"Yes you live your own life, but you've got to make sure that everyone relying on you is able to succeed as well."



Matt Hall accepting the Business of the Year Award

"We've grown well beyond an aviation business in the last few years and it's very humbling to be acknowledged by Lake Macquarie Council for our progress. We are very proud to operate in this thriving region," added Matt.

"The work we are doing with corporate speaking and team building workshops including aerobatic passenger flights is truly something else. No one is doing anything like it and we're really proud to share our knowledge and high-performance mindset with businesses in the Fortune 500's to small business."

"Our Red Bull passenger aerobatic flight experiences are popular as always and we find ourselves getting the honours for the aerial entertainment at prominent events like Formula 1, the Australian Open, State of Origin, NRL, NRLW, Supercars, Red Bull Cliff Diving, Bells Beach Pro, the list goes on."

Northern NSW Football was the evening's other big winner, taking home the Outstanding Community Organisation and Excellence in Sustainability categories.

Meanwhile, the organisation's CEO Peter Haynes was named Outstanding Business Leader for his work growing football participation and inclusion, and for his concerted push to improve the sport's local infrastructure.

Based at Speers Point, NNSWF is responsible for the delivery of football across an area of 188,000 km² – larger than England, Wales and Northern Ireland combined – and boasts almost 100,000 participants.

Mayor Adam said this year's list of winners reflected the changing face of business in Lake Macquarie.

"The 100-plus nominations this year were a mix of new and returning applicants and really demonstrated how we're seeing success across the business spectrum in our city," he said.

"That's everything from football administration to five-star dining, and dental services to design studios."

Dantia CEO Tim Browne said the small and micro business award categories were among the most hotly contested this year.

"Small business is big business in our city," he said.

"The LMBEA really showcase the quality of businesses Lake Macquarie has to offer – not only the winners but also finalists."

"The business community really is putting Lake Macquarie on the map as a terrific place to do business and be successful."

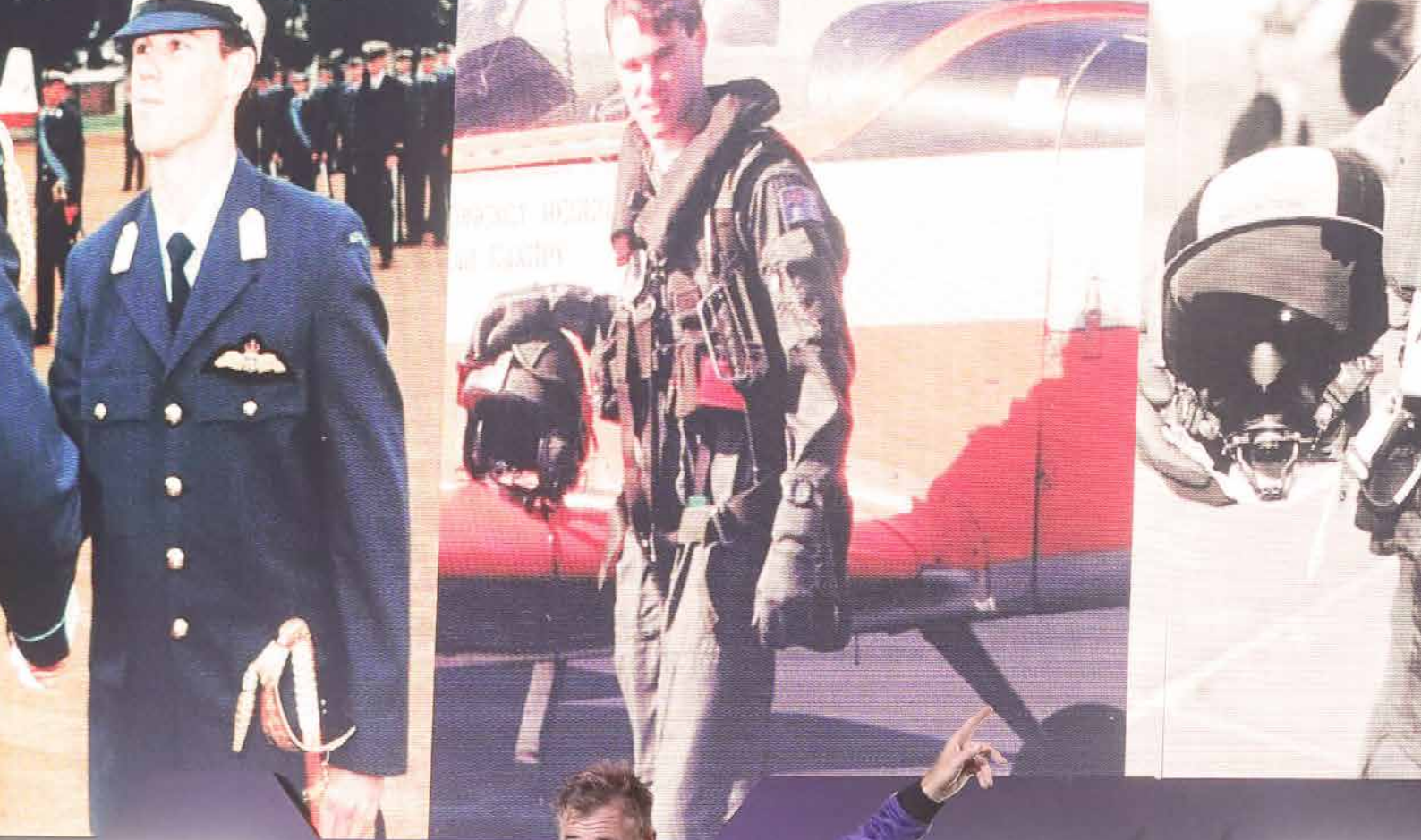
Waterfront dining venue 8 at Trinity took out the Origin Energy People's Choice Award for the second year running after more than 2500 people placed their vote online.

IT solutions company Dynamic Business Technologies was a finalist in four categories and took out the Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion award for creating a workplace embracing inclusive business practices.

The Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards are supported by Dantia, Origin Energy, the Newcastle Herald, University of Newcastle, Ramsay Health Care, Charlestown Square by the GPT Group, Lake Mac Holiday Parks, Hewlett Packard Enterprise and ATUNE Health Centres.

2025 Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards winners

Category	Winner
Outstanding Employee	Jade Gray, Flying Colours Education
Outstanding Young Business Leader	Quyen Nguyen, Dental Folk
Outstanding Business Leader	Peter Haynes, Northern NSW Football
Outstanding Visitor Experience	Matt Hall Racing
Employer of Choice	MoveAbout Therapy Services Warners Bay
Excellence in Innovation	Fire Response
Excellence in Sustainability	Northern NSW Football
Outstanding New Business	Showtime Kayaking
Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion	Dynamic Business Technologies
Outstanding Community Organisation	Northern NSW Football
Excellence in Micro Business	psyborg
Excellence in Small Business	Yard Kings Brewing Co
Excellence in Large Business	Agility Professional Tree Service
Origin Energy People's Choice	8 at Trinity
Business of the Year	Matt Hall Racing



- Motivation
- High performance
- Leadership
- Risk management
- Safety
- Complacency
- Attitude and mindset
- Excelling under pressure
- Recovering adversity
- Team trust
- Preparing to succeed
- Achieving your dreams
- Men's health
- Mental health
- Resilience

CORPORATE

KEYNOTES, WORKSHOPS &
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Matt Hall shares his fascinating story from humble beginnings to unimaginable goals. Matt is a third-generation pilot who has seen military combat in Iraq, decorated with medals for heroism under fire, multiple near-death experiences and immortalisation in Red Bull Air Race, the fastest motorsport on the planet.

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2025 Hunter Innovation Festival

The Hunter Innovation Festival is returning in 2025 with a huge event on 25 September at Newcastle City Hall.

For 23 years, this festival has been a place for dreamers and doers. This festival is a living, breathing conversation about our future. It's about connection, inspiration, and turning brilliant ideas into reality, right here in the Hunter.

From cutting-edge technology to groundbreaking ideas, this year's festival is a chance to connect with the brightest minds, be inspired by world-class speakers, and discover how we can shape a brighter tomorrow, together.

The speaking sessions will be guided by James O'Loughlin, who many of you will know from ABC's The New Inventors.

This year there will be over 60 speakers covering an array of topics.

Keynote speakers will include:

- The Hon. Analack Chanthivong, NSW Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology
- Em. Prof. Roy Green, Innovation Advisor, Economist, Governance Leader
- Vu Tran, Unicorn co-founder, purpose driven, aerospace innovator
- Dr. Renee Goreham, Senior Lecturer in Physics at the University of Newcastle
- Prof Thomas Nann, Co-Founder and CEO, Allegro Energy
- Pippa Smith, Founder, Social Startup Labs
- Ben Lindsay, Investment Principal, Investible
- Claire Quigley, Founder and Facilitator, Launchpad9
- Brandon Gien, Founder and Chair, Good Design Australia
- Clare Larkin-Sykes, Co-Lead, New.E - The Hunter New Energy Cluster

Sessions will include:

- Money. Money. Money. – a fundraising fireside
- Concrete Change Starts Here - accelerating low-carbon concrete adoption.
- Less Conversation More Action - discussing Australia's manufacturing renaissance
- Building Unshakeable Aerospace Capability - pioneers creating a new wave of technology
- The Future is Storage – batteries for the clean energy future.

