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# From the Editor



With the nation's focus still on COVID, the coming Federal Election is keeping a lower profile than normal.

The Federal Government is lagging badly in the polls, so it is expected that they will wait until May for the election, being the latest possible, and bank on a popular Federal Budget which is now scheduled for 29 March.

The normal focus in election campaigns is the state of the

economy and current economic indicators are quite positive given the upheaval of the last two years. For example, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December was 4.2%, which is significantly better than immediately before the COVID outbreak in 2019.

But the problem for the Government is that this is not a normal election. There seems to be relatively little elector focus on economic issues, with the Government's handling of the pandemic and personality issues taking front and centre.

The Government will hope that they can use the Federal Budget to refocus the electorate on the economy and convince voters that they are better economic managers than the opposition.

This was part of the strategy for the last election that helped them win what was seen as an unwinnable election.

The truth is that the ALP helped the Government immensely by announcing a wide range of policy announcements and making themselves a large target. Their perceived lack of support for the coal industry was also very unpopular in Queensland and this is where they lost the election.

One would have to think that the ALP would have learnt from the last election and will be more tactically astute this time around.

The other positive for the Government at the last election was that Scott Morrison was still fairly new as Prime Minister and some portions of the electorate were willing to "give him a go". Unfortunately for the Government, the Prime Minister's approval rating has been falling and the disapproval sentiment in some parts of the electorate seems to have hardened, making it difficult to win them back.

Whilst you can never say never, it seems extremely unlikely that the Government can win another unwinnable election. It will be even more difficult than the last election.

Given that the ALP will be aiming to make itself a smaller political target this time, we may not have a full understanding of their policies before the election which would make the business community uneasy.

If the ALP does indeed win the election, it is hoped that they understand that two years of pandemic has made both business and consumer sentiment fragile, even many of those that express confidence in surveys.

They will need to tread carefully in policy decisions and work with all sectors of the economy to allow recovery to continue and to put the nation on a firm footing for the future.

**Garry Hardie**  
**Publisher & Editor**

## ON THIS MONTH'S COVER

Interior of the TAFE NSW Tomaree Connected Learning Centre, a project constructed by Collaborative Construction Solutions. See the Office Design & Fitout feature commencing on page 22 of this issue.



## Planning a business FUNCTION?

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workshop, expo or other business event*

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## PKF and GHO accelerate path to profit for startups

Experts in business planning and finance, PKF Sydney & Newcastle have joined forces with brand, product and marketing

experts, GHO, to bring programs that provide a framework for innovation and growth, prioritising go-to-market strategies over blue sky thinking and idea generation.

Despite a growth in professional services focused on start-ups, there is a gap in the market for a more complete service that helps new businesses avoid conflicting advice or having to work with multiple partners that may eat away at cash and / or equity.

This new venture between PKF and GHO recognises that the Australian market has seen a large increase in new professional services in this area, buoyed by a strong increase in capital available for investment in start-ups. However, the path to market is challenging and complex requiring the right balance of experience and advice backed by proven processes.

Equally, with borders still shut and corporates paying more than ever to secure creative and technology talent, Startups are hard-pressed to access the talent they need for growth without giving away too much cash and/or equity.

This venture between PKF and GHO will enable Startups to access diverse talent across business, finance, creative, product and marketing through either a full sweat-equity or part cash/ part equity deal.

PKF Sydney & Newcastle Managing Director Steve Meyn said "PKF have been supporting startups like Grub Lab and AirCamp for some time, but this venture with GHO enables us to offer a more holistic offering and reduce the risk for the Startups we back as they go to market and scale."



*GHO Strategy Director James Legge and PKF Sydney & Newcastle Managing Director Steve Meyn*

GHO Strategy Director James Legge said "Innovation and creativity is core to what we do and a critical requirement of start-ups but we've long believed there is an opportunity to change the model for supporting these businesses and to help them scale rapidly and with clear purpose. By developing our design thinking offering and service-for-equity commercial models, together with PKF, we're in a position to help deliver a clearer path to profit and growth."



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## Port of Newcastle Diversified Trade Volumes Grow in 2021

Figures released on 20 January reveal that Port of Newcastle's import/export volume

performance of 2020 strengthened in 2021, despite global supply chain challenges and the continuing impacts of the pandemic.

