

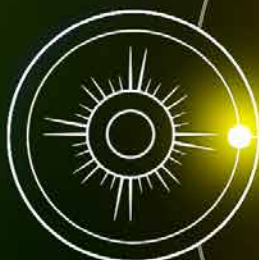
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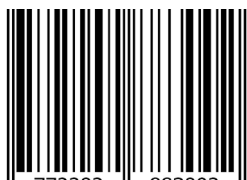


Business & THE ENVIRONMENT

HUNTER BUSINESS FUNCTION GUIDE 2022

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Glencore's contribution adds up for the Hunter Region



Glencore sites

- Mangoola Coal
- Ravensworth Coal
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- Mount Owen Glendell Coal
- United Wambo
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* Hunter Valley Operations is a joint venture between Yancoal (51%) and Glencore (49%), which is independently managed on behalf of the JV partners.

Direct contribution

Flow-on impacts



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GLENCORE

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Hunter Business Publications Pty Ltd
 ABN: 15 112 838 945
 265 King Street
 Newcastle NSW 2300
 PO Box 853, Hamilton NSW 2303
 Phone: (02) 4062 8133

PUBLISHER and EDITOR:

Garry Hardie
 Mob: 0414 463 125
 garry@HBRmag.com.au

ART DIRECTOR:

Sandie Collie
 sandie@HBRmag.com.au

CONTENT MANAGER:

Jason Duncan
 jason@HBRmag.com.au

PRINTING:

NCP Printing
 Phone: (02) 4926 1300
 sales@ncp.com.au
 www.ncp.com.au

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2022-23 Hunter Business Function Guide

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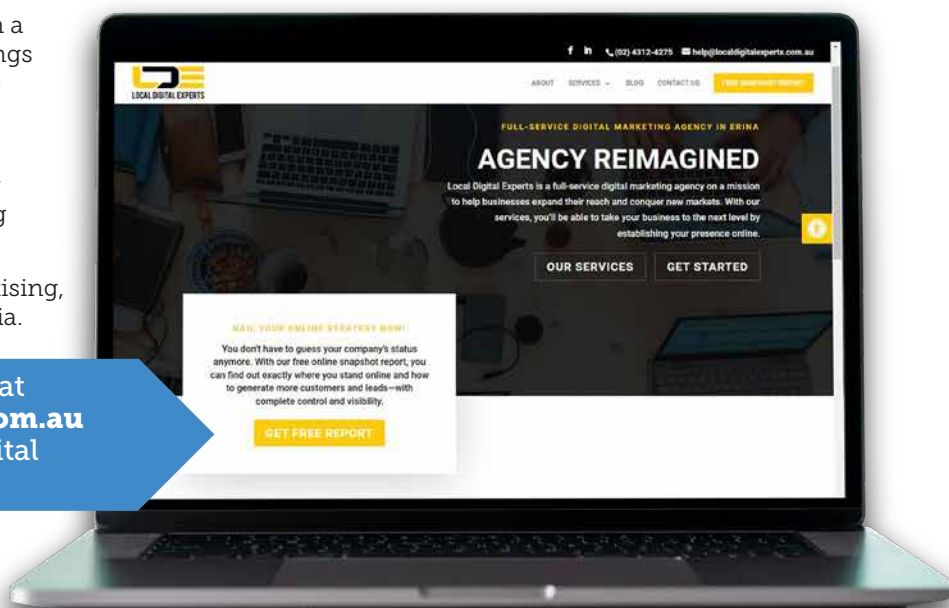
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From the Editor



This issue includes an Environmental feature. It is always a highly relevant feature for business and is especially pertinent at the moment, particularly in the area of carbon abatement and renewable energy.

The recent change in Federal Government has changed the political scene considerably, including the attempt to legislate a carbon emissions target of 43% below 2005 levels by

2030. With support by the Greens, this legislation is highly likely to pass. It has already passed the lower house by 89 votes to 55 and is scheduled to be put to the senate in September.

Climate change has been a political football for far too long in Australia. This legislation would in fact be the first to pass in over a decade.

Whatever your political views, renewables and lower emissions are the future. Besides the environmental arguments, the economics are also changing rapidly, with renewable energy now cheaper than traditional energy for new projects.

This legislation represents a challenge to the Australian economy but also an enormous opportunity and firmer legislation will provide greater confidence for long term investment.

Locally, the Hunter is of course a major coal region and the industry pours billions of dollars into the economy. It will continue to be a major component of the local economy for years to come, with some experts predicting we will not reach peak coal globally until 2026. The local economy, particularly the Upper Hunter, will face a major transition when local coal production falls and will represent a major challenge.

The local outlook for renewable energy, however, is looking extremely strong, with many major projects planned, underway and completed.

In 2021 the NSW Government announced the Hunter and Central Coast as a Renewable Energy Zone (REZ). This provides the potential of more than \$100 billion in investment.

As this issue was going to print, the Federal Government announced that it is declaring the Pacific Ocean off the Hunter as one of six proposed regions for the development of offshore wind energy.

The transition to a lower carbon economy is happening and the Hunter is well placed to continue to be an energy powerhouse well into the future.

Garry Hardie
Publisher & Editor

2023 HUNTER INVESTMENT PROSPECTUS NOW SEEKING SUPPORT



We are currently seeking support for the 2023 edition of the Hunter Business Investment Prospectus, the annual hard copy and online publication that promotes the Hunter Region as a smart business, investment and lifestyle choice.

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Have you read the 2022 edition of the Hunter Investment Prospectus?

The 2022 edition can be read online at
<http://www.hunterinvest.com.au>

SKY Residences - Stage Two receives Occupation Certificate

Stage Two of Newcastle's SKY Residences project officially received its Occupation Certificate and successful strata registration in July, marking the conclusion of one of the city's largest and most iconic residential developments to date. Consisting of 73 luxury apartments, Sky Residences Stage Two stands 9 storeys tall and is positioned alongside the 19 storey, 66 m tall Stage One tower completed in late 2021.

Completion of the 189-apartment luxury residential development represents a significant milestone for local developer and builder GWH.



"It has been incredible to watch our plans for this site come to life over the last few years", said GWH Managing Director Jonathan Craig. "SKY Residences is our largest residential project undertaken to date – To successfully deliver such an iconic new development to the Newcastle skyline truly is a phenomenal achievement and one we are all immensely proud of".

Construction of Sky Residences began in October 2019, with the construction team persevering through some of the toughest operating conditions experienced in recent memory. Despite these challenges, the team managed to keep the development on track, successfully topping out the 19-storey stage one tower in May 2021 before achieving its Occupation Certificate seven months later.

All 189 apartments within the development were sold prior to the project's completion, demonstrating the continued appetite for apartment living within the Newcastle market.

Designed to allow residents to take full advantage of the inner-city lifestyle its location encourages, SKY includes an array of incredible resident-only facilities including a pool, gym and the rooftop SKY Lounge, a luxurious indoor/outdoor entertaining space providing panoramic views over the CBD and beyond.



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Multipurpose “sweeper” vessel joins Port of Newcastle fleet

Dredging operations at Australia’s deep-water global gateway have received a significant boost with the launch of Port of Newcastle’s new multipurpose “sweeper” vessel, Lydia.

The bed levelling vessel will work in tandem with the Port’s hydrographic survey team and David Allan dredger to provide safe, deep-water access to the port.

Port of Newcastle CEO Craig Carmody said the Lydia will enhance the overall efficiency of current dredging operations, while improving post-flood recovery efforts.

“As the busiest port on Australia’s east coast with more than 4,600 ship movements annually and a gateway for trade worth around \$36 billion to the national economy, maintaining safe access is crucial to the Port’s operation and so the addition of a multipurpose ‘sweeper’ to compliment the work that is already being done by our survey and dredging team is an important investment for the Port,” Mr Carmody said.

“The Lydia will not only improve day-to-day efficiency of our maintenance dredging, but it will play an important role in flood events like the one experienced recently by limiting the amount of sediment that can accumulate on the channel floor.

“This capability, along with a rapid and pre-emptive response, will reduce the recovery time and impact on shipping movements within the port.”

The Lydia is fitted with a 9 m, 20 tonne sweeping bar, which is attached by hydraulically operated cables and is designed to level out the channel by pushing material from shallow to deeper areas in sections where dredging has occurred. The bar can be raised or lowered to the required depth and during flood events can be used to ‘churn-up’ sediment to target areas most prone to silt built-up.

Executive Manager Marine Operations Glen Hayward said the vessel arrived in Newcastle late last year and has been retrofitted to improve safety, reliability, and operational capabilities.

“Safety is our top priority, so we’ve undertaken an extensive program of works to ensure the vessel meets strict standards, while installing CCTV and additional monitoring systems in the engine room to improve crew safety and the overall operation of the sweeper when out on the water,” Mr Hayward said.

“It’s been a huge team effort, so I want to congratulate everyone involved in reaching this important milestone.”

Digital activation of Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre

Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre is going from state-of-the-art to cutting edge within mere months of operation with a \$448,600 grant under the NSW Government’s Creative Capital program to support the centre’s fit-out digital activation.

Member for Upper Hunter Dave Layzell MP was on hand in July at the opening of the Rotary Club of Singleton on Hunter Art Prize at Singleton Civic Centre to make the announcement. Following construction of the centre in partnership with Singleton Council, the latest funding contribution takes the NSW Government’s investment to \$3.2 million.

Sean Britton, Council’s Acting Director Organisation and Community Capacity said the funding would put the finishing touches to an already impressive facility and enable the space to provide a dynamic program of events including virtual reality technology, projectors and movable walls.

The cost of the total project is \$525,500 with the remainder contributed by Council. It will be completed in two stages between now and May 2023.

“The vision for the centre was always to be a community space for people to gather, create, connect, and collaborate by sharing ideas and inspiration,” Mr Britton said.

“The digital lab and projection in the main gallery space takes that to a whole new level, guaranteeing the centre is fit-for-purpose, future-focused and able to accommodate and support quality programming and diverse community groups with exciting opportunities to bring in different kinds of artwork, public lectures and the like.

“It’s also a great way to encourage school groups and young people to expand how they interact with the centre as the inclusion of an innovation hub and digital lab brings a unique facility to the region to increase youth participation and open up new learning pathways.”

Mr Britton said it was appropriate the announcement came as Singleton’s arts community gathered to celebrate one of the region’s largest regional art prizes in Australia, and where the idea for the Arts and Cultural Centre was born.

“Every year, hundreds of entries come to Singleton from local artists and artists right across Australia to be part of the Rotary Club of Singleton on Hunter Art Prize, which has played a lead role in establishing Singleton as a centre for the arts,” he said.



Rotary Club of Singleton on Hunter President Louise Jamieson, Council’s Coordinator Arts + Culture Dr Faye Neilson and Member for Upper Hunter Dave Layzell MP at the opening of the Rotary Club of Singleton on Hunter Art Prize.