Other notable aspects of the Hunter Innovation will include:

- Startup Alley – discovering tomorrows innovations today
- Office Hours—a globally-proven model designed to unlock potential, 15 minutes at a time.
- Hunter Mavericks: Pitch your trailblazing idea on the main stage at a 3 minute showcase.

For the latest updates and details on how you can attend, visit www.hunterif.com.au/festival

Daracon Group backs medical research

Daracon Group has announced its new platinum sponsor partnership with the Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) Corporate Giving Program, reinforcing their commitment to supporting initiatives that make a lasting difference in the lives of people across the Hunter region.

HMRI is Australia's largest regional medical research institute, tackling the most pressing health issues affecting people across the Hunter New England region. With a vision to "discover local, cure global," HMRI's work delivers scalable health solutions that improve lives both in the local community and around the world.

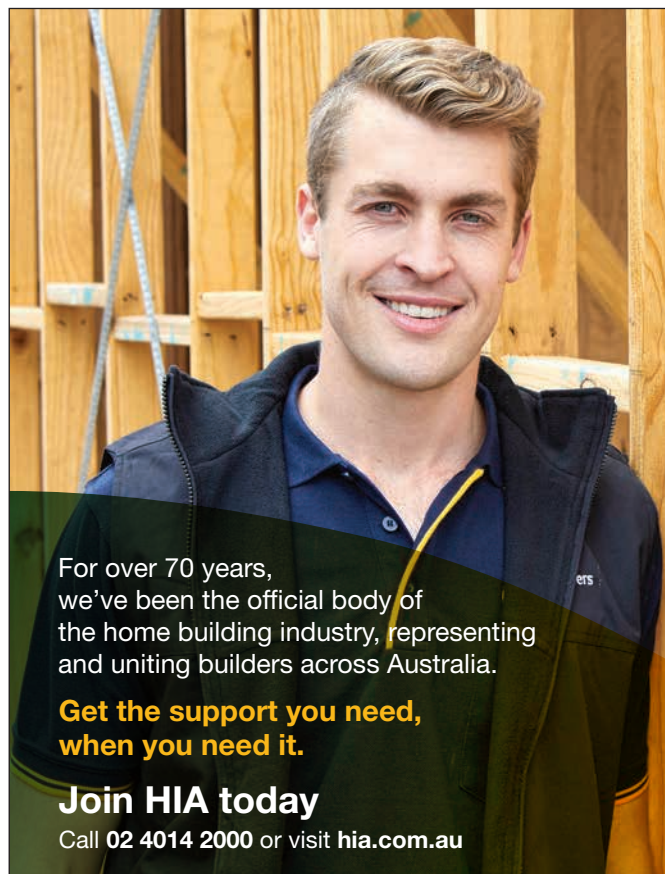
This refreshed partnership between HMRI and Daracon is a continuation of some great work together. In recent years, Daracon has provided specified funding to support the research of Associate Professor Dr Myles Young. Throughout the three-year funding agreement Daracon participated in Dr Young's SHED-IT weight loss program, which later became known as Workplace POWER. It was the first structured, group-wide health promotion initiative that Daracon Group ran over a four-year period. The success of this program became the catalyst for what has now become the Daracon Wellness offering for team members.

"We saw firsthand how some of these treatable health challenges impacted Daracon team members, which led us to connect with HMRI and their SHED-IT program team," said Belinda Boon, Daracon Group Health and Wellbeing Manager.

"What started as one initiative has grown into a dedicated, evolving space within our business focused on proactive health and wellbeing, and it is only fitting to continue that journey with our platinum sponsorship of HMRI," she said.

Todd Williams, HMRI's Chief Research Partnerships Officer, said the partnership is a testament to the power of collaboration.

"We're incredibly grateful to Daracon for their ongoing support. Partnerships like this ensure research makes it out of the lab and into the hands of the people who need it most, delivering impactful solutions to real-world health challenges. Together, we're taking healthy further and making a meaningful difference to the health and wellbeing of our communities," said Todd.



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Beanies kickstart new chase for brain cancer treatment options

Funding raised from the 2025 NRL Beanie for Brain Cancer Round will kickstart a big, bold project to develop new treatments for brain cancer patients.

Delivered through the Mark Hughes Foundation Centre for Brain Cancer Research (MHF Centre) at the University of Newcastle, this year's Beanie Round funding will aim to answer an urgent patient call for new options to treat brain cancer.

The MHF Centre will partner with industry and researchers in Queensland to develop new highly-targeted drugs that can be delivered directly to the site of the tumour via theranostics.

Theranostics is a personalised treatment that can be used for a wide range of cancers. Using a PET scanner, the operator can see if specific targets are present on tumour cells. If the targets are present, a radioactive form of the drug is given as an injection – selectively targeting the tumour cells and avoiding healthy areas.

MHF Centre Director and practising radiation oncologist, Professor Mike Fay, said it was an exciting opportunity.

"As a brain cancer research centre based in regional Australia, we're uniquely placed to do novel drug development, trial it in a small number of patients and scale it up in partnership with pharmaceutical companies."

Professor Fay said every week he sees patients in clinic, who want, and deserve, better treatments for brain cancer.

"We know that radiation works for brain tumours, we just need to make it work better.

"Patients want us to be brave and to develop and trial new treatments," Professor Fay said.

"If we're successful with this project, the clinical roll out for treatments could be done really quickly into practice in clinics around the country."



Kirralee and Mark Hughes in the University of Newcastle's Centre for Brain Cancer Research

Mark Hughes, founder of the Mark Hughes Foundation said the nation got behind the 2025 NRL Beanie for Brain Cancer Round in massive numbers with more than \$3.5 million raised for brain cancer research and patient support.

For more than 10 years, the Mark Hughes Foundation (MHF) has been committed to funding vital medical research into brain cancer – the leading cause of cancer death in Australians under 40 and children under 10.

Established in 2022 to build stronger relationships with brain cancer researchers nationally and globally – the MHF Centre for Brain Cancer Research is unifying brain cancer researchers and working together for better outcomes.

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WORKPLACE & EMPLOYMENT

Bookable coworking hub opens in the heart of Muswellbrook

A pocket of productivity with bookable desks and wi-fi has opened in the heart of Muswellbrook, with Council piloting the Co-Op shared working space. The coworking hub takes up a clean, modern room at Shop 6, Cambell's Corner and provides much-needed space to book a hot desk, plug in a laptop and get some work done over a coffee or tea.

With a range of cafes and food options within the building or an easy stroll away, the Co-Op meets a need in the Shire for a flexible, quiet space ideal for a quick stop or deep work that needs your focus for longer periods of time.

Muswellbrook Shire Council's pilot of the Co-Op aligns with a broader focus on backing innovation, economic growth, new energy and productivity in Muswellbrook's town centre.

Yukio Yasui, Council's Coordinator Commercial Property, says the Co-Op will be a productivity oasis for anyone caught between the office and home.

"Muswellbrook is famous for hard work and that includes our workers clocking a shift on Outlook or Teams. The way work is evolving, a flexible coworking space is part of the fabric of a successful, productive community," Mr Yasui said.

"The Co-Op is about providing locals, visitors and people passing through with a professional space to work, meet and collaborate – with the option to grab a tea or coffee. You can even book the whole space for longer, to suit you. It's a great, quiet space with reliable wi-fi."

Muswellbrook Mayor Jeff Drayton said the space will add capacity to the diverse range of workers, businesses and professionals of Muswellbrook Shire.

"Muswellbrook knows how to put its head down and work, but work is changing. With this space we're making sure the infrastructure keeps up with the needs of our community," Mayor Drayton said.

"Not every job in our Shire is hi-vis, as we know. Some come with video calls, clients and emails. This is a space where you can get on with it comfortably, professionally and with the focus you need."

Keys to the City marks 60 years of the University of Newcastle's impact

The University of Newcastle has been presented with the Keys to the City in recognition of the Institution's historic and ongoing contribution to Newcastle's cultural, economic and social life.

The civic honour was formally conferred during a special graduation ceremony at City Hall on 18 July, celebrating the University's 60th anniversary and its enduring partnership with City of Newcastle.

Lord Mayor Ross Kerridge said City of Newcastle is proud to recognise the institution's six decades of service and its profound impact on generations of Novocastrians.

"The University and its students have played a pivotal role in transforming Newcastle into a city of learning, aspiration and progress. Their influence is woven through our city and communities," Cr Kerridge said.

"Over the past 60 years, the University has transformed lives and opened doors for tens of thousands of people in our city.

This honour particularly recognises the University's role in enabling so many 'first in family' students to go to university, and the University's ongoing commitment to providing educational opportunities for all."

The motion to bestow the Keys to the City was initiated by Cr Declan Clausen and supported by the elected Council in May, acknowledging the transformational power of education and the University's leadership in fostering access and equity through programs such as Yapug and Open Foundation.

"The University has long been a leader of inclusive education,



Aunty Cheryl Newton, University of Newcastle Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alex Zelinsky AO, Chancellor, the Hon. Patricia Forsythe AM, Lord Mayor, Dr Ross Kerridge and Aunty Amanda Kelly at the official presentation during the University's graduation ceremony at City Hall today.