Acting CEO, Nick Livesey, said the results indicates the strength and capability of Australia's deepwater global gateway has facilitated approximately \$37 billion to the national economy during 2021.

"In 2021, Port of Newcastle handled 2266 ship movements and 166.1 million tonnes of cargo including coal, dry bulk, bulk liquids, roll-on roll-off cargo, general and project cargoes and containers."

"This represents an increase of 1.6 Mt of overall trade compared with 2020, with an extra 3% of vessels visiting the port in 2021," Mr Livesey said.

2021 trade saw records held for almost a quarter of a century tumble across a number of key export commodities.

"Many people don't realise that the Port handles 25 different cargoes through its deepwater global gateway, only one of which is coal. We have seen increased demand for diversified trades across the board, including wheat, fertiliser, steel, cement, fuels, project cargo and aluminium," said Matthew Swan, the Port's Acting Executive Manager Business Development.

"Achieving highest diversified trade volumes recorded since 1997, last year saw fertiliser imports grow 69% year on year in 2021, with over 720,000 tonnes exported through the Port. After years of long drought impacting supply, wheat exports also surged, up 900% on 2020 with over 3 million tonnes of the commodity travelling through the Port."

Global demand for Australian coal dipped slightly, but overall remained resilient and consistent with records of the past five years despite China-imposed trade restrictions, and the record thermal coal spot price.

"Mass tonnes of aluminium exported, predominantly to Korea and Japan, increased to its highest annual export rate in five years, with over 90,000 metric tonnes passing through the Port, valued at \$295 million. Strong demand from NSW infrastructure and construction sectors supported steel trade also reaching its



highest import/export levels since the closure of BHP Steelworks over two decades ago," Mr Swan said. The latest Port trade data for 2021 comes as the Port prepares to take significant milestone steps in 2022 on its continued diversification journey. "With a deepwater shipping channel operating at 50% of its capacity, significant Port land available and enviable access to national rail and road infrastructure, in 2022 Port of Newcastle will see a range of projects and initiatives come to fruition that will support the further diversification of our trade.

"We are committed to the continued growth of our region's critical asset, which includes a more sustainable, and environmentally and socially responsible future," Mr Livesey said.

"Port of Newcastle is working to realise projects now that will drive the diversification of our business and the Hunter Region over the next 50 years and beyond through a three-pronged approach; our Environment Social and Governance Strategy and sustainability initiatives, the Newcastle Multi-Purpose Deepwater Container Terminal development and our Port of Newcastle Green Hydrogen Hub Project in partnership with Macquarie's Green investment Group and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency."



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## Fluid and fabrication combine to become an industry force

Two Hunter based industry leaders have joined forces to create a one-stop shop for managing

resources across mining, transport and defence industries.

Banlaw Managing Director Bill Clifton says the two businesses – Banlaw and R & R Murphy – are complementary, providing the expertise in each business that had previously been missing when they were standalone entities.

“Banlaw brings engineering and electrical capability to Murphy and Murphy brings high quality fabrication capability to Banlaw.”

“It’s a really exciting time for both businesses, especially on the back of the global audience that one of Murphy’s partner projects, LAVO, received at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow last month.”

LAVO is at the forefront of hydrogen technology and were featured in the Australian Government’s pavilion at COP 26.

“This interest, combined with the creation of a world-leading hub for hydrogen use, export and expertise right here in the Hunter, has the merged companies perfectly positioned to be leaders in this field.”

R & R Murphy General Manager Mick Way says the synergies that Banlaw and R & R Murphy have, will ensure the family legacy of the business will be enhanced.

We are definitely stronger together and look forward to combining and expanding our industrial customer base across mining, heavy haul rail, defence, and transport industries as well as taking on larger and more substantive projects both locally and globally.”

Banlaw is a Hunter based original equipment manufacturer empowering industrial customers globally with fluid resource



*John Rudland (R & R Murphy Operations Manager), Bill Clifton (Banlaw Managing Director), Michael Way (R & R Murphy General Manager) and Jeff Barker (Banlaw Director)*

management solutions. They provide smart, reliable and safe resource management solutions for fuel, oil, chemicals, water, gas, hydrogen and other fluid assets.

R&R Murphy is a Hunter based manufacturer of high-quality precision metal fabrications like tanks, pipework and structures.

Both businesses are headquartered in Lake Macquarie.