Glencore Australian operations contribute \$14 billion to economy

Glencore has released its latest economic contribution study, which shows a direct contribution of \$14 billion to the Australian economy in 2021. It is Australia’s largest producer of coal, cobalt, zinc and lead, and the second-largest producer of nickel, copper and silver.

Employing 17,350 people in Australia, Glencore operates 25 mines across Queensland, New South Wales, the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The largest part of our contribution last year was a \$9.2 billion spend on goods and services from 8,630 Australian businesses.

Glencore also paid around \$2.9 billion in taxes and royalties in Australia for calendar year 2021. Since 2011, the Australian operations have paid more than \$19 billion in taxes and royalties in Australia.

Glencore commissioned Ernst & Young to complete the study, which estimated that last year the flow-on benefits from our operations was about 94,900 jobs and \$27 billion to the national economy.

Cassandra McCarthy, Head of Corporate Affairs for Glencore in Australia said “Glencore has been operating in Australia for more than 25 years, providing employment for Australians and contributing to jobs and businesses in the city, and in the communities where we operate.

“We believe mining matters. Australia has a world class mining sector that continues to be a key pillar of our economy and Glencore is proud to be part of that economic contribution.”



TAFE NSW addresses NDIS workforce needs

TAFE NSW and the Physical Disability Council of NSW are encouraging people to consider undertaking fee-free training in disability support courses to help meet an unprecedented demand for workers in the Hunter. The sector is Australia's fastest growing, with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) National Workforce Plan indicating an additional 83,000 workers will be needed to meet demand in the next two years.

TAFE NSW's Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) is currently free to eligible people under JobTrainer to help bolster the NDIS workforce in NSW.

Physical Disability Council of NSW CEO Serena Ovens said there has never been a better time to consider a career in the disability services sector.

"There is a crucial need for more disability support workers in NSW communities, particularly in regional and remote areas, and TAFE NSW is key to meeting future workforce demand," Ms Ovens said.

"By 2024, it is forecast that around 500,000 people will be accessing the NDIS across Australia. We need thousands more trained, skilled workers who can hit the ground running to ensure people with disability can access the essential services they need. This course is a great way to start."

The Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) includes training to empower clients to reach their independence and social inclusion goals, and to provide individualised support to increase client skills and community participation.

TAFE NSW Head Teacher of Community Services Vicki Field said the entry-level qualification provided practical, hands-on training

so that thousands of NDIS participants to access the individual support services they need.

"With the JobTrainer subsidy now available, this is an excellent opportunity for anyone thinking about starting a new career or changing careers to join the disability services sector," Ms Field said.

"The work is incredibly rewarding and TAFE NSW offers a nationally recognised qualification you can take with you anywhere. There is also plenty of scope for career progression.

"If you've ever considered working in the industry, our free training options offer people a unique opportunity right now to step up and help make a difference in people's lives."

A new era of visitor servicing in the Manning region

MidCoast Council and its facilities will now play a greater role in supporting the visitor economy. Manning Regional Art Gallery, MidCoast Libraries, Yalawanyi Ganya and The Manning Entertainment Centre will now be more involved in connecting visitors to information, advice and local knowledge.

It's the first phase of a planned partnership with local operators and facilities to extend the reach of visitor services by taking information to where the visitors are. Visitors will have more locations where they can find out about the beautiful Barrington Coast.

"We're excited to be working more closely with community groups and businesses to enhance our partnership network across the region in the coming months," said Council's Manager of Growth, Economic Development and Tourism, Deb Tuckerman.

The Council's Destination Experience team are also there to provide information and support to visitors to the Manning region through the Forster and Gloucester based centres following the closure of the Taree Visitor Information Centre on 30 June. Visitors and locals can contact the centres seven days a week by phone, online live chat, email and social media or by visiting the Barrington Coast website.

The decision to close the Taree Visitor Information Centre was made at a MidCoast Council meeting in March after a review of visitor services showed most visitors to the area did not use the centre.

Council is also planning to enhance its role in delivering information to visitors in the Manning region by meeting visitors and community members at pop up stalls across the area at peak times and at places heavily frequented by visitors.

"We look forward to working together to deliver a better visitor experience as well as greater results for local businesses."



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Rarekind expands into Queensland

Rarekind, a Newcastle-based leader in the HR and recruitment industry, has announced their expansion into Queensland with the acquisition of Brisbane-based Edge Personnel.

Managing Director Geoff Crews says Rarekind does HR and recruitment differently by focusing on business culture and partnerships rather than the traditional commission-based model, a philosophy shared by the newly acquired Edge Personnel.

"At Rarekind, we think the core characteristics of a great agency are intelligence, particularly emotional and business intelligence, an investigative mind and attention to detail and we are looking forward to bringing our unique approach to both employers and job seekers in Brisbane."

"Edge Personnel has the local market knowledge and existing relationships which will be invaluable as we establish ourselves in southeast Queensland. These strengths are brought to life in a loyal hardworking consulting team who share our Rarekind values and ambitions, and we are looking forward to welcoming them."

Rarekind has moved far beyond the early recruitment era of high-volume cold calls, high consultant turnover, and low-salary high-commission remuneration – and want to help lead wholesale change in the industry.

"We are led and structured to attract and retain professional career consultants who are invested in long-term client outcomes rather than short-term monthly commission cheques. We develop time-proven cultural and people insights to provide better advice and placements."

"For employers, we bring a full-service recruitment and HR consulting service to the market providing easy access to diverse niche specialists and whole-of-business cultural advantage."

"Jobseekers, with broad skill sets who feel narrowly pigeon-holed by niche agencies, will benefit from the more comprehensive exposure to multi-disciplined consultants and employers."



*Craig Batchelor Founding Director of Edge Personnel
with Geoff Crews Managing Director of Rarekind*

Jenkins Legal & Advisory redefine their purpose

The Newcastle CBD has built a strong reputation for being the hub of legal expertise and services, with a range of business operating out of the area. Jenkins Legal Services, based on Hunter Street, understood that to stand out from the crowd they needed to redefine and refresh their purpose to align with the business community they serve. Established in 2014, like many businesses their core services have changed throughout the years in response to the needs of their clients and community.

Legal Director, Micah Jenkins said that after years of finessing their approach for their clients, it felt appropriate and fitting to incorporate that into the business brand.

"We've worked hard to establish ourselves as a trusted law team in the region as Jenkins Legal Services, but a major part of this was about providing more than just legal advice," Micah said.

"For us, the epicentre of our service is establishing trust."

"This became even more important throughout COVID-19 when people needed to be able to have confidence in and invest in you."

"To demonstrate our commitment to a holistic approach, it was time to hit the refresh button on our brand and to start communicating as Jenkins Legal & Advisory."



Commercial and Property Partner, Sam Slack Smith, Estate Planning, Employment and NFP Partner, Sally Davies, Partner and Director, Micah Jenkins and General Manager of Jenkins Legal & Advisory, Louise Williams

"Pivotal to our success has been the addition of some highly skilled and dedicated team members, and now leaders, namely Estate Planning and Employment Partner, Sally Davies and Property Partner, Sam Slack-Smith."

In line with the updated trading name, the business now has a refreshed logo, transitioning their brand into something more dynamic.

General Manager, Louise Williams said that refreshing the look of the company has come at an opportune time, as businesses are finding their feet in the 'new normal' environment.

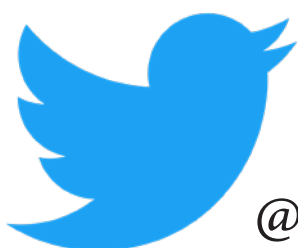
"We established Jenkins Legal Services eight years ago, and can't believe the growth we've experienced since then," Louise said.

"With any shifts you make in business we understand that there is that adjustment period – for clients and the community. We want to be known for a particular message and level of service that is unlike any other."

"So, in lead up to a decade we need our purpose to be just right. Pivotal to conveying this purpose is the amazing group of people around us. We have grown to nearly 20 team members, all supporting our goals every step of the way."

"This is an exciting moment in our history, and we hope our clients and business community love the approach we've worked so hard to establish since our inception."

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Cream of the business crop celebrated at 2022 Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards

An innovative company making global waves with hardware integration and software development has been named Lake Mac's business of the year.

Warners Bay-based SAPHI took out the top gong on 29 July at the Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards, recognising growth and entrepreneurship and celebrating corporate success across the city.

The company was one of 13 winners at the gala awards evening, held at Belmont 16s.

Lake Macquarie Mayor Kay Fraser, who sat on the judging panel, said almost 100 companies and individual workers entered this year's awards.

"The finalists we selected this year really demonstrated the diversity and strength of business in Lake Macquarie," she said.

"We had everything from air-conditioning installers to occupational therapists, and child-care centres to coffee cruisers."

Cr Fraser said SAPHI, which also took out the Excellence in Sustainability category, stood out for its innovation, commitment to circular economy practices and its rapid growth.

Since it was founded just five years ago, the company has grown to take on major clients in Australia and overseas and has played a key part in Australia's largest smart green infrastructure project in Sydney Olympic Park.

"I think we were all particularly impressed with how they've been able to grow their business during COVID, working hard to attract very significant clients and build community support," Cr Fraser said.

SAPHI Software Engineer Abigail Hall said it was an honour to be recognised.

"It's a real testimony to all the hard work the team has put in," she said.

"We do countless hours, countless days with different clients to bring innovation into the Lake Macquarie area, and this is wonderful recognition of that."

It was a triple win for the company, with founding partner and Director Cameron Owen also taking out the Outstanding Young Business Leader category.

Dance4Wellbeing, offering dance sessions for over-55s and people with disability, won the Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion category, while neighbourhood centre Swansea Community Cottage was named the city's most outstanding community organisation for 2022.

It was a case of lightning striking twice for private speech pathology company A Growing Understanding, which first won a

Lake Mac Business Excellence Award in 2018.

Back then, the company had only three employees, and was recognised in the Start Up Superstar category.

Friday night's ceremony saw the company return to the podium, this time in the Excellence in Large Business category after growing to employ more than 40 people and opening a new clinic to meet burgeoning demand.

Lake Macquarie City Council CEO Morven Cameron congratulated all entrants, finalists and winners, and the city's business community more broadly.

"We're home to more than 13,000 active businesses, and many have had to overcome some monumental challenges over the past two years," she said.

"But despite those challenges, we are in the midst of a generational change. We're emerging as a true regional powerhouse, and a very real alternative to major metropolitan areas when it comes to business and commercial investment."

Winners from 11 of the evening's award categories will now vie for victory at the upcoming Hunter Business Awards.

The Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards are proudly supported by gold sponsor Dantia, silver sponsors Allambi Care, Oasis Media, Ramsay Health and the University of Newcastle, and bronze sponsors ATUNE Health Centres, Kent Conveyancing, Hunter Water, Jodie Harrison MP, Lake Mac Holiday Parks, National Australia Bank, Safearth, VBD Business, Tax & Wealth Advisers, and media partner Newcastle Herald.