Credit: University of Newcastle

with a deep commitment to equity that has delivered lasting benefits to our city, region, state, nation and beyond," Cr Clausen said.

"Our ongoing collaboration continues to be a cornerstone Newcastle's progress, from community health and sustainability to First Nations engagement and urban innovation.

"The University's central role in Newcastle's urban renewal, through developments like NUspace and the City Campus, has helped shape the vibrant city we are today."

The Keys were accepted on behalf of the University by Chancellor, the Hon. Patricia Forsythe AM. The ceremony also featured Aunty Cheryl Newton and Aunty Amanda Kelly, Elders in Residence at the University's Wollotuka Institute, alongside students and special guests from the University's 60-year history, including some who have been part of the community since its earliest days.

University of Newcastle Vice-Chancellor Alex Zelinsky said the honour reflected the collective efforts of the entire University community.

Muswellbrook Shire Council slashes waste to landfill

Muswellbrook Shire has been named a statewide Bronze Partner of Sustainability Advantage for hitting 100% renewable energy for Council sites, cutting waste to landfill by a quarter and providing Hunter-wide leadership in sustainability.

The award, a recognition by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, is for commitment to sustainable practices and environmental leadership.

The Bronze Partner status reflects Council's significant progress toward its targets including a 35% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

The award follows several major sustainability successes including the transition to 100% renewable electricity across all Council sites, a Shire-wide upgrade to LED street lighting and the rollout of FOGO (Food Organics and Garden Organics) collections, which have reduced waste to landfill by 24.5%.

Now implemented widely in the Hunter, FOGO is a state-mandated requirement for all NSW councils by 2030.

This Bronze Partner recognition acknowledges the steps Muswellbrook Shire has taken to embed sustainability into operations and decision-making.

To achieve Bronze, organisations must undertake a sustainability diagnostic, establish baseline data, demonstrate progress toward clear environmental goals and integrate sustainability into strategic planning.

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Zeal Futures launches Women's Tradeblazer Program

Zeal Futures has launched the Women's Tradeblazer Program – a new initiative designed to open doors for women into trades and create lasting change across the industry.

Starting in September in the Hunter, the program will support 50 women to begin or restart their career journey in trades through apprenticeships and traineeships.

Participants will benefit from hands-on trade experience with multiple employers, exposure to the fast-growing renewables sector and work readiness training, which includes employability skills and accredited qualifications. They will also receive practical help including uniforms designed for women, financial counselling, and workplace rotations to find the right fit.

But Zeal Futures CEO, Sharon Smith, said it's the support networks built into this program that will really make a difference. This includes mentoring from award-winning tradeswomen, counselling, health & wellbeing programs, and literacy & numeracy support.

"Research shows that women are 77% more likely to stay in the industry with the support of a network. That's where we see the Tradeblazer program having the biggest impact."



Applications for the Tradeblazer pre-apprenticeship program are now open, with 50 spots available for women to begin or restart trade careers.

Prosperity surpasses \$1 billion in Funds Under Management

Prosperity has reached a major milestone in its financial services division, announcing it has surpassed \$1 billion in Funds Under Management (FUM). The achievement caps off a sustained period of growth for the firm, which has continued to expand its presence across wealth management, financial planning, and investment advice, despite a volatile macroeconomic environment.

With offices in Sydney, Newcastle and Brisbane, Prosperity has emerged as one of Australia's most trusted mid-tier advisory firms — offering an integrated service model that brings together financial planning, accounting, tax, business advisory, and corporate services. The firm's financial services division has grown through strong client relationships and a commitment to delivering tailored, conflict-free advice.



Founder and CEO Allan McKeown described the milestone as a "clear signal" that Australians are actively seeking independent advisers who can navigate the complexity of modern wealth and provide clarity across every life stage.

"Reaching one billion dollars under management is more than a number — it reflects the deep trust our clients have in our people, our advice, and the outcomes we help them achieve," McKeown said.

"Our team remains focused on helping Australians make smart decisions about their wealth, with advice that is proactive, evidence-based and genuinely aligned to their goals."

The firm's financial services business spans strategic financial planning, retirement advice, portfolio management, superannuation structuring, and intergenerational wealth solutions. Its client base includes business owners, professionals, executives, family groups and high-net-worth individuals.

Trial of smart school zone signs pioneered in the Hunter

The NSW Government is delivering a nation-leading safety trial in the Hunter, with the installation of two new smart school zone signs at Wallsend South Public School. The trial features locally developed safety technology made in the Hunter by HIVIS Group.

In an Australian-first, the trial will evaluate cutting-edge technology designed to improve safety for children and families travelling through busy school zones. The two signs feature radar, pedestrian sensors and artificial intelligence, and have been installed along Croudace Road and McCaffrey Drive.

These next-generation signs are solar-powered and internet-connected, and display dynamic messages based on real-time traffic and pedestrian activity. If a vehicle is detected exceeding the 40 km/h school zone speed limit, the sign will display a "SLOW DOWN" alert. The signs will also respond when high numbers of pedestrians are detected and can display tailored messages outside of school zone hours.

The trial has been supported by an \$83,500 investment from the Small Business Innovation & Research (SBIR) Program, administered by the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer.

The Wallsend South Public School has been chosen as the trial site for several reasons including high volumes of vehicle and pedestrian traffic on school days, its location close to the base of development and delivery partner HIVIS Group and the site having 4G connectivity and good solar access.

All information collected from the signs, including traffic volumes, vehicle speeds, and pedestrian data, will be securely sent to a central system for analysis. This will help assess how well the alerts influence driver behaviour and reduce speeds in school zones.

This trial represents the next step in the evolution of school zone safety infrastructure, which has already contributed to a 56% reduction in crashes across school zones in the past decade.

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Turning patient pain into start-up success

When cancer survivor and Newcastle native Cheryl Pollock was left with debilitating lymphoedema, she refused to settle for off-the-shelf solutions. Instead, she became her first customer, sketching prototypes on napkins and crafting homemade inserts to test a novel concept: using gentle, differential pressure (DP-Tx) to mobilise fluid and relieve pain.

Cheryl's relentless testing paid off. Early adopters, as well as fellow patients she met through local support groups, reported life-changing results. Their feedback became her north star, guiding iterative improvements and validating a clear market need. With minimal outside funding, she set up ChezLeon Pty Ltd, navigating the lean-start-up grind: cold-calling manufacturers, deciphering regulatory pathways, and pitching sceptical investors who preferred city-based med-tech ventures.

Her persistence has paid off with the official launch of her first product, the DP-Tx Bra Insert.

Built around patient centricity, the product speaks directly to survivors of breast cancer, mastitis sufferers, and post-surgical patients, an audience looking for alternatives to restrictive compression wear.

Cheryl's journey, from kitchen-bench designer to founder-CEO exemplifies start-up resilience: continuous customer engagement, rapid prototyping, and the courage to challenge industry norms. As ChezLeon looks to secure local partnerships and eyes global expansion, it stands as proof that a founder's pain point can spark solutions with worldwide impact.



\$310 million in development application for MidCoast

MidCoast Council is helping support local jobs and the economy, with \$310 million worth of development assessed over the past twelve months.

Council assessed 891 development applications, including new homes, businesses and subdivisions that can help build a stronger local community.

At the Council meeting on 23 July, Councillors reviewed the latest development activity report. It showed that Council received 1,570 customer requests for development assessment during the quarter – approximately 10% of all requests lodged with Council.

Council is working hard to speed things up. Thanks to internal triage improvements and a Fast Track system for uncomplicated development applications, wait times have gone down over the last two years. Council now takes an average of 84 days to approve a development application – faster than the state average of 101 days and the regional group average of 96 days. For Fast Track applications, approval takes just 15 days.

MidCoast Council is among the busiest councils in NSW when it comes to development activity, being in the top 10 councils statewide for the number of development applications assessed.

While Council handles most development assessments for the area, some larger developments (State Significant Development)

are handled directly by the State Government.

At times, Council needs to refer development assessments to State Government agencies like Transport for NSW and the Environmental Protection Authority which may add to the wait times for a determination.

With housing on the minds of many, Council is determined to do all it can to further improve development assessment turnaround times.

Council is also looking at how it can support affordable and accessible housing in the region with the preparation of an Affordable Housing Policy.

Upgrades for livestock market facility

Mayor of Singleton, Cr Sue Moore said \$3.73 million in upgrades for the Hunter Regional Livestock Exchange were vital to ensure the ongoing sustainability and growth of the local agricultural sector, particularly the hundred-million-dollar beef and cattle industry.

The NSW Government announced the funding from the Regional Economic Development and Community Investment Program to cover a new commercial centre, upgrades to livestock handling facilities and a modernised livestock weighing station at the facility.

Cr Moore said the announcement was welcome news after promises were made during the May Federal election campaign, with improvements to the site set to continue to support over 500 small businesses and primary producers in the Singleton local government area (LGA).

"Agriculture has long played an important role in the Singleton community, and livestock sales have occurred on the site of the Hunter Regional Livestock Exchange (HRLX) since 1909," she said.