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## Community invited to comment on ambitious shared vision for Newcastle

Newcastle will be a liveable, sustainable and inclusive global city in 2040 under an ambitious long-term vision developed with the community.

City of Newcastle

engaged with more than 5000 people during the development of the draft Community Strategic Plan, Newcastle 2040.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said it was important to understand the community's vision for the future of Newcastle and how it relates to the policies and projects being delivered during the next decade and beyond.

"Newcastle 2040 has been developed in consultation with the community over a period of 12 months and represents the collaboration of thousands of interactions, including face-to-face conversations, workshops, surveys, online feedback, advisory committees and stakeholder engagement," Cr Nelmes said.

"Through this extensive community consultation, we have developed four key themes that reflect the aspirations and values of our community, which are underpinned by our commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

"The priorities and objectives contained within this plan will enable us to celebrate our unique city, protect our natural assets, optimise opportunities, build resilience, champion inclusion and encourage innovation and creativity.

"The next decade is set to be an exciting and rewarding time for all of us as Newcastle grows from a great regional city to an emerging global city.

"Newcastle 2040 represents the highest level of strategic planning carried out by Local Government. It will guide our project delivery plans and annual budgets over the next decade and beyond as we work together to help make Newcastle a better place to live, work and enjoy."

The draft plan's four key themes are: Liveable Newcastle, Sustainable Newcastle, Creative Newcastle and Achieving Together – each of which have been expanded to include a range of priorities and objectives.

Cr Nelmes said the delivery of Newcastle 2040 will require shared decision-making and collaborative partnerships with government agencies, non-government organisations, business and the local community.

A Community Strategic Plan is required to be prepared every four years and must be adopted by June 30 of the year following a local government election.

## Surge in Newcastle development to inject \$1.8 billion into local economy

Newcastle's revitalisation and transformation continues with a record \$1.8 billion of development approved over the

past 12 months set to generate approximately 3,500 direct jobs and buoy the local economy. City of Newcastle recorded a 20% increase in the number of development applications (DAs) lodged during 2021, in addition to state significant projects.

Development in Newcastle is showing no signs of slowing, with over 1600 DAs lodged with City of Newcastle in 2021 (compared to 1361 in 2020). The value of lodged DAs increased by a staggering 89% highlighting the significant nature of development unfolding in the city, including The Store redevelopment (\$118 million), former Dairy Farmer's site (\$100 million) and a 133-lot industrial subdivision at Black Hill (\$33 million).

City of Newcastle Manager Regulatory, Planning and Assessment Michelle Bisson said low interest rates and a booming property market is helping to drive development activity in the city.

"Newcastle is surging ahead when it comes to injecting

cash into bricks and mortar, despite the pandemic, reflecting high levels of optimism amongst homeowners, investors and developers," Ms Bisson said.

"The highest value DAs are predominantly in Newcastle West, Adamstown, Beresfield, and Merewether but we've also seen a surge in residential development in the suburbs such as Wallsend, Fletcher and New Lambton for residential alterations, additions and single dwellings.

"The construction associated with this level of development generates approximately 3,500 direct jobs and buoys Newcastle's economy which is a positive as we come up against the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and look to the future."

Newcastle recently announced a design competition for the \$100 million redevelopment of the former Spotlight and Anaconda site at 711 Hunter Street in the city's revitalised West-end, meaning the pipeline of significant future development applications expected in 2022 is strong.

"Newcastle is transforming into a modern metropolitan city with significant large redevelopments in the pipeline, showing developer confidence in our city is at an all-time high," Ms Bisson said.

"Ongoing revitalisation and development is continuing to transform Newcastle, and 2022 is set to be another exciting and busy year for our city."



## \$2.1 million to beat rare genetic disease cystic fibrosis

University of Newcastle respiratory disease expert Professor Peter Wark will lead a new \$2.1 million

project to develop targeted treatments for the rare genetic and life-threatening disease cystic fibrosis, which damages the lungs and digestive system.

One of 27 projects awarded funding through the Federal Government's 2021 Rare Cancers, Rare Diseases and Unmet Need grant program, the collaborative research project will focus on precision medicine by considering individual genetic variations when tailoring treatments for people with cystic fibrosis.

Caused by more than 2000 gene defects, cystic fibrosis primarily affects the lungs and digestive system because of a malfunction in the exocrine system, which is responsible for producing saliva, sweat, tears and mucus.