Lake Macquarie CEO Morven Cameron, Mayor Kay Fraser and winners from SAPHI.

CATEGORY	WINNER
Business of the Year	SAPHI
Outstanding Employee	Jordan Farrelly, A Growing Understanding
Outstanding Young Business Leader (18-35 years)	Cameron Owen, SAPHI
Outstanding Business Leader (36 years and over)	Michelle Kent, Kent Conveyancing
Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality	Mischief Kitchen
Employer of Choice	Lake Group Strata
Excellence in Innovation	The Blue Tribe Company
Excellence in Sustainability	SAPHI
Outstanding Community Organisation	Swansea Community Cottage Inc
Outstanding Start-Up	Jaegersoft
Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion	Dance4wellbeing
Excellence in Micro Business	Adventures in Speech Pathology
Excellence in Small Business	Salon Ten
Excellence in Large Business	A Growing Understanding



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Newcastle's Victoria Theatre to shine again

Newcastle's historic Victoria Theatre will be reinvigorated thanks to \$4 million in funding from the NSW Government's Creative Capital Program.

Minister for the Arts Ben Franklin said the upgrade will transform the Victoria Theatre into a world-class cultural asset and ensure the 168-year-old theatre can be enjoyed for generations to come.

"This project will cement Newcastle as a top destination for the arts in NSW and provide new opportunities for audiences to enjoy dynamic creative experiences in world-class cultural infrastructure," Mr Franklin said.

Performances are on track to return to the historic location within 12 months, bringing 170,000 visitors, artists and staff to the theatre in its first three years.

"This is an important cultural infrastructure project for Newcastle that will shape its future as a destination for arts and culture and enhance experiences for audiences and visitors alike.

"Cultural equity is at the heart of the NSW Government's Creative Capital program and thanks a total \$72 million investment, more projects like this can now come to life, providing more people with access to the best arts and culture, no matter where they live in the State."

Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter Taylor Martin said the NSW Government's investment would support quality arts venues for the community that would boost tourism and the Hunter economy.

"This targeted support will deliver excellent opportunities for the economy and help us provide better cultural experiences for our local audiences and visitors to enjoy," Mr Martin said.

Executive Director of Century Venues Greg Khoury said that this capital investment by the NSW Government into the Victoria Theatre's revival is trailblazing and will change the way that theatre infrastructure can be delivered in NSW.

"This capital investment was much needed to refurbish and bring the Victoria Theatre back to life. We applaud Minister Franklin and Create NSW for their vision and enterprise," Mr Khoury said.

New era for container handling at Port of Newcastle

Port of Newcastle has taken a critical step forward in its important diversification agenda to unlock trade opportunities within regional and rural NSW, support local industry and create jobs, with the arrival of two Liebherr mobile harbour cranes on 2 August.

The German-built LHM 550 cranes sailed into Newcastle Harbour onboard general cargo ship UHL Fighter, after leaving the Port of Rostock in late June.

Port of Newcastle CEO Craig Carmody said the \$28.4 million investment marks a significantly increase in container handling capabilities at the Port's versatile Mayfield 4 berth.

"Industry has been very clear - they don't want to have to pay more to send their container exports to Port Botany or Port of Brisbane when they could be taking advantage of Port of Newcastle's enviable road and rail network and potentially save millions of dollars a year," Mr Carmody said.

"These two new mobile harbour cranes will allow us to move cargo and containers within the limits that the Port Commitment Deeds (PCD) bind us, so that we can give our customers a viable alternative.

"As a global trade gateway and the world's largest coal export port, diversification isn't an option, it's a must, so we are taking what action we can while continuing to advocate for the removal of the PCD.

"The future of the Hunter region, of local industry and of local jobs is far too important for us to sit idly by.

"As the saying goes, 'if you build it, they will come', which is essentially what we are doing.

"By proving that there is demand for containers out of Newcastle, we hope the NSW Government will finally see the irrefutable benefits and remove the PCD.

"Independent analysis has shown a Newcastle deepwater container terminal would contribute \$2.5 billion to the national economy and generate more than 19,000 direct and indirect jobs, while reducing road and rail congestion and providing cheaper freight costs for regional importers and exporters, which in the end means more money back into the pockets of local farmers and businesses."

The 550 tonne Liebherr mobile harbour cranes feature the latest lift assistance systems for safer lifts and can handle a diverse mix of project cargo, including wind turbines, timber, steel coils, transformers and mining equipment.

They also have the capability to work in tandem for heavy lifts and lift two 20 ft or one 40 ft container in a single move.

Port of Newcastle's mobile harbour cranes will undergo testing and are expected to begin operations in September.

Funding boost for arts centre

Cessnock Performing Arts Centre will be reinvigorated thanks to a \$1.26 million funding boost from the NSW Government's Creative Capital program.

Minister for the Arts Ben Franklin and Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter Taylor Martin visited Cessnock on 12 July to announce the funding. The grant will allow for the completion of stage two of the arts centre refurbishment, which includes the relocation of the box office, a newly created 67 sqm retail space, an administration office and access improvements.

Mr Franklin said the upgrade would transform the Cessnock Performing Arts Centre's ground floor and create a more functional and accessible space.

"This project will see the centre expanded into a cultural hub – providing locals with enhanced access to the arts and dynamic cultural experiences, as well as a place where people can come together to express and exchange their creative ideas," Mr Franklin said.

"This is an important cultural infrastructure project for Cessnock that will shape its future as a destination for arts and cultural experiences for audiences and visitors alike."

Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter Taylor Martin said the financial support for this quality arts venue for the community would boost tourism and the Hunter economy.

"This targeted support will deliver excellent opportunities for the economy and help us provide better cultural experiences for our local audiences and visitors to enjoy," Mr Martin said.

Cessnock Performing Arts Centre has also received a \$181,000 grant to upgrade its stage lighting from The NSW Government's Creative Capital grant program.

HBR

Hunter Business Review

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*All People 15+ years. Source: National conducted by McNair Yellow Squares - Greater Newcastle 2021 Survey Wave 2



MORAY & AGNEW

Moray & Agnew has appointed **Sarah Hammond** to the position of Special Counsel – Building & Construction Disputes. Sarah is sought-after for her expertise in building & construction and commercial litigation, primarily in transport, utilities, civil infrastructure, defence and aerospace. She has an impeccable track record on major disputes in all courts including the High Court of Australia, Court of Appeal and Supreme Court of NSW, and also advises on the negotiation and conclusion of construction contracts and procurement projects.



HUNTER VALLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Rebecca Butterworth is the new Principal at Hunter Valley Grammar School. Rebecca is an experienced educator with a proven leadership record in diverse schools in Europe, Asia and Australia. She graduated from the University of Tasmania, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours and a double major in English. Having taught overseas since 2003, Rebecca returned to Australia this year with a wealth of knowledge and understands a global perspective on education.



COASTAL ADVICE GROUP

Coastal Advice Group (CAG) has welcomed seasoned Financial Adviser **Jacob LoCascio** to their Newcastle-based Financial Planning team. Jacob, a Certified Financial Planner, and member of the Financial Planning Association of Australia, builds on the shared CAG team passion which is to help as many everyday Australians as possible with high-quality advice tailored to achieving their financial goals.



HUNTER VALLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Dionne Molina has been appointed as the Director of Advancement and Community Engagement at Hunter Valley Grammar School. Dionne is an award-winning marketing, communications and advancement professional and has worked in senior leadership roles in the education sector for the past 10 years. At HVGS Dionne has oversight over the School's marketing, communications, enrolment and community engagement.



MORAY & AGNEW

Isabella Rebellato has been appointed as Senior Associate – Commercial Disputes at Moray & Agnew. Isabella advises and acts in complex commercial disputes, property-related litigation, competition and consumer law disputes, building and construction litigation, strata scheme disputes, insolvency and debt recoveries.



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2022-23 Hunter Business FUNCTION GUIDE



THE COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL GUIDE TO HELP WITH
FUNCTION AND EVENT PLANNING FOR YOUR BUSINESS

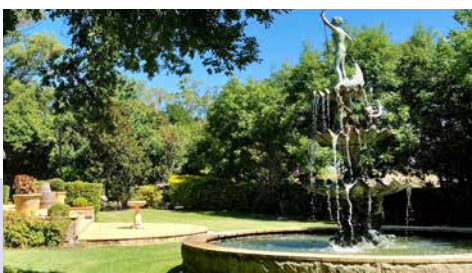
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Hunter Business Publications Pty Ltd
ABN: 15 112 838 945
265 King Street
Newcastle NSW 2300
PO Box 853, Hamilton NSW 2303
P: (02) 4062 8133

PUBLISHER and EDITOR:

Garry Hardie
Mob: 0414 463 125
garry@HBRmag.com.au

ART DIRECTOR:

Sandie Collie
sandie@HBRmag.com.au

CONTENT MANAGER:

Jason Duncan
jason@HBRmag.com.au

PRINTING:

NCP Printing
Phone: (02) 4926 1300
sales@ncp.com.au
www.ncp.com.au

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GARRY



SANDIE



JASON

Welcome to the 2022–2023 issue of the Hunter Business Function Guide, an annual special coverage by HBR to help businesspeople with planning and running a successful event in the Hunter region.

The function and events sector has been severely affected by COVID over the past two years but is now re-emerging and is ready to help you with your next business events.

The Hunter has a well-earned reputation as an ideal location for business functions, with a growing number of local, Australian and overseas business people experiencing the excellent locations and services available.

One of the exceptional strengths of the Hunter is its extremely broad range of venues available, satisfying all tastes and budgets. The Hunter can readily accommodate any type of function, from small, intimate gathering, to large expos and international symposiums. The locations vary immensely, from the CBDs of major centres, to water-front venues, vineyard experiences and rural retreats.

The Hunter also has a wide range of excellent support services to help ensure that you have a successful event. Whether you need help with just one aspect of an event or someone to take responsibility for almost the entire event, the Hunter has an experienced organisation ready to work with you.

The region is also unique in its range of accommodation, dining options and activities for delegates and visitors.

The Hunter is truly the perfect location for almost any type of business function.