"With an average of 900 head of cattle coming through the stock sales weekly and generating more than \$40 million in stock sales annually, the Hunter Regional Livestock Exchange development is desperately needed to provide a modern regional facility for Singleton and the wider Hunter Region to better serve stock and sales agents and buyers.

"It may be surprising to some that beef and dairy cattle and meat manufacturing generate an economic output of \$292 million in our local government area, so this is a vital piece of investment for our future prosperity and will support the economic ecosystem consisting of the saleyards, abattoir and primary producing businesses in our LGA."

The upgrades will see the replacement of a decrepit 1960s commercial building that has been condemned due to asbestos and consequential temporary arrangements for management staff and agents, with a new building that will include a commercial kitchen, cafeteria, management offices and facilities for truck drivers and other workers.

Other components of the project include:

- Construction of new livestock weighing, and animal processing facilities
- Construction of new livestock holding yards and feeding infrastructure
- Construction of new access walkways
- Construction of a new livestock unloading loading ramp

With funding secured, Council staff are finalising the scope of the works for the project, which has been included in its capital works program for 2025/2026.



TAFE NSW Newcastle trades teachers to wear vibrant shirts in new awareness drive

TAFE NSW Newcastle, Glendale and Belmont teachers are backing the future of the Hunter region's construction workforce by wearing a custom-designed shirt as part of a new state-wide initiative to raise awareness of mental health and provide vital support to trades students.

A recent survey by Beyond Blue revealed almost half (45%) of workers in trade occupations reported poor mental health negatively affected their relationships. Furthermore, a fifth (20%) of respondents said they would not disclose if they had depression.

TAFE NSW, in collaboration with mental health organisation, TradeMutt, has developed a unique and vibrant workwear shirt to encourage apprentices and trainees to prioritise their physical and mental health and access mentoring support while they study, learn on the job, and complete their qualifications.

It comes during Tradies National Health Month (August), which shines a spotlight on the health and injury risks that affect tradespeople, and the benefits of safe work practices and early intervention.

Featuring the slogan "This is a conversation starter" and a QR code on every shirt, the collaboration will create a supportive learning environment where students can connect with teachers and peers, and use their mobile phone to access free, professional support.

TAFE NSW Newcastle, Glendale and Belmont will be three of 42 TAFE NSW campuses taking part in the initiative, alongside more than 500 TAFE NSW Carpentry, Electrotechnology, and Plumbing teachers.

Jen Perkins, R/Executive Director Construction and Energy, said,



"TAFE NSW is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its students.

"Balancing study and starting a new career can be tough for young tradespeople, which is why it's important for students to have mentors and professional support services close by.

"Our teachers come from industry, so they understand the real-world pressures apprentices face. This initiative helps students feel supported both on the tools and in looking after their mental health," Mrs Perkins said.

Steve Whan, Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education said, "The construction industry is the backbone of our state's future – building the infrastructure we need and supporting economic growth.

"But it is also an industry full of humans and we need to make sure they know they are valued and supported. That's vital for their lives but it is also important for building the workforce our state needs. It builds on the type of work the Government is doing working closely with the Commonwealth, industry, and unions to ensure apprentices get the support they need to complete their qualifications and secure long-term careers.

"This initiative is a significant step forward safeguarding young talent, so NSW has a skilled and thriving workforce now and, in the future," Mr Whan said.

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Lake Mac development tops \$1 billion

The total value of development approvals in Lake Macquarie has cracked the billion-dollar mark again in Lake Macquarie, despite a nationwide downturn in development investment.

Analysis of development application data over the 2024-2025 financial year shows Lake Macquarie City Council approved 1,824 development applications and DA modifications worth a total \$1.02 billion, with Morisset topping the list for hot-spot suburbs.

The new figures mean Council has now approved more than \$8 billion worth of development across the city since 2019.

Director Development Planning and Regulation David Antcliff said streamlining processes over the past five years had resulted in quicker approval times and aided the city's growth and transformation.

"Approving high-quality, sustainable commercial and residential development has helped Lake Macquarie transition rapidly from an economy based around mining and traditional industry to one focusing on services, health, tourism and innovation," he said.

"It sets up our city to grow and prosper for the next generation and provides employment opportunities for younger people, so we don't lose them to Sydney and other capital cities."

South-west Lake Macquarie continued to firm as one of the Hunter Region's most significant growth areas, with Morisset home to the highest value of new DAs approved (\$49.6 million), and Wyee Point (\$31.4 million), Wyee (\$30.7 million) and Cooranbong (\$27.6 million) all in the top 10 suburbs.

Lake Macquarie Mayor Adam Shultz said he was optimistic for the year ahead, with interest rates easing, and new Council measures approved earlier this month to attract new investment, such as increased incentives for affordable housing developers.

"The 2024-2025 data shows Lake Mac is in a very strong position and remains a place where people want to build and invest," he said.

"We will continue to work hard, streamline our processes and do what we can to attract further quality development for the good of the city."

Local banks and supporters launch campaign to keep branches alive in regional Australia

Maitland-based The Mutual Bank is one of 25 regional banks and supporters who have banded together to advocate to keep face-to-face branches open in regional towns.

The organisations have formed the Regional Banking Investment Alliance (RBIA) and want essential bank branch services such as cash handling and fraud advice to be supported by a community service obligation (CSO) on the wider Australian banking sector to share the cost burden.

CEO of The Mutual Bank, Mark Williams said, "We have been supporting regional Australians since 1888, supporting locals in places like Dungog where they have been abandoned by the bigger banks chasing profits.

"It is time to stand up and support banks that stay, not just allow those that leave to reward their shareholders at the expense of regional Australia."

Despite enquires and taskforces, big banks have closed more than 90 regional branches since February 2022, including more than a dozen this year, while RBIA members continue to provide face-to-face services in their local communities.

CEO of Regional Australia Bank and Alliance spokesperson, David Heine said that regional bank branches often incur additional costs due to "pass through banking", where customers use regional bank branches for costly services like cash handling and then transfer their funds to big banks who enjoy the profits.

"We are at the front line, working with and part of the local community, offering fraud and scam advice, access to cash and cash floats and keeping our profits in regional Australia," Mr Heine said. "The big four banks made more than \$31 billion in profit last

year, yet they're walking away from the communities that actually helped to build their success."

"Around 30% of the transactions our bank processes lead to 'pass through banking', which seriously disadvantages our ability to compete and expand. We want the banks who are abandoning regional Australia to pay their fair share in keeping face-to-face services alive."

A delegation of Alliance members recently travelled to Canberra to discuss a cost-sharing model where big banks whose regional branch investment falls short, continue to support regional communities.

The Alliance has garnered support from community groups, with the Country Women's Association (CWA) NSW, Regional HQ, Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association (CPSA) and National Seniors signing on as supporters.

Hunter Water's 2025 Love Water Grants Program

Hunter Water has announced the successful recipients of its 2025 Love Water Grants program, with 19 community organisations and groups awarded a share of \$125,000 in funding to support water-saving and sustainability-focused initiatives across the Lower Hunter.

Now in its seventh year, the Love Water Grants program offers one-off funding of up to \$10,000 for projects that promote water conservation and efficiency, as well as those that incorporate education, environmental stewardship, or sustainability outcomes.

Among this year's recipients is Belmont Wetlands State Park, which will use the funding to purchase a water cart to help efficiently irrigate areas where water is not available. The cart will support ongoing rehabilitation and revegetation of native flora while also assisting with local events.

Park Manager Clinton Smith said the organisation is grateful to have received a Love Water Grant.

"Belmont Wetlands State Park is an important part of the Lower Hunter community, and this funding will allow us to deliver practical water savings, as well as provide a useful water source during bushfire season.

"The water cart will also help support responsible access to water for our community events so we can continue to take care of local flora and fauna," Mr Smith said.

Hunter Water Executive Manager Strategy and Engagement, Emma Berry, said the program continues to strengthen community resilience and environmental awareness.

"The 2025 program attracted a strong response once again. Hunter Water received 76 applications, totalling \$620,945 in requested funding, from schools, early childhood centres, not-for-profits, and local councils.

"This incredible interest shows the commitment of our local communities to protect our most valuable resource—water. These projects, from rainwater harvesting systems to educational gardens and upgraded water infrastructure, will deliver lasting benefits across the Lower Hunter," Ms Berry said.



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High-speed rail needs homes, skills and a sequenced pipeline

The Property Council of Australia put the opportunities of high-speed rail for the Hunter and Central Coast firmly on the agenda at the 2025 High Speed Rail Conference in Sydney on 12 August.

Speaking at the conference, Property Council Hunter and Central Coast Regional Director Nuatali Nemes said high speed rail would deliver the most value when planning for housing, skills and infrastructure moves in lockstep.

"The opportunity is enormous, but it only works if we line up the housing and infrastructure that sits around the stations," Ms Nemes said.

"At Broadmeadow, that means working closely with the NSW Government on integrated planning for new homes, local transport, utilities and open space so precincts are liveable from day one."

Ms Nemes said the Property Council's Central Coast Taskforce and Hunter Committee have expressed in-principle support for high-speed rail, citing opportunities for jobs, private investment and better connections across the Hunter and Central Coast.