Although medications have been developed to help manage cystic fibrosis, they improve outcomes for only 80 per cent of people with the disease. As part of an ongoing commitment to help people live better, healthier lives, Professor Wark and his team have developed a personalised avatar using cells from each person that can predict accurately who will and will not benefit from these medicines.

The University of Newcastle-led project will involve researchers from six additional Australian universities and research institutes.

The \$2.1m grant is part of the Medical Research Future Fund, administered by the National Health and Medical Research Council.



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## Forsythes Recruitment becomes Rarekind

Forsythes Recruitment & HR has launched an official rebrand to

Rarekind, in a move away from their founding firm's distinguished name.

"Rarekind is the future of Forsythes Recruitment & HR. It's been a privilege to share our roots with the Forsythes brand, and the people who have made the brand so successful, but it's now time to carve our own identity beyond those shared beginnings," announced Managing Director, Geoff Crews.

Forsythes Recruitment & HR was born in Newcastle 35 years ago – in 1987 – as a small department inside Forsythes Chartered Accountants; a firm originally established by brothers Alec and Colin Forsythes in 1951.

"Like other Forsythes departments, Recruitment & HR grew through the 90's and 00's. In 2010 the, then highly diversified, firm demerged to create six separate business entities sharing the Forsythes name via a license agreement. Over the following 11 years those businesses grew and prospered in many ways, including mergers and acquisitions that have taken the Forsythes brand to extraordinary new places and industries," said Geoff.

"Sharing the Forsythes name for the first 10 years after demerging from the original firm has been what we needed to establish ourselves as a strong and growing independent business. We have had the time to forge a name for ourselves in the market that was autonomous from the Forsythes estate – so it was time we had a new brand to reflect that."

Geoff Crews and his co-directors have worked together for over 15 years throughout the Newcastle, Greater Hunter, Central Coast and Greater Western Sydney regions. Their niche managers – the eight consultants leading the activity of each specialist recruitment team – have also now worked together for over 10 years.

In the Sydney market, Forsythes Recruitment & HR is well known under the brand name, Penrith Personnel.

According to Geoff Crews, for their current clients, this rebrand is an affirmation of their ability to deliver deep-front, deep-middle and deep-back-of-house expertise through a single point of contact. A full-service recruitment and HR consulting business with diverse niche specialists to provide whole business, people and cultural advantage.

## Port Of Newcastle now powered by 100% renewable energy

Port of Newcastle has started 2022 powered by 100% renewable energy power, having decarbonised its operations to deliver upon its sustainability

commitments set in 2020 and to support tenants across the Port to improve their own sustainability performance. The Port has partnered with green energy supplier Iberdrola to secure a retail Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) that provides the Port with Large Scale Generation Certificates that have direct linkages with the Bodangora Wind Farm in the Orana Region of New South Wales.

"In achieving 100% renewable energy at Port of Newcastle we are showing tangible evidence of just how committed we are to driving sustainability in every aspect of our business. In doing so we have also enabled 15 port tenants that work in and rely on Port of Newcastle to make their own operations more sustainable," said Craig Carmody, the Port's CEO.

"Port of Newcastle's 100% renewable power deal directly supports the development of renewable infrastructure and will deliver significant environmental improvements at the Port. Through being powered by 100% renewables we are able to further reduce carbon emissions in the Port by almost 5,000 cubic tonnes, which is equivalent to taking 1,000 cars off the road or planting 80,000 trees each year."

The Port's Senior Manager of ESG, Jackie Spiteri, said the renewables achievement strengthens the renewables supply chain already bolstered by the Port being a leading importer of wind turbines and its future plans for it to support a hydrogen export hub.

"In December, Port of Newcastle completed an LED lighting upgrade to more than 400 lights on its 792-hectare site including an impressive environmentally conscious colour display lighting up the Destiny Sculpture and Dyke Point which will result in even further energy efficiencies and stronger Port safety," said Ms Spiteri.

Port of Newcastle Senior Manager Engineering & Utilities Wendy West said the project was made possible through the willingness and commitment to sustainability shared by project stakeholders.

"With many shipping and logistics related businesses operating across the Port and a complex range of embedded electrical networks, collaboration with our tenants such as Stolthaven and Svitser has enabled us to reach this important milestone of 100% renewable energy for our entire operations," said Mrs West.