Cover image provided courtesy of Scion Audio and Events

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FUNCTION GUIDE TABLE 2022

Venues	Location	Room Capacity					Facilities	Onsite activities	Accom. rooms	See page
		Conference rooms	Max Area/M ²	Max Cocktail	Max Theatre	Max Banquet				
48 Watt Street	Newcastle	2	380	250	150	150	Wireless microphone, PA system, table linen, cutlery, glass wear	N/A	N/A	7
Central Leagues Club	Charlestown	3	336	200	250	170	Roaming microphones, overhead projector, portable projectors, whiteboards, wifi, Flip chart, fully stocked bar in function room and tailor made catering packages available.	Eat at BB's Restaurant & Pizzeria and Sideline Cafe. Ample car parking.	N/A	12
Foghorn Brewhouse	Newcastle	1	400	80 (250)	80 (180)	60 (180)	Wireless microphone, wi-fi, data projector, drop-down screen, accessible	Brewery tours & guided tasting.	N/A	12
Harrigan's Hunter Valley	Pokolbin	6	N/A	140	60	120	Data projector & screen, whiteboard, flipcharts, PA systems, lectern, WiFi, Continuous Tea and Coffee, Morning & Afternoon Teas available, Lunch available, Conference Room WIFI, Pens & Pad, Water & Mints	Wine tasting	48	2
Margan Family Wines	Broke	2	232	N/A	150	120	Microphone, PA system, Wifi	Degustation Dining, Wine Tasting Experiences, Winery & Vineyard Tours, Garden Tour, Cooking Class, Vermouth Cocktail Class.	N/A	14
Mercure Resort Hunter Valley Gardens	Pokolbin	9	255	350	300	170	Arrival tea & coffee, Whiteboard & flipchart, Morning & afternoon tea available, Lunch available, Conference room WIFI, Pens & writing pads, iced water & mints	Swimming pool, sauna, spa, tennis court, Hunter Valley Gym, Heavenly Hunter Massage	72	2
Nelson Bay Golf Club	Nelson Bay	2	230	200	200	180	2x data projectors and screens installed, PA system with handheld mics, FREE WIFI, stage, dancefloor, dedicated bar in function room, balcony overlooking golf course, in-house caterers, professional events team, wedding ceremony site on the course.	Golf, golf clinics/training, kangaroo tours, team building activities, 27 hole golf course, Bluewater Grill Restaurant, Sports Bar, full gaming facilities, café/lounge, golf carts, halfway house on course, fully stocked Proshop, function room + boardroom, kids room.	N/A	8
Newcastle Racecourse	Broadmeadow	5	600	500	600	400	Hand held microphones, data projector and screens, TV monitors.	Race Day functions, lawn areas for outdoor break out sessions.	N/A	11
NOAH'S On The Beach	Newcastle	8	380	300	300	280	Lectern, lectern microphone, roving microphone, Data projector, projector screen, wireless internet, whiteboard, flipchart stand.	Restaurant & Cocktail bar.	91	3
Novotel Newcastle Beach	Newcastle	3	166	140	150	140	WIFI and dancefloor available complimentary. All audio-visual equipment can be hired via our preferred supplier for an additional cost, eg. LED TV, data projector and screens, lectern, microphones, flipcharts and whiteboards.	Novotel In balance meetings includes 2 complimentary team activities when taking our day delegate packages. Other team building activities can be arranged at an additional cost via our preferred supplier. Onsite restaurant and bar, room service, secure underground self-parking, gym, spa, steam room.	88	10
Seabreeze Hotel	Nelson Bay	2	N/A	140	140	140	Microphone, Wifi.	Karaoke, musical trivia, pool table Restaurant, Accommodation	18	9
Shoal Bay Country club	Shoal Bay	5	332	500	350	240	Microphone, Data projector, wifi, flipcharts. Bathrooms, breakout rooms, tea and coffee facilities and catering (on request).	On-site catering is available plus a café, 3 restaurants and multiple bars. Entertainment and activities each night and live music all weekend.	accom available	5
The Imperial Hotel	Maitland	2	50	50	50	50	Microphone, Data projector, wifi, self serve tea & coffee, Catering Available	Jukebox, pool table, live music, bar & bistro	11	9

FUNCTION GUIDE TABLE 2022

Venues	Location	Room Capacity					Facilities	Onsite activities	Accom. rooms	See page
		Conference rooms	Max Area/M ²	Max Cocktail	Max Theatre	Max Banquet				
The Kent	Hamilton	2	245	250	50	50	Microphone, WIFI, Data Projector, in house music	Pool Table	N/A	9
University of Newcastle – Local Connections Restaurant	Callaghan	1	200	150	N/A	80	Licensed bar, dedicated chef and kitchen team, wait staff, food and beverage packages, hand-held microphone and inbuilt sound system. Book a table or book the whole restaurant.	Degustation dining, beer and wine tasting events, networking and cocktail events, awards nights and celebration events, breakfast functions.	N/A	13
University of Newcastle – Shortland building	Callaghan	5	444	400	380	200	Flexible stage and lectern, tables and chairs for up to 250, high-speed WiFi, two projectors and two screens, handheld and lapel microphones, in house audio system, blue-ray player, catering.	Two large spaces for a conference, gala dinner, ball, cocktail event, expo, graduation or school formal. Three small meeting rooms for meetings, presentations, workshops and training days.	N/A	13
University of Newcastle – Q Building	Newcastle	4	162	120	110	N/A	High speed WiFi, lectern, zoom capabilities, hand & lapel microphones, projector & screen, tables, chairs, white board, kitchenette, instant hot & cold water	Presentations, workshops, classes & networking events.	N/A	13

*During Covid -19 restrictions these numbers could change. Please contact the venues directly to find out adjusted numbers.

SUPPORTING SERVICES

The Hunter Region is blessed with a wide variety of organisations that can provide services and expertise to help make your event be a success.

COMPANY	SERVICES	PAGE
Scion Audio & Events	Audio, visual, staging & event equipment	6

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EVENTS COME BACK WITH A VENGEANCE

Louise Tilman
Scion Audio and Events

How things have changed in the world of events in 2022. After 2 years of cancellations and postponed events this year has seen events. Life is busy for everyone right now.

So many of the events that didn't happen in 2020 and 2021 have finally happened in 2022. We have been busy with large Conferences and Charity Balls and many Council funded projects. At last, those conferences have come to fruition after being planned for the third time. Newcastle has been lucky to host conferences with over 500 delegates so far this year with more on the way. These conferences have brought so much life back to the city, benefitting function centres, hotels and restaurants and businesses like us. Some of the larger events have included the Australian Community Engagement and Fire Awareness Conference and the Australasian Corrosion Association to name a few.

So many of our charity events have happened this year as well with Newcastle opening their wallets and supporting charities like Ronald McDonald House and Hunter Medical Research Institute raising over \$600,000 between them.

Councils embarked on a range of events to get people out and about and numbers were great. Newcastle Council showed Disney movies outside the Museum and created interesting events at the Library. Maitland City Council did events like After Dark and Taste, while Lake Macquarie did multiple outdoor events including Beers, Blues and BBQs, Fast and Loud and an amazing number of live events at MIMA.

All our clients have felt the need to get back to the face-to-face events of pre-covid and at this stage people from all over Australia have embraced face to face events in Newcastle. Conferences have been fully subscribed, Gala Charity Balls have been sold out and various expos have seen exhibitors and visitor numbers return to normal levels.

This return to "normal" has seen some changes, however. We have found that lead times are shorter

with event organisers keeping an eye on the Covid situation up to the last minute. We have also had to be agile knowing that face to face events can suddenly need a hybrid element at the last minute. As an event company we must be ready to combine a "live" in-person event with a "virtual" online component at the last minute.

Scion Audio and Events has been fortunate enough to keep most of our pre-covid staff but staffing still becomes an issue when there are so many events happening at one time. Newcastle hosted it's second Le Diner En Blanc on the same weekend as The Newcastle Writers Festival plus other events as well. It was a huge weekend for the city and required extra hands to be brought in to help.

It has been a great year but we have had some "downs" with our "ups". The weather is something that affects our day-to-day life but this year the rain has been a constant threat to our outdoor events. Our event co-ordinators have the difficult job of making a call based on the weather forecast. The floods of this year have meant changes to events like Steamfest in Maitland as the Steamfest grounds were still boggy from being covered in water.

2022 has certainly been a great year for events and we are all hoping that this new "normal" will remain.

For further information contact Scion Audio and Events at (02) 4961 3733, email scion@scionaudio.com.au or visit www.scionaudio.com.au



Louise Tilman owns Scion Audio and Events and has more than 25 years' experience working in the event industry. Her expertise covers both the technical and the creative side of events. She enjoys nothing more than to work on an event from its conception to fruition.



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TIPS FOR MAKING YOUR EVENT A SUCCESS

It can be an arduous task to organise a successful event, particularly if it is large. The disappointing aspect for the organiser is that most attendees probably have no comprehension of how much work has been involved. Those without function organising experience often think it is just a matter of booking a venue and sending out the invitations. The organisers are often not really thought about unless there is a really big wow factor or if something major goes wrong.

Every event is different and will have its own requirements; however, the following general tips will help you to achieve a successful event:

Getting help

There are a range of local businesses that can help with your event, from assisting with one aspect (like catering) to organising almost the entire event. Even if you gain the services of an event planner, this does not mean that you will have no responsibilities in the planning stages. First and foremost you must have good communications with the planner and ensure both sides have a clear understanding of the type of event, its goals and its budget. The event planner will also require input from you along the way with necessary information and options requiring a decision. These should be attended to promptly but with due consideration. In the end the event planner wants the event to meet the client's expectations, so your input is important and required.

Initial planning

The first task is to clearly define what your event is trying to achieve. Finalise the type of event or function it will be – launch, networking session, end of year party, exhibition, seminar, team building etc.

Next set the budget available, including both revenue streams (if applicable) and expenses. If it is a re-run of a similar earlier event, these stages will be much easier. Make sure to also have realistic and measurable targets.

Event budget

Set a budget at the start and monitor it as each stage progresses. It is usually best if you can allocate some of the budget for unforeseen expenses as these often occur.

Date and venue

Much care must be taken when setting the date and venue as it is not usually easy to change these. When considering the date take into account public and school holidays, other major or competing events, staff and equipment availability and any other issue that may restrict the timing.

Risk management

Create a risk management plan and ensure any appropriate insurance is in place and current. Create a contingency plan for factors outside of your direct control on the day.

Timeline

Prepare a project timeline with tasks that must be accomplished by specific dates. These may include:

- When to announce the event
- Preparation of promotional material
- Selection of caterer and menu
- Selection of entertainment
- Organisation of audio-visual needs
- Selection and confirmation of speakers
- Selection of accommodation
- Organisation of insurance or permits
- Preparation of a contingency plan for the event
- Organisation of transportation
- Organisation of marketing, signage and social media.
- Finalisation of program
- Confirmation of attendees
- Preparation of event material
- Organising set up

At the event

The better the planning and preparation, the better the chance that all will go smoothly on the day. Often it won't go exactly to plan, but most attendees will be unaware. Try to stay calm, even if there are a few hiccups, and finally try to enjoy yourself.

After the event

When the event is finished you will need to remove equipment and possibly rubbish from the venue. Depending upon the nature of the event, sponsors and participants may be thanked and possibly given a questionnaire for feedback. In the days following the event have a debrief session on the event, covering the successful aspects as well as those that could have been improved. If appropriate, a report on the event can be sent to participants and sponsors. Plans for future events can also be included.