"We're backing the vision, and we're ready to help deliver it. But we need a clear plan to manage skills and materials, so the project doesn't impact the broader construction pipeline," she said.

"With labour tight and costs elevated, government and industry must map the workforce, invest in training, and time packages to avoid drawing people and product away from housing, hospitals and other essential builds in the region."

Ms Nemes said strong risk management and transparent sequencing across the infrastructure pipeline would be essential.

"Publish the schedule, phase the work, and coordinate approvals. A steady, predictable program will lift productivity, reduce price spikes and give industry the confidence to invest in capacity," she said.

"The High Speed Rail Authority's on-site presence in Newcastle is more than symbolic. It puts our region at the table as business cases are finalised and delivery ramps up.

"Fast, reliable connections will make the Hunter and Central Coast even more attractive for people and investment, but we must turn that connectivity into homes and jobs on the ground," Ms Nemes said.

University recognised at AFR Higher Education Awards

University of Newcastle's researcher Professor Matt Dun and the Wollotuka Institute were recognised at The Australian Financial Review Higher Education Awards in August, which highlight the contribution that the Higher Education sector makes to Australian life.

The awards are the pinnacle awards for the higher education sector, with the University taking out two of the eight categories - showcasing its standing against the 43 universities across the country.

Professor Dun was awarded the Emerging Leadership Award, recognising his transformational leadership as one of Australia's leading brain cancer researchers.

After an early focus on paediatric leukaemia, Professor Dun pivoted his research to paediatric brain cancer research and clinical trials in 2018, when his two-year-old daughter Josephine was diagnosed with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG) or diffuse midline glioma (DMG), the most lethal form of childhood cancer.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alex Zelinsky AO said

"Professor Dun has accumulated an outstanding list of achievements having secured \$40.87 million in total funding in 12 years, has authored 190 publications, including 99 journal articles and four book chapters and his scientific industry ratings show his



work is 780 times more impactful than the average for his field.

"He has also been incredibly generous with his time - in the past six years he has supervised 13 postgraduate students and, inspired by his daughter, he founded RUN DIPG which makes a valued contribution to supporting research and amplifying the voices of families impacted by DIPG/DMG."

For more than 40 years, the University of Newcastle's Wollotuka Institute has led the sector addressing the under-representation of Indigenous students in higher education.

Professor Alex Zelinsky said "Our University feels a deep sense of pride in our Indigenous commitment. This award is an acknowledgement of the outstanding work of the Wollotuka team, whose decades of work have led us to our position as the leading university in the country for Indigenous education.

"From its beginnings in the 1980s with just four staff, Wollotuka has grown to a team of 52, and today, 5% of our student population proudly identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The University's Daughters & Dads Active & Empowered Program, led by Professor Phil Morgan was a finalist in the Community Engagement Award category and the School of Architecture for the Master of Architecture program, were finalists in the Teaching & Learning Excellence category.

Construction of new homes to commence at former Waratah Gasworks

The NSW Government has achieved a major milestone in its remediation of the former Waratah Gasworks, with construction of new homes commencing in July.

Property and Development NSW (PDNSW) has completed remediation of 11 residential lots which were contaminated with soil and infrastructure left behind by the former gasworks operation. The remediation project takes in a total of 13 properties on Ellis and Turton Roads. Seven properties are being rebuilt, while four others will be sold on the private market.

The remediation work completed involved the excavation and removal of contaminated soil and gasworks infrastructure buried at the site of the former gasworks, which operated from 1889 to 1926.

The works are part of a \$25 million project that has so far removed more than 20,000 tonnes of gasworks impacted material.

Work included excavation and removal of a 56 m wide underground gasholder which extended to a depth of 6 m below the ground, along with tar wells, and purifier beds.

**PROSPERITY ADVISERS GROUP**

Prosperity Advisers has promoted **Aidan Vuocolo** to Associate Director. Aidan has been a key contributor to Prosperity through his professionalism, technical expertise and dedication to client service. He has demonstrated strong commercial judgement and broad experience in all aspects of advising clients, as well as a talent for developing team capability through coaching and mentoring. Aidan's ability to foster client relationships, generate new business and identify cross-referral opportunities across the firm has been integral to his success.

**PKF**

PKF has appointed **Stephanie Brown** as a Principal in its Newcastle tax team. With 20 years of experience in tax, accounting, and law, Stephanie brings a unique combination of technical capability, industry knowledge and human insight to her new role. Her career spans time at top-tier firms including KPMG and PwC, alongside roles in the not-for-profit sector and commercial law. This diverse background equips her with a rare breadth of perspective, allowing her to approach client challenges holistically and deliver strategic, real-world solutions.

**ROBERTS CROSBIE
MORTENSEN LAWYERS**

Roberts Crosbie Mortensen Lawyers has promoted **Christa Chapman** to Senior Associate Solicitor. The promotion recognises Christa's outstanding legal expertise, professionalism and commitment to clients. Christa represents both individuals and businesses in relation to a broad range of commercial and property transactions, including buying and selling of businesses, commercial and retail leases, and buying and selling residential and commercial properties.

**DELANEY ROBERTS SPECIALIST
FAMILY LAWYERS**

Delaney Roberts Specialist Family Lawyers promoted **Monique Allan** to Special Counsel. Monique is an Accredited Specialist in Family Law and has practiced almost exclusively in this area since her admission as a solicitor in 2016. Monique's work focuses on both property and parenting family law matters. Monique is compassionate and understanding and strives to achieve the best possible outcome for her clients within the family law framework.

**DELANEY ROBERTS SPECIALIST
FAMILY LAWYERS**

Delaney Roberts Specialist Family Lawyers has promoted **Tayleh Soames** to Senior Associate Solicitor. Tayleh has become a trusted advisor in resolving intricate property settlements, her expertise extends to untangling assets within complex family trusts, navigating the tax implications of Self-Managed Super Funds, and ensuring fair division of businesses and companies. Her extensive knowledge of financial structures is further bolstered by her academic achievements.

**MOVABLE**

Natalie Tonks has joined the team at MOVABLE. With a reputation built on trust, results and relationships, Natalie is one of Newcastle's most respected agents. Known for her calm confidence and strategic approach, Natalie has more than six years of industry experience and over 25 years of business leadership to every property she represents. With her husband Alan and son Nicholas already part of MOVABLE's commercial and industrial team, her move marks a new chapter for the Tonks family.

**PROSPERITY ADVISERS GROUP**

Prosperity Advisers Group has promoted **Graham Southgate** to Associate Director. Graham from the Financial Services division has consistently maintained a high standard of client service and compliance, while growing his client base and contributing to new business initiatives. He is a regular representative of the firm at industry events and has built strong referral relationships, particularly with colleagues in the Sydney office. Graham's commitment to team culture and firm-wide initiatives has been a hallmark of his leadership.

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WARATAH SUPER BATTERY PROJECT BEGINS PARTIAL OPERATION AS SHOCK ABSORBER FOR NSW GRID

The Waratah Super Battery Project is now actively bolstering energy security for NSW's grid as a 'shock absorber' in the event of power line outages due to events like lightning strikes and bushfires.

The first 350 MW (700 MWh) of the project's battery capacity have come online in the lead up to full operation, expected later this year.

The project is part of the NSW Government's plan to upgrade our grid and provide clean, reliable and affordable energy for everyone in the state as ageing coal plants retire.

It involves the most powerful battery energy storage system in the world, located at the site of the former Munmorah coal-fired power station.

The Waratah Super Battery Project is more than just a battery. It has multiple parts that work together to help it perform its unique role in supporting the electricity grid.

The project will allow more power to flow from existing generators to supply electricity to people around the state and is faster to implement than new transmission lines.

Around half of the battery's capacity is now online, the overarching control system is in operation, agreements with generators are in place, and the first stage of upgrades to the existing transmission network has been completed.

The remainder of the battery's capacity (for a total of 850 MW / 1680 MWh) is expected to come online later this year.

EnergyCo is the NSW Government body responsible for overseeing the delivery of the project, while Transgrid is the network operator and Akaysha Energy operates the battery storage system.

Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Penny Sharpe said "The Waratah Super Battery is one of the biggest in the world, and a crucial addition to our energy system.

"As it comes online, it will help power our homes and businesses while stabilising the grid to avoid blackouts."

EnergyCo Chief Executive, Hannah McCaughey stated "Switching on the Waratah Super Battery Project is a win for our grid and a win for households and businesses across NSW.

"It will help provide clean, reliable and affordable energy to the people of our state and the National Electricity Market.

"It's a fantastic example of how new technologies bring new solutions for our energy needs.

"This is the first of our projects to go into operation, and there are many more to come. We look forward to more milestones in our renewable energy zones this year."

Akaysha Energy CEO, Nick Carter: added "Bringing the first 350 Mw of the Waratah Super Battery online is a major milestone and a moment of real pride for everyone at Akaysha Energy.

"This achievement is the result of a tremendous collective effort spanning our global business units across all areas such as delivery, engineering, commercial and legal, technical integration, grid modelling, software, operations and trading. Of course, we

could not achieve success without our outstanding delivery partners – CPP, Hitachi Energy and Wilson Transformer Company.