Port of Newcastle's ESG Strategy lays out its long-term commitment to Net Zero by 2040 and also defines its medium term SBTi approved target for Scope 1 and 2 emissions.

This announcement is the latest in a string of acknowledgements Port of Newcastle has received for its Environment Social and Governance (ESG) commitments including a 5-star GRESB rating, Silver Partnership to the NSW Government's Sustainability Advantage Program and receiving recognition as a finalist across two of seven categories in the Banksia Foundation's 2021 NSW Sustainability Awards in December. Port of Newcastle was also the first and remains one of only two Australian ports to be accredited under the leading global EcoPorts port environmental review system.



## New boutique accounting firm launched in Hamilton East

Local accountant, Dan Velich has launched a new boutique accounting firm, Velich Advisory, that aims to use technology to provide proactive and efficient advice to small

businesses whilst also giving back to the community.

Velich Advisory has heavily invested in technology to enable efficiencies which allows them to spend more time proactively catering to client needs, and advising clients on how to grow their small business. The firm has experienced strong early interest for their services despite small businesses bearing the brunt of the recent Covid-related shutdowns.

Dan has attributed the strong early interest to clients wanting a more proactive and efficient service and also to more millennials starting small businesses, and they tend to be more open to using technology to improve their business and processes.

Velich Advisory are in the process of finalising their agreement with the Cancer Council where they will be donating 5% of their profits to help find better treatment options for pancreatic cancer.





# 2022 HUNTER INVESTMENT PROSPECTUS

Promoting  
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Published by Hunter Business Publications Pty Ltd, the Hunter Investment Prospectus is an important promotional project for the Region that is distributed as a high-quality hard copy as well as online.

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## Innovative, 'keyhole surgery' technology breathes new life into water mains

Hunter Water is breathing new life into its network by using innovative European technology to

provide long-term benefits to customers and the Lower Hunter community.

Crews have been busy restoring water mains throughout the region, with four projects renewing damaged or degraded pipes with an internal lining; essentially creating a 'pipe within a pipe'.

The structural liner, ideal in sensitive and difficult-to-access areas, has been used to extend the life of Hunter Water's mains while minimising disruption to the community.

Hunter Water Managing Director, Darren Cleary, said the organisation is constantly improving how it assesses and manages the condition of infrastructure across its network of more than 10,000 kilometres of water and sewer mains.

"We devote millions of dollars every year to replace or improve the pipes throughout the network as part of the \$685 million we are investing in our capital works program over the four years to 2024.

"There are many factors that can affect the pipes' longevity, including their material, construction method, the weather, ground conditions and movement, not to mention vehicle traffic.

"While condition assessment of any underground assets is not a perfect science, it is evolving with technological advancements, and we are progressively trialling smart sensors and advanced analytical programs to help our ability to prioritise our investment.

"Once we determine the need to restore a pipe, lining technology is a less invasive means of breathing new life into our pipes and it minimises the disruption for the community.

"We can line a specific section of pipe using access pits, instead of digging a trench all the way along the length of the pipe.

"In some ways, it could be likened to keyhole surgery," said Mr Cleary.

Hunter Water has used the technology to complete several projects throughout Lake Macquarie.

In Teralba, a water main under William Street, between the railway bridge and Short Street, is now back online.

Over in Cardiff, crews have completed improvements to a water main under Macquarie Road, near the busy Munibung Road intersection.

Work to remediate and reline a water main that runs adjacent to the railway line between Mary Street and Lake Road, Argenton, has also recently been completed while a water main relining will soon start at Glendale.



## City of Newcastle drives towards electric future

City of Newcastle's transition to a zero emissions fleet is powering forward with the unveiling of its first electric truck.

The medium rigid Hino truck is the only one of its kind in Newcastle and will replace a diesel vehicle currently being used by City of Newcastle's (CN) Parks and Recreation team, reducing CN's carbon emissions by more than 20 tonnes each year.

Deputy Lord Mayor Declan Clausen said the launch of the electric truck was part of a broader sustainability strategy that will deliver a 100% reduction in carbon emissions from CN vehicles during the next decade.

"City of Newcastle was the first council in NSW to shift to 100% renewable energy in our operations, with our own solar farm at Summerhill and a power purchase agreement with the Sapphire Wind Farm," Cr Clausen said.