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ORGANISING A WORK SOCIAL DAY

The Hunter region offers a wide spectrum of activities for organising a work social day, from adventure parks, race days, wine tours, brewery tours, team building events and many more.

Many businesses organise activities for their staff in an effort to build a more effective team, use it as a reward, to increase job satisfaction and to help get to know staff. Work social days are a great way to achieve these outcomes but if they are poorly organised these activities can fail to produce and even dampen morale if it is seen as just a work obligation.

The following tips will help you with planning your team building activities.

Decide on objectives and a budget

What is the purpose? Different activities will gain different outcomes. Is it to celebrate a significant business accomplishment, reward staff, let staff get to know each other better without work pressures, help staff see the "bigger picture" or some other purpose? The activity needs to be selected to meet the goals and keep within budget, for example a wine tour would be a great way to celebrate a business accomplishment, whereas an informal lunch is better way to introduce a new staff member.

Select an activity suitable for your whole team

If you have less active members, it is not a great idea to organize anything too strenuous. Don't select an activity that is likely to have an extreme range in abilities. Don't let the activity be overly competitive – you can have winners if you want, but make sure that others don't feel like losers. Also not everyone drinks alcohol or feels comfortable around people who are drinking.



Pick a convenient time

Employees will be most receptive to an activity that is during work hours and does not interfere with their personal time. When scheduling the activity, keep your employees' schedules and personal obligations in mind. If you have employees with children in day care or school, make sure that the social day does not interfere with their pick-up schedule or require them to plan additional childcare.

Ease work pressures

Make sure that you reduce the employees' workload that typically gets done during the scheduled team-building time so that they do not have to work nights or weekends to get their jobs done. You may need to hire temporary staff. Take into account the downtime when setting schedules and targets.

Consider help

Ask possible venues for tips, what has worked before etc. You can even consider hiring an external professional to organise the whole or some of the activities.

Don't forget travel time

You may find a great location, but staff may not be happy if they have to travel an extra hour or two each way. If you are really set on a location a little more distant, consider hiring a mini-bus and also use the travel time effectively.

Provide food.

Make sure food is involved in the planning as no one is happy if they are hungry or if finding something to eat is a chore.

Don't make it about the business

Don't bore staff with speeches or work-related talks. Make the day interesting and memorable. The best activities are those a bit different, not something many of the staff do on a regular basis.

Encourage staff to mix

Forget about staff hierarchy. Make all staff feel like they are on an equal footing. If you have a large number of staff, consider nametags with just their first name. If the activity involves teams, try to have teams comprised of staff members that normally don't work closely.

Get post-event feedback

After the event, have employees provide anonymous feedback on the team building day. By knowing what your employees liked and disliked about the event, you can better plan team-building activities in the future. If you planned the day for a specific reason, evaluate the outcome after the event.



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SELECTING A VENUE

One of the most important decisions when planning a business event is the venue. Assuming you do not have suitable in-house facilities, you will likely be faced with a range of venue options and these must be evaluated early in the process.

The following are factors to consider when you are deciding upon the venue for your next event:

(1) Location – The venue should be easy to get to for participants and attendees. It is usually good to be located close to most of attendees to minimise travel time and increase attendance. If you think many will use public transport then these links should be evaluated. If most will be driving then close-by parking facilities will be an important consideration.

(2) Venue suitability – Obviously the venue must be the right size for your event. If it is too small you will not have enough room for everything you need as well as attendees. But if it is too large, it may feel quite dead and empty. If the venue is not air-conditioned or is set outdoors you should consider ventilation or heating options, particularly if the event is being held in summer or winter. If extensive setting up is required, such as in an expo, then ease of access to the venue can be important. The venue also may need to be available for ample time before and after the event. Wheelchair and invalid access may also be a consideration.

(3) Facilities & services – The available facilities and services provided by a venue can be of major benefit in the quality of an event, the total cost of an event and the ease of organisation. Check there is sufficient

chairs and tables (if required). These days microphones, audio visual facilities and internet access are essential for many functions. If food and drink facilities are not available, or not available to the desired quality, then there are a number of excellent caterers available in the Hunter that can help.

(4) Availability – The venue does of course need to be available. The earlier the venue is locked away, the better the chance of having it for your desired time. You will also have more flexibility in settling on a date if you start early.

(5) Cost – Cost is always a factor to consider, particularly if operating on a tight budget but make sure you are taking all costs into account. For example a more expensive venue that provides additional facilities at no charge may well work out cheaper in the long run than a cheaper venue that provides little and you need to arrange additional facilities.

(6) Venue staff – The quality of the venue staff is sometimes overlooked. Good venue staff are a major help both in the organisational phase and on the actual event day. Alarm bells should start ringing if you find them disinterested or they fail to respond to enquiries.

(7) Other help – Don't be shy to ask other organisations that have had similar types of events about their experiences. Event organisers can take away most of the venue selection work. They also have more detailed intelligence on possible venues and the range of options available.



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SPACES TO GATHER YOUR REMOTE WORKERS

Neroli Foster
Venue Management Coordinator
University of Newcastle

Our 'new normal' sees many businesses downsizing their footprints with remote working becoming a productive and cost-effective way of doing business. Organisations are downsizing their footprints, and instead, financially supporting staff with the costs of a home office to enable them to work from home permanently. Technology companies have been some of the most enthusiastic adopters of working from home since the pandemic. Just recently, Twitter announced it will be closing its Australian office in Sydney's CBD as they evaluate their existing footprint and move towards various flexible work options.

While the pandemic has shed light on the many benefits of working from home for both companies and its employees, it's becoming clear most people do value and need face-to-face connection too. Research from SEEK shows 54 per cent of workers expect a hybrid model in 2022. This kind of business model operates best when its members can combine remote working balanced with high value face-to-face occasions.

Even if most of our work could be delivered from home, hosting in-person meetings enhances workplace culture, builds personal connection, and fuels team spirit. Social connectivity is vital for employee wellbeing. According to PwC research, every \$1 invested in employee mental health delivers a \$2.40 return. A focus on wellbeing pays off.

We've found our meeting spaces are increasingly in demand for activities that are accomplished more effectively in person. With spaces for a small team meeting, workshop or presentation hosting up to 100 people, the new Q Building in Honeysuckle is bookable

by any individual or organisation. The building's inspiring design has breathtaking views of the harbour and city landscape. As the first building in regional NSW to achieve a 6 Star Green Star 'Design and As Built' rating, guests can delight in the building's clever sustainability features and reduced carbon footprint.

Such a spectacular location might help convince participants that time spent away from the home office is worth the commute. Inspiring participants with an opportunity that can't be achieved at home will increase attendance. As creatures of connection, being face-to-face is a vital part of office culture. Being an online observer, you may hear the presentation, but you miss the facial expressions, body language, and casual conversations. All these interactions help to build trust and relationships that you can rely on when the pressure is on. A future-focussed leader will create opportunities for their remote workers to continue to connect.

Helping guests feel safe when they leave the home office is an important consideration. Our Local Connections restaurant is nestled among the bushland in Callaghan and can offer private dining for your event away from the crowds. The menu is crafted by expert chef, Alex Hunter, with ingredients sourced only from the Hunter region. An event here will bring a new experience to most and bring dining as an appealing element to your activities. With small meeting spaces nearby, we have everything you need for an off-site workshop or conference, and plenty of space to keep everyone safe.



Corporate dining events

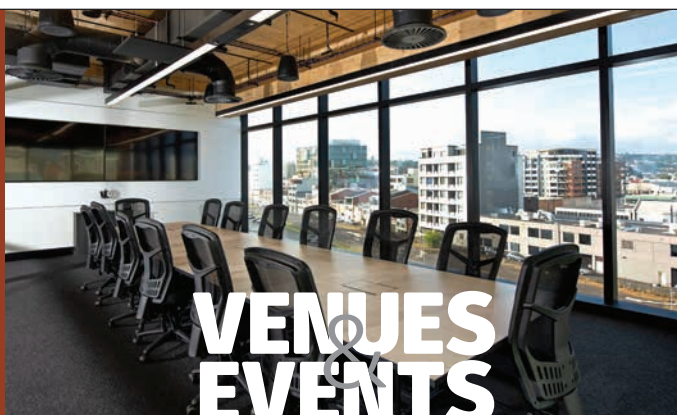
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MARKETING YOUR EVENT

One of the most important parts of organising an event is letting people know about it. If there are no attendees, there is no event.

There are many paths available to do this. Advertising for your event should involve a mixture of the tactics depending on your target audience and where they seek out event information.

Traditional marketing tactics

Direct mail marketing campaigns, press releases and hard copy advertising are a great way to announce the event and know that it is getting to the right target audience.

Social media

Social media is an effective way to advertise your event. Platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are an easy way to reach people.

Use attendees

When people sign up for your event, provide them with opportunities to share the information about your event on social media or via email.

Invite major industry players

Contact prominent people in the industry, who also have a following on their social networks. Invite these people to your event and it's sure to get coverage on a lot of related socials.

Market the speakers

If your business has the budget to book a well-known speaker, it will create more hype. When marketing



your speakers focus on their education, experience, and interesting facts about their lives. This will generate interest in hearing these facts and experiences live. Feature your speakers in your media releases, hard copy advertising and social media.

Testimonials

Testimonials are great if your business organises an annual event that is well attended, especially by regular attendees and repeat vendors. Get testimonials from attendees and vendors about your key outcomes for the event e.g. the event was informative, fun and I made some key contacts.

Corporate sponsorships

Gaining corporate sponsors for your event is a plus for both parties. When the sponsors advertise the event, not only is it good marketing for the event, it is also a good marketing strategy for their company.

Free tickets

Another great way to promote your event is to offer the participating sponsors, speakers, industry players and vendors free admission tickets. You can request that they mention the event to all their contacts or share it on social media.



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Don't take customer service for granted

Steve Dick
Movable

When it comes to successful real estate buying, we are all familiar with the adage "location, location, location". But when it comes to ringing customer service at Newcastle City Council, it's "frustration, frustration, frustration".

Local government organisations can do better

As a director of a commercial real estate firm, I can make and receive over 100 calls some days, and sometimes I must prioritise my call-backs. That's my theory, rightly or wrongly. It works like this: if your phone number appears in red on my mobile device, you should receive a call back some time that day or evening.

However, if your number is private, I'll listen to your message ad hoc. Not good, but as a busy small business owner, that's how I cope. I am a one-person response team, but my way is better than some larger organisations with dedicated customer service teams, as we discovered over the last couple of weeks.

Race cars and weddings

My son and his partner have booked a wedding venue in Newcastle East on the same day the Supercars plan to rev up in Newcastle, according to a report in the Newcastle Herald. Immediately my wife took it upon herself to find out the race times in the hope of slotting the garden nuptials between races.