"Delivering this scale of infrastructure on such an accelerated timeline is no small feat, and we are honoured to have been entrusted to deliver a project of such significance to NSW's energy security."

Transgrid CEO, Brett Redman said "Transgrid is proud to work with EnergyCo and Akaysha Energy to deliver the Waratah Super Battery Project – the first priority transmission infrastructure project under the NSW Government's Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap.

"To support the project, Transgrid's experts have designed and installed a System Integrity Protection Scheme (SIPS) Control System which is the largest and most innovative of its kind in Australia.

"Specialist crews have also carried out upgrade work at 22 substations and 4 existing transmission lines across NSW to deliver additional energy to consumers when it's needed."

CALL FOR HUNTER GROUPS TO APPLY FOR FUNDING

Community groups in the Hunter and Upper Hunter Valley regions with projects or ideas that make a positive difference to the local community are being encouraged to apply for funding in the next round of Mount Thorley Warkworth (MTW) and Ashton Coal's Community Support Programs.

The 2026 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.

Mount Thorley Warkworth General Manager, Cris Shadbolt, encouraged local community groups to lodge their application form to apply for funding.

"Our Community Support Program gives us the opportunity to assist locally focused programs and initiatives capable of making a real contribution to the continued growth and sustainability of the region.

"A previously successful organisation is Singleton Heights Pre-School. With joint funding support from MTW and Ashton Coal, they were able to install a waterproof shelter over their softfall play area. This has enabled the children to have access to the playground equipment more frequently, the play area is dry which is safer, and research shows that having kids play outside leads to better general health. It is a significant improvement to the Pre-School.

"We are a proud and active member of the local community, and this is just one example of some of the amazing projects that have been supported by our program, which will be enjoyed by many people in our community for years to come.

"If you have a project or idea that has the potential to benefit others in the Hunter Valley region, we encourage you to apply now," said Cris.

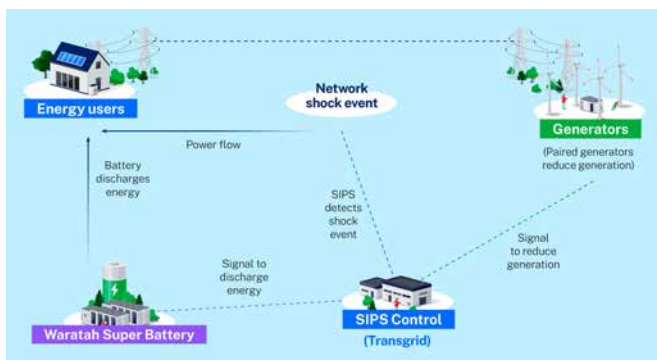
In the past, Yancoal Australia funding has enabled: the development and implementation of environmental projects, education, training, and employment assistance initiatives; sponsorship of key community events; the purchase of much needed equipment; and helped support disadvantaged groups within the community.

Ashton Coal Operations Manager, Michael Bartlett urged Upper Hunter Valley community groups to apply for financial assistance.

"As a key employer in the area, we believe in the value of supporting grass roots groups and organisations to grow and expand, thereby strengthening our community.

"In the past, Ashton donated funding to Singleton PCYC to update their outdoor space. The centre purchased a new five burner BBQ and outdoor dining setting to create a functional and comfortable area to relax and mentor its youth members.

"We are proud to be able to help organisations like this one and we encourage all the local community groups in our area to apply for financial support now," said Michael.





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NCIG MARKS RECORD-BREAKING MILESTONES AND INDUSTRY RECOGNITION

2025 has been one of the most productive periods on record for NCIG, with the team delivering operational milestones and earning prestigious industry accolades.

Following the wet weather and port disruptions in late May and early June, NCIG faced one of the busiest periods in history, with over 3 million tonnes of coal in the stockyard and an increasing shipping queue. Over the following weeks, the team worked tirelessly to draw down stock levels while maintaining the high service standards our customers expect.

In June this effort culminated in a significant milestone with 63 vessels being loaded during the month - the highest number of vessels loaded in a single month in NCIG's history. This brought the stock levels and ship queue down to a more manageable level and is a clear demonstration of NCIG people's ongoing commitment to delivering performance for their customers.

On the back of these efforts in the outbound section of the terminal operations, on 10 August NCIG broke another record with the largest-ever inbound coal delivery by train - 275,527 tonnes delivered by 32 trains in just 24 hours. The achievement formed part of a four-day run totalling more than 900,000 tonnes, despite challenging conditions from track flooding and harbour delays.

"These milestones reflect the dedication, teamwork, and resilience of our people. Even in adverse conditions, our team rises to the challenge to deliver for our customers and keep the coal chain moving," said John Kite, Acting CEO.

Alongside operational success, NCIG also been recognised for excellence in safety and workforce development.

In March, they received the Most Innovative WHS Idea - Large Organisation award at the 2025 Hunter Safety Awards. This

acknowledges NCIG's commitment to embedding safety into every decision and their innovative Safety Culture Score initiative which measures leading safety indicators across leadership, environment, practices and people. The initiative empowers NCIG's people to take ownership of safety performance and reflects NCIG's proactive safety culture.

In May, NCIG was awarded the Host Employer Innovation Award at the 2025 Zeal Futures Excellence Awards, recognising the decade-long partnership with Zeal Futures and commitment to creating meaningful, hands-on learning experiences for apprentices. Over the past 10 years, NCIG has welcomed many apprentices through the program, with the award highlighting the dedication to developing future talent and fostering a workplace built on learning and innovation.

With record-breaking operational results and industry recognition for innovation and safety, NCIG has set a strong pace for the remainder of 2025 and beyond.

HUNTER TRANSMISSION PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Hunter residents are encouraged to have their say on the Hunter Transmission Project's environmental impact statement (EIS), which is now on public display and open for submissions.

In a major milestone in the delivery of this State significant infrastructure project, EnergyCo has lodged the EIS with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and it will be on public exhibition until 5pm Wednesday 24 September.

The Hunter Transmission Project will unlock electricity supply from new renewable energy zones to ensure reliable, state-wide delivery of energy as coal-fired power stations close.

As with all major infrastructure projects, an EIS is an essential part of the Hunter Transmission Project planning process. It assesses the environmental, social and economic impacts and opportunities of the project. It also outlines how impacts will be avoided, minimised or managed.

The Hunter Transmission Project will provide a missing link in the electricity network and help unlock the supply of electricity from the Central-West Orana and New England Renewable Energy Zones.

Following extensive planning, community consultation since 2022, and detailed technical studies, the project has been refined to minimise impacts on people and the environment. More than 85 per cent of the infrastructure will be built on mining, energy and government land.

HTP Project Director Peter Redwin said "The Hunter Transmission Project is a vital part of NSW's plan to secure our energy future.

"The release of the environmental impact statement (EIS) marks an important step in planning and delivering infrastructure that will ensure a reliable, affordable and clean energy future.

"This milestone is the result of more than 2 years of detailed planning and extensive community consultation to ensure the project is delivered in a way that minimises impacts and maximises benefits for the local community.

"I encourage the community, landholders and stakeholders to review the EIS, understand the project and provide their feedback"

To view the EIS and make a submission, visit the NSW Planning Portal: planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/have-your-say

The graphic features the Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group logo at the top, with a stylized orange and white crane icon. Below the logo, the text '2025 ACHIEVEMENTS' is prominently displayed in white on a dark blue background. The background also shows faint illustrations of a coal ship, a train, and a coal pile. At the bottom, three key achievements are listed in white text on a dark blue background, each accompanied by a small icon: a ship for vessels loaded, a train for coal unloaded, and a ribbon for awards. The bottom of the graphic has an orange banner with the text 'Proudly delivering sustainable export services for our customers'.

Newcastle Coal
INFRASTRUCTURE GROUP

**2025
ACHIEVEMENTS**

63 VESSELS LOADED IN JUNE (NEW RECORD)	275,527 t COAL UNLOADED FROM 32 TRAINS IN 24HRS ON 10TH AUGUST (NEW RECORD)	2 Awards HUNTER SAFETY AWARDS & ZEAL FUTURES EXCELLENCE AWARDS
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Proudly delivering *sustainable* export services
for our customers

The graphic has a dark blue background with white text. On the right side, there is a small inset photo of a smiling woman with dark hair talking on a mobile phone. The text on the left reads 'WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR NEWS!' followed by the large number '4062 8133'.

WE WANT TO HEAR
ABOUT YOUR NEWS!

4062 8133

2025 HEALTH, SAFETY, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY AWARDS WINNERS

On 8 August winners of the NSW Minerals Council's Health, Safety, Environment and Community Awards were announced in the Hunter, celebrating outstanding innovations and contributions to the mining industry across a range of categories.

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

"Every year our HSEC Awards are a highlight of the Conference as they showcase the NSW mining industry's ongoing efforts to deliver better outcomes for our workforce, our communities, and the environment," NSW Minerals Council CEO, Stephen Galilee said.

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

"Our 2025 awards have continued a very high standard, demonstrating our industry's commitment to ongoing improvement and mining responsibly," Mr Galilee said.

Health Excellence Award

The 2025 Health Excellence Award went to The Bloomfield Group for their program Fostering a mentally safe and respectful workforce.