"Fossil-based liquid fuels such as diesel and unleaded petrol in CN cars, trucks, waste fleet, plant and equipment account for more than 90% of our remaining operational carbon emissions.

"This is produced from more than 1.6 million litres of fuel used annually across CN's operations.

"City of Newcastle is working to deliver the adopted Climate Action Plan 2021-2025, which sets out a roadmap for achieving emission reduction within CN operations. This includes the development of a Fleet Transition Plan to target zero emissions from vehicles for 100% of the fleet by 2030.

The launch of the electric truck follows previous trials of electric vehicles within CN's fleet, including the replacement of four pool cars with equivalent full electric passenger vehicles.

City of Newcastle will be participating in the NSW Government's recently announced Drive Electric NSW EV fleets incentive, which will help support the transition of its passenger fleet.

City of Newcastle is helping to support the community's transition to electric vehicles as well with the development of a council-owned public electric vehicle charging network. This currently includes seven chargers installed across four sites, which provide 11 charging bays, with additional sites planned to be built this year.

*City of Newcastle Senior Field Worker Andrew Parkinson, City of Newcastle Manager Community Strategy & Innovation Ashlee Abbott, Cr Callum Pull, Deputy Lord Mayor Declan Clausen and City of Newcastle Fleet Coordinator Ian Lorenz and City of Newcastle Sustainability Manager Steele Adams with the new electric truck, which will reduce CN's carbon emissions by more than 20 tonnes each year.*



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#### CATHERINE HENRY LAWYER

**Tahnee Woods** has joined the health law team at Catherine Henry Lawyers. She brings expertise and experience in personal injury and compensation law, having worked for a large national law firm in class actions, public liability and civil liability in a wide range of matters including catastrophic injury and dependency claims. Tahnee has a Bachelor of Laws from Deakin University where she was an Alfred Deakin Law Scholar and received the Deakin Academic Scholarship in her graduating class.



#### EMERGENT GROUP

Renewable energy leader **Dr Glenn Platt** has joined Emergent Group as Executive Director-Strategy and Innovation. Glenn will identify how Emergent Group's expertise can be brought to solve the challenges of Australia's new energy industries. Glenn has a wealth of experience with an international reputation in energy, clean technology and R&D. Glenn has led project teams from engineers to economists and many Australian firsts – including first virtual power station, first large-scale battery deployment, and first vehicle-to-grid project.



#### SINGLETON COUNCIL

**Dwight Graham** will join Singleton Council's Executive Leadership Team as Director Business and Community/Corporate and Commercial, continuing the organisation's commitment to generating new revenue streams to boost levels of service to the community. Mr Graham will commence in the new role on 28 February 2022, overseeing Council's finance, procurement, corporate services, business development and grants management, information technology, and land and asset management systems functions.



#### MONICA CLARE RECRUITMENT

Monica Clare Recruitment recently welcomed **Naomi Everingham** to the team. Naomi brings fresh eyes to her role as Talent Specialist, with a mixed background in recruitment and education. She has excellent candidate care and looks forward to refining her skills in recruitment.



#### ROBERTS LEGAL

Roberts Legal has welcomed **Sannan Tariq** to their Commercial Litigation team. Sannan has joined as an Associate Solicitor. He is a dual qualified lawyer whose practice focuses on commercial and residential building disputes and the enforcement of foreign judgments.



#### THE MUTUAL BANK

The Mutual Bank has appointed **David Jay** to its Board. Respected as an outstanding leader, Mr Jay brings more than 30 years of banking, finance, and payment systems experience. He is currently the Executive Chairman at Armstrong Kennedy International Pty Ltd and has worked with leading organisations including Australian Settlements Limited (ASL), AMP, Commonwealth Bank, Coal Services Pty Limited and the Sydney Futures Exchange Limited.



#### COLLECTIVE FINANCIAL PART.

Collective Financial Partners has welcomed Financial Planner, **Bill Patterson** to the team. Bill has recently relocated from Sydney to return to his hometown of Newcastle, after practicing with a large institutional wealth management firm. A member of the Financial Planning Association (FPA), Bill specialises in providing financial strategies tailored to suit goals and aspirations of his clients.