This research involved speaking with Newcastle City Council, and then the frustration, frustration, frustration began.

Multiple frustrations and on-hold roadblocks

My wife rang Council for the first time on Tuesday, 19 July and

was put on hold and then no one took her call, so she hung up in frustration. She again tried the next day and left her number thinking someone would return her call. Wrong again. No one from Council returned her call.

Two days later, she rang again and stayed on hold, determined that someone would answer her questions. Finally, the call was responded to, and my wife was put on hold again while "they tried to find someone to take the call."

Frustration again when the answer came back "they were all too busy, and someone would return within 48 hours." Worse, no one returned her call.

Audacity, audacity, audacity

When you'd thought this sorry saga couldn't get worse, Newcastle City Council sent my wife a customer satisfaction email the following Monday. The email asked about how Newcastle Council had performed actioning my wife's recent enquiry. And even though all the answers were highly negative – she thought this would unquestionably prompt a response – there was still no response.

Two days later, my wife made another call to Council. This time she got a helpful young girl who put her on hold again as she looked for someone to take the call. The willing young girl returned with "no one would take the call."

Exasperated, my wife explained to the girl the problem about the wedding, guests, timing access, accommodation, and noise. The response: "Well, hopefully, your guests will love the supercars", and added, "someone would ring her back."

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www.mcnamaraadams.com.au	 NSW GOVERNMENT	Telephone: (02) 4961 2244

Making an enquiry shouldn't be this hard

Imagine the pushback if my wife was making a complaint? Anyway, I must give my wife full marks for perseverance as she tried again two days later Friday, 29 July, some ten days since this infuriating saga started.

This time she got through and spoke to someone who said the Newcastle Herald was wrong and the date in March wasn't set in concrete.

So, at the time of writing, we are still none the wiser. Yet, this sorry saga shows an embarrassing disconnect between what Council management wants the organisation to be and the reality.

As a business owner, I understand responding to some calls can be challenging. However, if you dodge calls, the caller will eventually catch up. Also, if you do not ring back, the caller will get angrier and make the eventual conversation even harder. And if your automated BOT sends out customer surveys before the issue is dealt with, that's embarrassing.

For further information contact MOVABLE on (02) 4915 3000



Steve Dick is a director of Newcastle's leading residential and commercial real estate firm, Movable.

Report calls for increased housing supply for the Hunter

A recent report from the Property Council of Australia and Gyde consulting has shown a spike in population growth for the Hunter region – sparking a call for increased housing to keep up with demand.

Property Council's Hunter Regional Director Anita Hugo said population growth over the past five years in the Hunter had exceeded figures predicted in 2019 projections.

"Significant growth is likely placing pressure on housing demands and current housing supply," Ms Hugo said.

"While the Hunter looks set to meet its housing targets to 2041, we need to be careful we don't become complacent in light of the population growing greater than predicted.

"The Hunter is facing significant housing and rental market stress, an agile approach to housing that takes a strategic look at housing diversity across LGAs as well as serviced land will be critical to alleviate this going forward.

"Deliberate planning that enforces targets and encourages scalable supply of new housing based on serviceability will be critical. Improved data metrics will assist in determining the strategic alignment of the growth currently occurring in the broader region."

The regional housing analysis for the Hunter concluded the Hunter has been experiencing population growth over the last five years beyond what was projected by DPE in 2019. This increased level of population growth is likely increasing demand for housing in these LGAs, placing pressure on the existing supply and delivery trends.

DPE has identified that the Hunter requires 84,700 dwellings from 2016 to 2041 requiring delivery of approximately 3,380 dwellings per year. Detached dwellings have dominated delivery however, in 2019-20 more multi-unit dwellings were completed than detached dwellings for the first time in the LGA.

Since 2012 approvals in the region have been increasing detached dwelling completions are still dominant, with multi-unit dwelling completions seemingly more prone to the peaks and troughs of the housing market.



The location of dwelling approvals from 2019-2021 indicates a combination of greenfield and infill development will be delivered over the coming years.

This represents some diversity in location, as well as differing dwelling types. The metrics for measuring housing diversity and location in the Hunter, however, need to be improved to ensure adequate supply and the delivery of housing that is suitable to different stages of life.

The Hunter is on track to provide enough housing to meet the projected demand to 2041. Extrapolation of the current completions and trends suggest an ongoing and increasing surplus to 2041. However, the 2041 projected demand is based on lower population growth than what is currently occurring in some parts of the Hunter.

The strategic planning guiding the region will need to be more agile to adapt to the likely increased demand generated by this population growth. The majority of Greater Newcastle LGAs are on track to deliver enough housing to meet projected demand within their local area.

However, some LGAs need to increase dwelling supply and delivery to ensure enough housing is provided for their population particularly given the increased population growth occurring in much of Greater Newcastle.

Understanding the individual circumstances of each LGA will be key to ensuring strong delivery of housing, as will a strategic assessment of 'market/shovel ready' greenfield land.

Overall, the Hunter is performing well however, with changed demand arising from unanticipated population growth, the region needs to respond and maintain a supply of housing capable of meeting this demand.

An agile approach to housing will be key to ensuring that increased/decreased demand can be catered to across the region, particularly given the unanticipated population growth currently occurring that is likely to impact the market in several years' time.

Hunter building sector booming "but beware the headwinds", local adviser warns



Bradd Morelli - National Managing Partner, Jirsch Sutherland

Australia's building and construction sector is facing major headwinds – and Hunter region builders and subcontractors are being urged to be aware of the challenges and speak up if they start to struggle.

"The sector is certainly booming in many parts of Australia – including the Hunter region – but it's been dubbed the 'profitless boom', with the cost of materials and labour rising rapidly and many contractors and subcontractors having accepted contracts that are no longer appropriate for

the current environment. There has been a number of home builders and major construction companies go into voluntary administration or liquidation around the country. That's why it's crucial to recognise the warning signs that a business is struggling," says Bradd Morelli, Newcastle-based National Managing Partner of Jirsch Sutherland, a specialist business turnaround and insolvency solutions firm.

Morelli says warning signs to look out for include:

- any slowdown or delays in projects, or deadlines that have lapsed;
- delays in payments to subcontractors or others in the supply chain;
- subcontractors refusing to go on-site;
- lack of contractor education and legal advice – e.g., contractors and subcontractors too readily accepting onerous terms.

"These signs can indicate a company is struggling with its cash-flow, which is why it's important to recognise them and take action asap," Morelli says. "And with the ATO now back into debt collection mode, it's also crucial to act if you're struggling to pay tax. The softly-softly approach the ATO has taken for the past couple of years is coming to an end."

Keep your eyes on the ball

Statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) indicate that detached home activity across the HIA Hunter region performed strongly in the year to March 2022, despite the impact of the global pandemic and the ending of the federal government's HomeBuilder stimulus package. Detached dwelling approvals increased 11%, while multi-unit approvals increased by 12%. In total, 6,456 approvals were issued for new dwellings across the HIA Hunter region during the 12 months, an increase of 12% from the previous year.

"Despite the positive outlook, the construction industry is facing a unique series of challenges nationally," says Morelli.

"There are labour shortages, supply chain issues which means materials shortages, and escalating costs. It means the time and cost to build a new home or complete a renovation have increased significantly. And as many builders and their clients operate under a fixed price contract, there is no leeway for either party to share the burden of increased costs which are beyond their control.

"So, while the sector is performing strongly, it's important not to take your eyes off the ball. In an environment of multiple and potentially diversified projects, spotting the signs that a building company is struggling may not always be apparent.

Monitoring project performance from tender to hand-over is essential in a time where many factors that are outside of a business's control can impact a project's financial success."

Bradd adds that identifying a potential problem early expands the options available for the business, ensuring that any financial contagion does not spread further than necessary. "There are various business rescue programs designed to protect companies and the people behind the companies in the event of financial distress. Which is why it's important to speak with a trusted adviser, such as your accountant or business turnaround specialist," he adds.

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*Approximate

Mining land transformation holds the key to region's enormous economic potential

Peter Coughlan
Hunter Renewal project

The potential for 13,600 new jobs and \$3.7 billion in economic output from rehabilitated mining land is good news for the Hunter's businesses and communities, as a new report by EY confirms significant economic and environmental opportunities can be unlocked together.

The ground-breaking report "Diversification and growth: transforming mining land in the Hunter Valley", commissioned by Lock the Gate and the Hunter Renewal project, quantifies the scale of opportunity by exploring land use requirements for the 17 mines set to close in the next 20 years.

The report details three scenarios for over 130,000 hectares of land owned by mining companies that can contribute to region-wide restoration supporting biodiversity and jobs. It also highlights how a broader ambition to build on the region's strengths and diversify into renewable industries can increase incomes and future stability.

The first "status quo" scenario is where mining companies rehabilitate a specific area of title land based on existing approvals. The potential economic gains for this scenario would provide a cumulative increase in gross regional product of \$95 million and an additional 320 jobs per annum.

A second "maximum conservation" scenario adds the further restoration of "buffer lands" for biodiversity and farming use which increases the potential jobs to 670 and the economic output to \$200 million.

However, the most exciting opportunities come from a third "renewable energy precincts scenario" which combines "buffer land" restoration with clean industrial development on selected former mine sites. Here, the region stands to benefit by an average of 13,600 jobs.

In addition to these new jobs that EY have predicted over and above the base level Hunter projection, they have modelled that over the next 25 years there would be an increase in gross regional product of \$3.7 billion, even after allowing for a 7% discount rate.

This third cumulative scenario generates the greatest spread of employment in 10 different industries that service renewable energy production, agriculture, manufacturing and land conservation management. The economic gains will also flow throughout a variety of other industries.

A case for action

The EY report demonstrates that increasing the mining land rehabilitation requirements increases economic growth for the area; it's not a trade-off. However, to realise the benefits, the Hunter needs a collective vision supported by a clear roadmap that provides for flourishing biodiversity, landscape recovery, and new economic opportunities.

A key part of this roadmap includes expanding the current mine rehabilitation framework to create a whole-of-region environmental plan in consultation with the community.

We also need the new Federal Government to work together with New South Wales to establish a Hunter Valley Authority, supported by a long-term rehabilitation fund, to seize the opportunity to turn our challenges into thousands of jobs in thriving industries.

Hunter Renewal is inviting local businesses to be part of this conversation as we advocate for a more proactive approach to our transition.

Visit https://www.hunterrenewal.org.au/transform_land to read the EY report, support our community-led proposals or sign-up for updates



Peter Coughlan is a member of Hunter Renewal – a local not for profit bringing the people of the Hunter together for crucial conversations about how we can chart a new course for our future. Alongside his Hunter Renewal role Peter is the principal of Coughlan Consulting, providing Hunter based business coaching services to the SME sector.