In response to the Respect@Work report and evolving psychosocial hazard legislation, The Bloomfield Group implemented a cultural transformation program to foster a safe, respectful, and mentally healthy workplace. Key initiatives like Program One and Mentally Safe, have led to reduced psychological claims, high employee engagement, and improved leadership capability.

Safety Excellence Award

The Safety Excellence Award was presented to Glencore: Bulga Open Cut for their Remote Inspection System.

Daniel Crebert at Glencore's Bulga Open Cut developed a cost-effective remote inspection system to enhance safety and efficiency during heavy mining equipment inspections. Using GoPro cameras and custom magnetic mounts, the solution enables single-person inspections from a safe distance, reducing exposure to hazardous areas and eliminating the need for two-person teams.

Environmental Excellence Award

The Environmental Excellence Award was won by Glencore Coal Assets Australia: Liddell Coal for the Liddell Coal Rehabilitation Certification.

Glencore's Liddell Coal Operation is the first to achieve mine rehabilitation certification under NSW's enhanced reforms, setting a new benchmark for sustainable land use. Through a 15-year progressive rehabilitation strategy, 52 hectares were transformed into productive grazing pasture just 12 months after mining ceased. Scientific trials confirmed the land's superior agricultural performance, while advanced digital tools ensured real-time progress and risk management.

Community Excellence Award

BlackRock Industries won the Community Excellence Award for their Second Chance for Change Program.

In collaboration with Mach Energy, Malabar Resources Ltd, Sedgman and Thiess, the Second Chance for Change program is a pioneering initiative supporting Aboriginal men during the final stages of incarceration with real employment, training, and mentorship.

Through partnerships with mining companies, over 200 participants have gained purpose, skills, and a path to reintegration, drastically reducing recidivism and breaking generational cycles.

Glencore Coal's contribution adds up for Hunter communities

5,110 Direct jobs

\$1.6 billion Annual spend on goods and services

1,210 Suppliers

\$2.2 billion

2024 total direct contribution

Glencore in the Hunter Valley

- Mangoola Coal
- Liddell Coal
- Integra Coal**
- Bulga Coal
- Hunter Valley Operations*
- Mount Owen Glendell Coal
- United Wambo
- Ravensworth Coal



Scan the QR code to find out how our economic contributions add up for New South Wales, or visit glencore.ws/Contributions

GLENCORE

Data from the Commonwealth Electoral Division of Hunter. All dollar figures are in AUD and relate to the 2024 calendar year. Glencore's total direct economic contribution includes our payment of wages and salaries; spend on goods and services; payment of taxes and royalties to federal, state, territory and local governments; and support for community partnerships. * Hunter Valley Operations is an independently operated Joint Venture in which Glencore owns a 49% stake. **Our Integra mine reached the end of its scheduled life in 2024 and is in the process of rehabilitation and closure.

FINAL INVESTMENT DECISION ON 500 MW TOMAGO BATTERY

AGL Energy Limited has reached a Final Investment Decision (FID) on a 500 MW, four-hour duration, grid scale battery to be located at Tomago.

Construction work for the battery is expected to begin in late 2025, with the commencement of operations targeted for late 2027. The expected asset life of the battery is 20 years. The total construction cost of this grid forming battery project is estimated to be approximately \$800 million. AGL has entered into a contract with Fluence as the engineering, procurement and construction provider.

The battery will be funded on AGL's balance sheet, utilising operating cash flows and existing debt facilities, including green capex loans.

AGL's Managing Director and CEO, Damien Nicks, said:

"the Final Investment Decision on the Tomago battery project marks yet another significant milestone in AGL's delivery of its strategy and the transition and decarbonisation of its energy portfolio."

"Once operational, the Tomago Battery will expand on AGL's existing suite of grid scale battery assets and contracted capacity from third parties and further enhance our flexible asset portfolio.

Importantly, both the 250 MW Torrens Island and 50 MW Broken Hill Batteries have delivered strong performance since they commenced operations, and the 500 MW Liddell Battery remains on track to commence operations in early 2026."

"In addition, we have a clear pathway to FID for a further 900 MW of grid scale battery projects, as we aim to accelerate the development of our grid-scale battery portfolio and grow our fleet of flexible assets. We will continue to leverage our innovative, in-house capabilities to optimise the performance of our grid-scale battery assets."

PORT OF NEWCASTLE WELCOMES FIRST OF 30,000 WIND TURBINE COMPONENTS

Port of Newcastle has welcomed the arrival of the first major shipment of wind turbine components destined for Squadron Energy's Ungula Wind Farm, marking the beginning of a new era for renewable energy logistics in NSW.

PON CEO, Craig Carmody, said the shipment signals the start of what will be an unprecedented volume of renewable energy infrastructure passing through Newcastle, with up to 30,000 wind turbine and renewable energy components expected over the coming decade.

"This first consignment not only highlights the Port of Newcastle's unrivalled capability to manage large-scale renewable energy projects but also demonstrates our commitment to advancing NSW's clean energy transformation.

"With major projects like Ungula Wind Farm underway, the Port is reaffirming its central role as the state's gateway for renewable energy components, from wind to solar and battery installations."

Located 14 kilometres east of Wellington, NSW, Ungula Wind Farm will feature 69 turbines and generate enough clean energy to power the equivalent of more than 220,000 homes, avoiding over 560,000 tonnes of carbon emissions each year once complete.

Squadron Energy Executive General Manager Development and Delivery, Tony Clark said these were the first Ungula Wind Farm components to hit Australian shores, with the tower parts being stored at Port of Newcastle until the site is ready for them later in the year.

"This is a big milestone for the project, as we prepare the site for turbine installation," Mr Clark said.

"Port of Newcastle's state of the art storage facilities means our components will be well looked after until we're ready for them to make the journey from Newcastle to site.

"We're powering through work on site and can't wait to start erecting the first turbine early next year, getting one step closer to generating clean energy through our 414 MW project."

Mr Carmody said today's milestone underpins the close collaboration between PON, the NSW Government, and private sector partners to support the diversity and reliability of the state's energy sector.

"We are proud to work alongside industry and government to deliver a cleaner, more affordable, and more reliable energy future for NSW. Today's arrival is just the beginning of a decade-defining transformation, and Port of Newcastle is ready to deliver," he said.

Recent analysis shows that 86% of wind farm Environmental Impact Statements in NSW have named Port of Newcastle as the potential entry point for their componentry. Additionally, 77% of all renewable energy projects across the state, including batteries and solar, have specified PON as a gateway, making it a vital link in the supply chain for the state's decarbonisation efforts through the 2030s.

"PON's investment in specialised on-site storage infrastructure means that large wind turbine blades, towers, and drive trains can be efficiently received, securely stored, and dispatched to projects statewide, minimising double handling and reducing unnecessary transport in regional communities," Mr Carmody continued.

Since 2020, Port of Newcastle has handled components destined for projects in Yass, Boorowa, and the Southern Tablelands, as well as managing cargo, such as spare blades, bound for wind farms across Australia.

The arrival comes off the back of a \$115.5 million investment by the NSW Government toward the construction of the Newcastle Logistics Precinct adjacent to the Port, with dedicated pavements for storage and seamless road access to renewable energy zones throughout NSW. The funding was announced at the Port in June by NSW Minister for Energy, Penny Sharp MP.



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MAINTENANCE-FREE MARSH MELLOW SPRINGS

The need to avoid downtime in manufacturing, mining, and materials handling tasks is driving maintenance and engineering operations managers to rethink their options of how to isolate production equipment from the machinery-busting effects of vibration.

"Where once standard metal springs were always the go-to option for dealing with Noise, Vibration, and Harshness (NVH), now the need to achieve better isolation, greater reliability, and quieter operation is prompting a search for alternatives to consider in varied applications," says Air Springs Supply Technical Product Manager, Vinh Lam.

"Avoiding downtime is a major reason for change in highly competitive industries, but also driving a rethink is the fact that staff have to contend with OH&S hazards involved in maintenance and damage caused by NVH to vital components and structures, including bearings, bushings, joints, welds, and mountings. And then there are the long-term effects of crashing and chattering springs on hearing and the nerve damage that can result where NVH is untrammelled," says Vinh.

Marsh Mellow feature hollow centres surrounded by a solid rubber core and fabric ply-reinforced body to deliver constant vibration isolation with changing loads. Their unique construction delivers low natural spring frequencies to provide excellent isolation of forced frequencies in the range of 13-20 Hz (800-1200 cycles a minute).

This outstanding performance – and a maximum load range now extending from 0.64 kN up to 88 kN (on special order) – makes them particularly suitable for vibration isolation applications beneath equipment commonly used by the mining,

quarrying, primary production, food and beverage processing, and manufacturing industries.

"Marsh Mellow also make ideal shock absorbers for conveyor, primary product, and other materials handling applications, particularly in situations where their corrosion-resistant durability means they will survive damp and corrosive environments in which alternatives may fail," says Vinh.

"Marsh Mellow have no moving parts and require no maintenance or lubrication, so they are ideal for applications in moist, grimy, and demanding environments. And because they reduce structurally transmitted noise caused by vibration, Marsh Mellow have considerable OHS and comfort benefits by being quiet in operation.