Sustainable Futures Festival

In the Hunter, as in the rest of Australia and overseas, there is ever-increasing pressure on governments, business and community to understand and embrace the implications for how we operate now and into the future. To this end, EcoNetwork Port Stephens are

bringing together sustainability experts, business owners and the local community at the inaugural Sustainable Futures Festival on 11 September on the Tomaree Peninsula.

Professor Veena Sahajwalla is the founding Director of the Sustainable Materials Research & Technology Centre at UNSW. Her industry-integrated research program has resulted in a world-first, patented process called Polymer Injection Technology for recycling end-of-life plastics and rubber in electric arc furnace steelmaking, resulting in the production of 'Green Steel'.

The Polymer Injection Technology process has shown that researchers and industry can successfully collaborate to make a valuable contribution to enhance the efficiency of manufacturing, whilst simultaneously diverting end-of-life materials from landfill.

Professor Sahajwalla has delivered keynote and invited addresses at some of the most prestigious research gatherings and conferences in the world and has lectured in Argentina, Canada, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, UK and USA. She has also published more than 250 refereed papers in leading journals and conference proceedings in her field.

Professor Veena Sahajwalla is heading up the impressive program of speakers and presenters at the Sustainable Futures Festival including:

- Dr Hedda Askland from the University of Newcastle's Centre for Social Research and Regional Futures who studies the issues of displacement and resettlement within mining-affected communities in rural Australia including the Upper Hunter. She is also working on a 'sustainable energy futures' project for NSW.
- Dr Jarra Hicks, founding director of the Community Power Agency, a worker's cooperative that supports communities to participate in and benefit from the transition to renewable energy.

The Sustainable Futures Festival in Port Stephens aims to showcase leading solutions to the ecological and social changes we face. Adapting to new technologies can be a challenge. Scientists such as Professor Veena Sahajwalla are showing us there are practical solutions to the problems we face.

For more details and to keep up to date, visit ecops.au/pvs



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While many waste handling businesses lay claim to being a 'circular economy business' - in fact, very few of them are.

Benedict Recycling is however - one of those few. Located in the heart of Mayfield West's CSIRO-lead Innovation Hub that is the Steel River Eco-Industrial Precinct, **Benedict Recycling** are leading the way in end-to-end recycling solutions.

As well as managing waste at their purpose-built resource recovery and spoil-handling facility, the family owned- and operated company also recovers, recycles, and reuses their waste streams, converting them on- and off site, into a range of quality recycled products and materials for the Greater Hunter's building and landscaping industries. Since 2021, Benedict Recycling has had an exceptional resource recovery rate of 87%.

In the past 10 years, **Benedict Recycling** has been a valued partner on many of the region's major construction and infrastructure projects. Projects of significance include Hunter & Central Coast Development Corporation's Honeysuckle Precinct Development, Port of Newcastle commercial sites, Kooragang Island Infrastructure, as well as large-scale road and rail works across the region.

The company's comprehensive range of services (and products) were demonstrated through their involvement in the re-development of Newcastle Harbour Foreshore and Honeysuckle Precinct. Under the Benedict Partnership Model, **Benedict Recycling** brought together Developer, Principal Civil Contractor, Managing Geotechnical Contractor and Haulers to provide a solution that JM Environments Director James McMahon described as - "one of our Region's stand-out case studies for major re-development sites where complex, multi-stratum legacy materials have been successfully optimised for available re-use, and landfill diversion through excavation and waste review methodologies that are industry-leading and best practice within our complete regulatory and compliance framework". Lead by Business Manager (and die-hard Knight's fan) Dayne Steggles, **Benedict Recycling**, with the backing of their own internal Quality Control and Environmental Compliance units and a network of industry experts - including Certified Environmental Management Practitioners and Contaminated Site experts, truly is an end-to-end service provider. From site auditing support with project-based material solutions, including interpretation for material beneficiation and amelioration through the management of Environmental Protection Licences and Resource Recovery Exemptions and Orders, to the development of remediation action plans, dedicated waste tracking and reporting modules, and innovative project-specific resource recovery solutions, **Benedict Recycling** is the partner of choice for your next major project.



Benedict Recycling's expansive site at Mayfield West
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Supporting local businesses and the local team.



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For more information visit: **BenedictRecycling.com.au**

Newcastle reaffirms sustainable development goals on 25th anniversary

The 25th anniversary of an historic declaration signed in Newcastle to pursue sustainable development was marked before representatives from Hunter businesses, not-for-profit, local and state government on 2 August.

The Newcastle Declaration was endorsed at the Pathways to Sustainability International Conference hosted by City of Newcastle in June 1997, and signed by former Newcastle Lord Mayor Greg Heys, as well as representatives from the International Union of Local Authorities, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), Australian Local Government Association.

The Declaration made its way around the world, being presented to the United Nations at the 1997: Rio +5 Conference in New York.

The acknowledgement of its 25-year milestone came during the meeting of the Hunter Region Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Collaboration Group, which works together on ways to achieve the United Nations' goals across the region.

Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nemes said City of Newcastle remained committed to the objectives laid out in the original Newcastle Declaration.

"It is important to recognise this significant milestone and the actions of our former leaders who were forward thinking for their time in responding to the challenge of establishing sustainable management practices with the Newcastle Declaration," Cr Nemes said.

"As a result, City of Newcastle is now a leader in this space and over the past 25 years has successfully achieved economic, social, cultural and ecological goals by integrating sustainability into the design and implementation of our policies, programs and projects.

"City of Newcastle was the first local government in NSW to switch to 100% renewable electricity supply, with our 5 MW solar farm and a power purchase agreement with the Sapphire Wind Farm.

"By meeting together with local businesses, government representatives, and not-for-profit organisations that are also committed to sustainable development initiatives, we will collaborate on ways we can bring the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals to life in Greater Newcastle for an environmentally sustainable future."

"Vast momentum of interest and growth is now occurring in Newcastle and the Hunter region where these technologies need to be validated", said MCI Chief Operating Officer Sophia Hamblin Wang.

"MCI offers a unique opportunity to assist in the decarbonisation of industry, and since the news in Glasgow we have continued to attract more local talent."

MCI captures emissions from hard-to-abate industries, like steel, cement, fertilisers and mining, unlocking the value of carbon by creating valuable products and materials for the circular carbon economy. The company has grown exponentially in recent years, creating more than 20 jobs in the region following the recent announcement of a \$14.6 million Federal government grant to build a world-first demonstration plant on Kooragang Island.

"It is advantageous to have an office centrally located between MCI's pilot plant facility, the planned site for its demonstration plant and in close proximity to Newcastle airport", said Martin Murphy, Chief Commercial Officer.

"I look forward to welcoming MCI's domestic and international customers and partners."

Commissioned in 2016, the company's pilot plant is located at the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources (NIER). The chemical process, called 'mineral carbonation', creates a range of low carbon embodied materials, including calcium carbonate, by carbonating minerals in slag and other by-products of the steelmaking process (mainly steelmaking slag), coal ash produced by thermal power plants, and other industrial waste materials containing magnesium or calcium (mine tailings: by-products from the collection of metals and ore).

"Our technical team has grown from eight staff in July 2021 to over 20 this month, as we expand to meet growing customer interest and to deliver our engineering scale-up program", said MCI's Chief Technology Officer, Dr Mark Rayson.

"Having a common space also means team members across departments now have a central hub to collaborate, which will be increasingly important as we scale up."

As industries transition away from fossil-fuel intensive manufacturing to achieve emission reduction goals and those of the Paris Climate Agreement, a range of new technologies will be developed and commercialised through to 2050 and beyond.

"MCI offers a unique opportunity for communities in the region to assist in the decarbonisation of industry with novel technology and to form collaborations and partnerships with proactive customers to make a real impact", says CEO Marcus Dawe.

Recently featured in the Australian Financial Review, Smart Company and GQ, with CEO Marcus Dawe and COO Sophia Hamblin Wang named in the Top 100 Australian Green Power Players, published in The Australian.

MCI Carbon opens industrial headquarters in Steel River

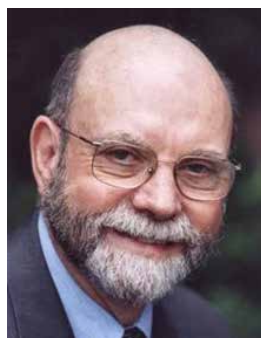
Australian cleantech MCI Carbon (with corporate headquarters located in Canberra) opened its new industrial headquarters in the Steel River precinct in Mayfield West and held their inaugural Town Hall meeting in July.

Company stakeholders, the board of directors and staff from both the Newcastle and Canberra contingencies came together for the first time in the new office. MCI Carbon is an Australian technology platform that transforms CO2 into building materials and other valuable industrial products. The company was catapulted onto the global stage last year, when MCI was awarded #1 Global Cleantech at COP26 in Glasgow where Chief Operating Officer Sophia Hamblin Wang delivered the winning pitch.

MCI Carbon staff



Talis Consultants establishes Newcastle base



Graham Brown, Principal Environmental Consultant

Talis is a Perth based specialised consultancy with over 100 employees, providing bespoke solutions in Assets, Engineering, Environment, Noise, Spatial, and Waste Management. Since its establishment in 2012, the company has grown exponentially and has expanded its operations throughout Australia.

Talis established an office in Nowra in 2017 and presently has staff operating out of Newcastle, Sydney, Victoria and Tasmania. The company is currently

opening a new office in Newcastle to host a newly established Environmental team and an already operating Waste team, supported by the larger teams in Nowra and Perth (Talis' head office). The Newcastle Environment team will operate under the leadership of Graham Brown, a well-known and experienced local consultant, and offer a diverse range of Environmental Services with the support of the larger Talis' Environment team. The Team's diverse range of expertise across science, engineering and law together with its local experience enable them to offer bespoke services across a vast area of Environmental Management.

The Environmental Investigations team specialises in all aspects of environmental site assessment including contaminated site assessments; hydrogeological assessments; geotechnical investigations; PFAS investigations, monitoring and management; and acid sulfate soils assessments, among many others.