"Their terrifically rugged rubber construction eliminates any problem with metal cracking to allow fragments to damage equipment and potentially cause costly downtime. Additionally, Marsh Mellow springs exhibit exceptionally high overload characteristics.

In addition to curtailing damage to machinery and resultant production interruptions, other advantages of Marsh Mellow include:

- High load carrying capacity because of their superior deflection capabilities and the load-carrying influences of the fabric reinforcement.
- Increased stability at higher percentages of compression. As height compresses, the fabric-reinforced rubber plies pantograph and the diameter grows.
- Lower cost. Marsh Mellow springs' higher load capability means fewer springs may be needed in an application.

The spring's components (rubber, bias plies, size of centre) are combined in different ways to meet specific load and performance requirements. This gives them great flexibility and precision.

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Our Vibration Isolation Design Manual for Marsh Mellow springs details how and where to use compact, cylindrical Marsh Mellow springs for machinery such as compressors, vibrating screens, bin hoppers, blowers and motors, cranes, hammers, bumpers and conveyor stops.

www.airsprings.com.au

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HUNTER MINES ON NOTICE TO BUST THE DUST

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is putting Hunter mines on notice to protect local air quality, with the annual Bust the Dust campaign kicking off again this spring.

Now in its sixth year, the successful regulatory campaign returns with strengthened penalties which came into force after passing into law in 2024.

Mines found to be in breach of their licence conditions now face significantly higher penalties, including \$30,000 for a first offence and \$45,000 for a subsequent offence.

During the campaign, EPA Operations Officers will be out in force doing roadside surveillance, unannounced inspections and using drones to monitor dust generation.

NSW EPA Director Operations David Gathercole said he recognises the community wants to see stronger regulation to ensure open cut mines don't contribute to air pollution.

"While we regulate dust emissions year-round, regional air quality monitoring shows spring is a peak time for particle pollution.

"The Bust the Dust campaign is a timely reminder for operators to have the right practices in place before we come knocking.

"Mines can prevent dust pollution through improved surveillance and reporting and by deploying water on stockpiles and roads or just ceasing work during dry and windy conditions," Mr Gathercole said.

Earlier this year, Warkworth Mining in Mount Thorley entered into a legally binding agreement to improve dust management. The mine was forced to pay \$120,000 to a local environmental rehabilitation project after finding operational failures during the Bust the Dust campaign in 2023.

More than 11 mines were inspected across the region in last year's campaign, and all were found to be managing dust appropriately.

LAUNCH OF AUSTRALIAN MINING: MAPPED

The Minerals Council of Australia launched Australian Mining: Mapped, a new publication showcasing the industry's vast economic and social contributions across the country, particularly in regional and remote communities.

Australian Mining: Mapped highlights the essential role mining plays in sustaining Australia's prosperity.

Mining is the backbone of national prosperity as the nation's largest exporter, top company taxpayer and a major employer. The industry sustains hundreds of thousands of working families, supports regional businesses through local procurement, and underpins a thriving mining equipment, technology and services sector.

In 2023-24, mining companies procured more than \$161 billion in goods and services from over 63,700 suppliers nationwide. More than \$661 million in voluntary grants, sponsorships and donations supported over 5,800 community groups, services and programs, while \$32.5 billion in company tax and \$26.9 billion in royalties helped fund schools, hospitals, childcare and roads. The industry directly employed 303,300 Australians and supported more than 1.25 million jobs across the broader mining ecosystem.

Mining's contribution goes well beyond the economic metrics. It supports communities, empowers Traditional Custodians, and drives innovation that will help Australia and the world achieve net zero emissions by 2050. With the right policy settings, Australia can unlock its critical minerals potential, attract greater investment, and position itself as a global leader in the clean energy transition.

The industry is also committed to sustainability. Less than 0.1% of Australia's land mass is used for mining at any time, and companies invest heavily in rehabilitation, biodiversity protection, and partnerships with local communities to ensure the benefits of mining are widely shared.



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PWCS LIGHTS UP IN BLUE TO SUPPORT MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE

Port Waratah Coal Services' Carrington Terminal lit up in blue during August to raise awareness for vital research and support services for people living with Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

MND is the name given to a group of diseases which impact the nerves known as motor neurons. Motor neurons are found in the brain and spinal cord. They send messages to activate the muscles in the body. With MND, messages from the motor neurons gradually stop reaching the muscles. This causes the muscles to weaken and, eventually, stop working. With more than 270,000 people estimated to be living with MND globally, many of us know someone who has been impacted directly or indirectly by this condition.

In addition to the shiploader 'glow up' throughout August, Port Waratah also undertook FightMND Big Freeze fundraising including ice bucket challenges across August.

Acting Port Waratah CEO Trudie Larnach said she was expecting to see employees get involved and 'get the bucket' and she has committed to the FightMND Big Freeze Challenge herself.

"Several members of our team know someone who has been touched by MND, so we have been very keen to include this initiative in our Community Investment and Partnership Programme this year to enable the whole team at Port Waratah to come together and show their support," said Ms Larnach.

Proceeds from the fundraising activity hosted by Port Waratah will go to FightMND. Established in 2014 by Neale Daniher AO, Pat Cunningham and the late Dr Ian Davis OAM, FightMND is a founder led organisation with a vision of a world free from motor neurone disease (MND). FightMND works to raise awareness and fund vital research to improve the quality of life and find treatments and, one day, a cure for those living with MND.

Since 2014, FightMND has invested more than \$117 million into MND research and care projects supporting Australian's living with MND. This includes 15 clinical trials for Australian patients and 34 drug development projects.

The Port Waratah Community Investment and Partnership Programme invests \$850,000 each year to support impactful projects and services within our community. To find out more about our community partnerships, visit pwcs.com.au/our-partners.

Port Waratah also has a proven track record in raising awareness for our community partners through our Shiploader illumination projects; this will be the eighth year supporting charities and community organisations through the initiative. Additional information on FightMND, its research, services and fundraising initiatives can be found on their website: fightmnd.org.au.

GOVERNMENT BACKS RENEWABLE BOOST TO HUNTER

The Federal Government is securing Australia's energy future with a Hydrogen HeadStart investment in Orica's Hunter Valley Hydrogen Hub in a \$438 million announcement. The project will secure the future of ammonia and explosives manufacturing at Kooragang Island by reducing its reliance on gas. This keeps local manufacturing competitive and sustainable, supporting jobs and the long-term future of the industry in the Hunter.

Located on Kooragang Island in the heart of the Hunter Region, the project will deploy a 50 MW electrolyser powered by renewable energy, producing around 4,700 tonnes of green hydrogen each year. By switching from gas to green hydrogen, the project will also significantly cut emissions from Orica's ammonia production facility and help produce green ammonia for domestic use across mining, agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

It will also help open Australia to exporting clean renewable hydrogen and renewable ammonia overseas, and the jobs and economic benefits that will come with it as the world looks to decarbonise.

Delivered through the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA), the funding will bring down costs and accelerate the uptake of renewable hydrogen in heavy industry.

Before funding is released, Orica will work closely with ARENA to meet a number of conditions and demonstrate progress toward key milestones.

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"SECURE DESTRUCTION - GUARANTEED"

The doctor says to the old lady, "I can't determine the cause with certainty, but it would be best if you reduced your alcohol consumption and we'll see if it improves."

The old lady replies, "Can't I just increase it and we'll see if it gets worse?"

A wife says to her husband, "There's something wrong with the car; there's water in the fuel injectors."

The husband replies, "That's ridiculous, you don't even know what fuel injectors are. Let me go see, where is the car?"

Says the wife, "In the pool."

A Roman centurion walks into a bar and orders a Martinus.

The barman, confused, enquires: "Perhaps you meant to say Martini?"

The centurion responds begrudgingly, "Surely, if I wanted two drinks I would have said so!"

Two drunken Irishmen in a graveyard.

Paddy starts reading the gravestones.

"Mick" he says;

Would you look at this, a feller here who was 90 when he died!"

"Who's that?" says Mick.

"Somebody called O'Toole from Kerry," he replies.

Mick says, "Never mind him, there's a feller here called Murphy, was 99 when he died! From Castletown of all places!

"Well thats nothing!" says Paddy.

"What about what written on this feller's stone, here right beside the gate!"

"The stone says 147!"

"147? thats amazing!" says Mick.

"Who was he?"

"Well according to the stone, its somebody called Miles from Dublin!"

I went to a job interview this week. The interviewer said to me that I had put on my CV that I was very quick at mental arithmetic.

"What's nineteen multiplied by seventeen?" he asked.

Quick as a flash I replied, "Thirty-four."

"That's wrong," he said.

"But it was very quick," I pointed out.

A man in the Scottish Highlands sees a hillwalker kneeling by the side of a burn scooping up water in his hand to quench his thirst.

"Haw, min!" he shouts. "Dinna' drink oot o' there, it's fu' o' coos' keech!"

"I don't understand a word you're saying," replies the hillwalker. "Why on Earth can't you silly Scots learn to talk proper English?"

The man says, "I was saying, 'Use both hands to scoop up the water - you'll get more!'"

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere."

- Albert Einstein



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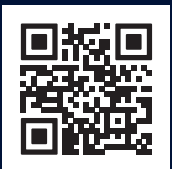
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