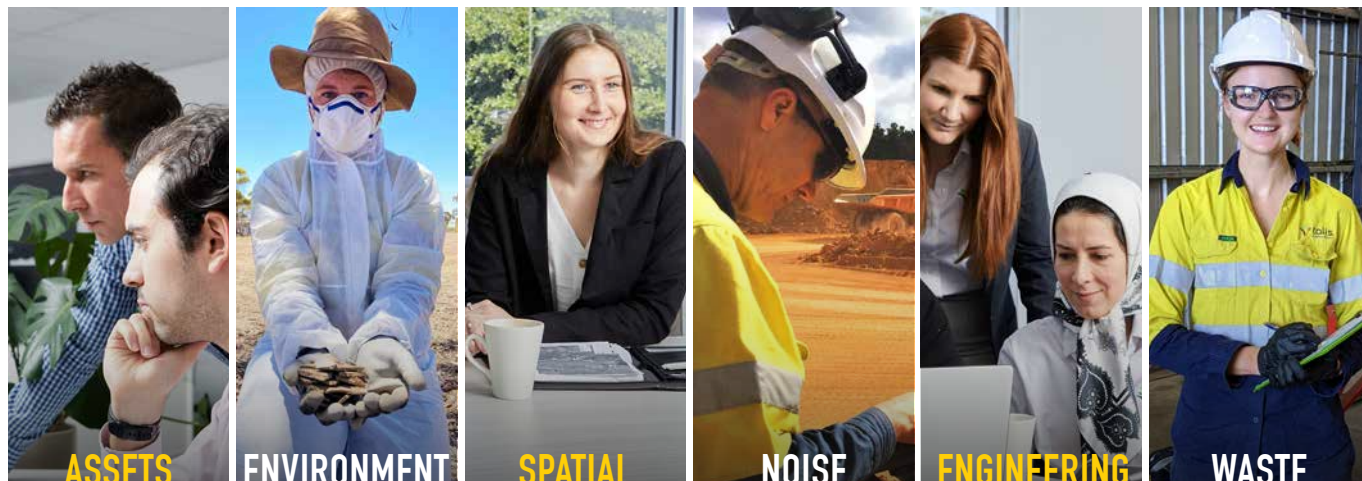
The Mining and Industrial team have significant experience in all aspects of mining and industrial activities, covering exploration, due diligence, environmental impact assessments, operational approvals, audit, reporting, management, monitoring, compliance, closure planning and rehabilitation.

Talis' environmental services are complemented by its unique Noise and Spatial Sections. The Noise Section provides a wide range of occupational, environmental and underwater noise and vibration consulting services based on decades of experience in mining, oil & gas, infrastructure and utilities and the Spatial Section provide independent professional consulting and advisory services that range from simple map production to organisation-wide spatial strategy development.

The Talis Waste Section recognises the ever-changing needs of a growing waste management industry, specialising in the creation and implementation of long-term strategy specific to the client's business and needs, including extensive experience in the delivery of all types of waste management infrastructure.

Talis staff understand relevant statutory processes, approval requirements and work collaboratively with their clients, the government and the community to deliver cost-effective solutions throughout Australia and are proud to have some of Australia's most prominent top tier companies as their clients.

Graham Brown commented, "This wide range of integrated capabilities will provide an important focal point for industries of every type in the Hunter and beyond. The Talis team members are industry focused to ensure skills and knowledge are transferred to clients."



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Plastic transformation business nominated for Hunter Manufacturing Awards

Plastic waste is a blight on our environment, but one Newcastle company is “manufacturing change” – reducing plastic pollution and boosting business in the Hunter. Sustainable furniture company Resourceful Living transforms plastic waste into functional household items.

Resourceful Living takes tonnes of discarded plastic, shreds it, heat-presses it, and cuts it into practical items ranging from furniture to clocks and even skirting boards. Based at Beresfield, the process “from pollution to practical” can take as little as two days.

The company takes waste from yellow bins and environmental clean-up groups. An end goal is to help more big businesses improve their sustainability, all while bolstering the region’s manufacturing industry. As such, it is a worthy nomination for the Hunter Manufacturing Awards (HMA) Outstanding Start-Up Award.

The Hunter Manufacturing Awards represents all businesses actively engaged in the manufacturing sector, including their allies, in the Upper Hunter, Lower Hunter, Central Coast, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Port Stephens, and Mid-North Coast regions. HMA has a loyal following thanks to its efforts of inspiring and encouraging vibrant and enduring manufacturing in these regions.

A mission to promote best practices in manufacturing motivates the HMA. In highlighting the achievements of the best, it encourages and sustains the aspirations of those who want to join them. Resourceful Living is one such operation.

With costs rising, particularly the cost of power, which also has issues around availability, it is imperative that local companies support each other. Manufacturing diversity is crucial for the Hunter region.

Resourceful Living founder Jess Hodge says everything the business can use, it does use. And the possibilities for the end result are endless.

“Covid made Australian companies acutely aware of supply chains and problems accessing products from overseas,” Ms Hodge says. “Now we’re manufacturing, we are also trying hard with our price point to compete with bigger companies from overseas.

“We give plastic materials a second, third, or fourth life. In fact, we can transform high-density polyethylene or HDPE (2) plastic into further-use products up to 10 times.”

Do you want to feel good about making a purchase to help the environment? “Recycled east-coast ocean plastic” certainly has a nice ring to it. Do you want your furniture to tell a story? Resourceful Living turns furniture into conversations. Your drink bottle today is your coffee table tomorrow, or your old wheelie bin is now your dining table.

Resourceful Living proudly boasts of not adding anything to its products. “When people want to repurpose an item, they can send it back to us and we can recycle it again and again before finally sending it to a refinery to be made into recycled oil,” Ms Hodge says.

“We pride ourselves on working towards a circular economy. A circular economy ensures sustainable growth over time, which allows us to reduce the consumption of raw materials, and ultimately recover all waste through recycling and using recycled products in the future.”

Resourceful Living is “making change”. Its goal is to remove plastic from oceans and landfill and recycle and reuse HDPE (2) up to 10 times to make a cleaner more sustainable world for generations to come. It has already recycled more than 7000 kilograms of plastic. Adding to its credibility is its “no-print” policy. Resourceful Living completes all production and administration

electronically. Paper business received is scanned, shredded, and then composted.

HMA will host the gala awards evening at NEX in Newcastle on Friday 28 October. Expect the unexpected is the theme for the event as it recognises the way in which businesses have honed their survival instincts out of the extraordinary levels of uncertainty experienced in the past couple of years. In sharpening their skills, manufacturers have acquired greater resilience to sustain momentum and competitiveness.

Fourteen categories are available for application, including the re-introduction of the Apprentice of the Year – Manufacturing Award category. Helloworld Business Travel Newcastle will once again sponsor the Incentive Prize – a trip for two to a city of choice in Australia or New Zealand. HMA draws this prize randomly, giving all finalists the opportunity to win. The Manufacturer of the Year Award winners will receive a trip for one person from the company to attend an event, or other similar occasion, enabling them to expand their business contacts and opportunities.

Jess Hodge - Resourceful Living



NSW EPA partnership to curb single use plastics

Positioned to help champion the ban on single use plastics, the University of Newcastle has been selected as a partner in sustainability with the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA). The University is part of a diverse group of organisations in the partnership, who are designing and implementing solutions to support sustainability and the single use plastic bans in NSW.

On 21 July representatives from the University attended a cross-sector event in Sydney hosted by the NSW Minister for Environment James Griffin to exchange ideas and drive meaningful momentum in the transition away from plastics.

Ranked top five in the world for partnering for a sustainable future (Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2022), the University of Newcastle is deeply committed to its sustainability goals and has already implemented initiatives such as the transformation of soft plastics recycled by staff and students into outdoor benches on campus.

Thanks to funding awarded from EPA as part of the partnership, the University will develop a cookbook with recipes using ingredients with plastic-free packaging to educate and inspire action in the community.

From 1 June, lightweight single-use plastic bags were banned in NSW. From November, the NSW Government is banning additional single-use items, including plastic straws, stirrers, cutlery, plates, bowls and cotton buds, expanded polystyrene food ware and cups, and rinse-off personal care products containing plastic microbeads.



Australia's largest rooftop solar system

The rooftop solar installation at APP's Oberon production facility

Newcastle-based renewable energy EPC, earthconnect Pty Ltd, recently switched on the largest roof-mounted Solar Energy System in the country.

Located in Oberon, NSW, the system is comprised of approximately 27,000 solar panels, covering nearly 8 ha of roof space on Australian Panel Products' (APP – formerly Borg Manufacturing) Oberon production facility. Covering what would otherwise be unused space, the system has a capacity of 10 MW, surpassing all previous installation records.

The system will provide APP with 14 GWh of clean renewable energy annually, all of which will be consumed on site. This system supplies APP with approximately one third of their required energy, whilst reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by around 15,000 tonnes annually. This system significantly expanded APP's clean energy portfolio to a combined total of 16.3 MW of 'behind the meter' rooftop solar capacity.

earthconnect will add a further 2.5 MW of solar capacity to APP's renewable energy portfolio by the end of 2022.

The project was completed within the established 9-month timeframe, despite significant challenges arriving from international shipping delays, raw material shortages, supply chain disruptions, inclement weather, and the effects of Covid-19.

Whilst this record-breaking system will significantly reduce APP's environmental impact, it shall also generate significant savings through the reduction of power purchased from the grid. The importance of energy independence for such a large consumer of energy has been further highlighted after the Australian energy market prices skyrocketed in response to international events, forcing the market operator to suspend the spot power market.

APP's Oberon rooftop solar system is the largest individual project delivered by earthconnect to date. Earthconnect will continue to deliver commercially significant energy systems, having a renewable energy installation portfolio of above 50 MW.



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Teacher: "If you had one dollar and you asked your father for another, how many dollars would you have?"

Vincent: "One dollar."

Teacher: "You don't know your arithmetic."

Vincent: "You don't know my father."

I went to the zoo yesterday and saw a baguette in a cage. The zoo keeper told me it was bread in captivity.

A child asked his father, "How were people born?"

So his father said, "Adam and Eve made babies, then their babies became adults and made babies, and so on."

The child then went to his mother, asked her the same question and she told him, "We were monkeys then we evolved to become like we are now."

The child ran back to his father and said, "You lied to me!"

His father replied, "No, your mum was talking about her side of the family."

A husband got his mother-in-law a cemetery plot for Christmas. It came with a coffin, tomb stone, the works.

Next Christmas comes by and the husband gets her nothing.

When the mother-in-law asks, "Why didn't you get me a gift?" the husband says, "You haven't used the one I got you last year!"

A Christian guy named Bill saw an ad online for a Christian horse, so he went to check it out.

The horse's owner said, "It's easy to ride him. Just say 'Praise the

Lord!' to make him go and 'Amen!' to make him stop."

Bill got on the horse and said, "Praise the Lord!"

Sure enough, the horse started to walk. "Praise the Lord!" he said again, and the horse began to trot.

"Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!" he yelled, and the horse broke into a gallop.

Bill was enjoying his ride so much that he almost didn't notice the cliff he and the horse were about to go over.

Bill shouted "AMEN!" at the top of his lungs, and the horse stopped right at the edge of the cliff. Relieved, Bill said, "Phew! Praise the Lord!"

One of my third graders was running around wearing a Fitbit watch, which prompted me to ask, "Are you tracking your steps?"

"No," said the little girl.

"I wear this for Mummy so she can show Daddy when he gets home."

What is the difference between capitalism and socialism?

In a capitalist society, people exploit people and in a socialist one, it's the other way around.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently."

— Henry Ford

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