#### MERRIDY ELPHICK LAWYERS

**Amelia Brayley** has joined the Merridy Elphick Lawyers team as a solicitor. She has over 5 years' experience in the Legal Industry and holds a Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Arts (International Studies) from the University of New England, and a Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies. She is well practiced in Family Law, Estate Planning, Property Law, and is passionate about children's matters and litigation.

## LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR PEOPLE!

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



## Property Council welcomes renewed focus on the Hunter

The Property Council of Australia has welcomed the appointment of a dedicated Minister for Cities in the New South Wales Cabinet announced on 20 December 2021.

Property Council Hunter Regional Director Anita Hugo said the announcement was a strong endorsement of the Hunter's economic significance and looked forward to working with the new Minister to unlock the full potential of the region.

"These changes come at a time when the region needs strong leadership across a number of these portfolios if it is to have progress and growth," Ms Hugo said.

"With the draft Hunter Regional Plan recently released and an anticipated review of the regional transport plan, we'll be looking for continued commitment to removing barriers for housing and jobs growth and alignment of these is crucial to achieving that.

"We welcome the appointment of the Hon Rob Stokes as Minister for Cities and hope this role will bring much needed attention to significant regional priorities including the Newcastle Airport and Hunter Park.

"Our city is an important player in the broader state economy and must be supported with the necessary infrastructure and investment to support expected population growth.

"Regional housing must remain a key priority for the new minister for planning and homes.

"We look forward to working with the incoming Minister for

Planning and Homes the Hon. Anthony Roberts MP to ensure Newcastle remains a great place to live and work, with the necessary and high-quality housing stock we need."

Ms Hugo thanked the Hon. Rob Stokes MP for his strong commitment and service in the planning portfolio and welcomed his appointment to the newly created Cities portfolio.

"Minister Stokes should be congratulated for the leadership and drive he brought to the portfolio amid a busy reform agenda," she said.

"We look forward to our productive working relationship with Mr Stokes continuing as the new Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport on the delivery of the Government's vision for six major urban population centres spanning Sydney, Wollongong, the Central Coast and Newcastle."

"Our CBDs are the economic engine rooms of New South Wales and they need to fire on all cylinders – including beyond Newcastle.

Ms Hugo thanked outgoing ministers for their service, including the Hon. Melinda Pavey MP for her recent service as Minister for Housing, Property and Water.

"Minister Pavey's passion for regional New South Wales is unquestionable. We recognise her work overseeing the regional housing taskforce, as well as her strong track record improving social and affordable housing for the people of our state."

## Treat your ageing commercial property like a temple

**Steve Dick**  
**MOVABLE**

When the ageing process starts to coincide with your life and your everyday activities, you notice there's a difference. You see the superficial changes and try to ignore them, such as greying hair - even loss of hair.

Being a grandparent, you notice the changes more. Myself and my wife worked while always intertwined in what the kids were doing. We raised four children and travelled with their sport here, there and everywhere. We renovated properties, landscaped, mowed, helped family and friends. Yet now, our beautiful little grand progeny leaves us exhausted. Where did that energy go?

Working in the wise years, one realises there is a life cycle to everything. Whether natural or man-made, including commercial property, all things have a used by date.

### Maintenance use by date

In the past, I've mentioned the 3-Ps of commercial property, PRICE, PRESENTATION, and PROMOTION. Another factor to throw into the mix is the big M, MAINTENANCE.

Every aspect of our existence has a life expectancy, including our commercial property assets. Right down to the nails, nuts & bolts, glue, and especially the electrical wiring, time takes a toll. There is still 2,329 km of faulty Infinity Cabling in walls around Australia.

Think about it? Do you expect the wiring and the bolts to last 100 years? Moreover, these are the small items that hold the property together. However, to help with the wear and tear caused by time on your commercial property, the taxman allows you to depreciate it and the items that go to make up your asset. But many tend to overlook this tax assistance.

There are plenty of commercial owners who purchased wiring from now defunct Masters, Mitre 10, and others back somewhere between 2010 and 2013. Most accepted the tax deduction and now think nothing more of the commercial property asset.



Yet owning commercial and industrial property has ongoing responsibilities as an owner if you want to maintain your tenants. During the week, I was with a Sydney owner who owns a vast property portfolio. He religiously refurbishes his properties every ten years. As a result, his vacancy factors are far lower than his competition.

Australians have an attitude of putting things off. This attitude applies to maintenance outside of equipment failures on buildings. However, as a leasing and selling agent, maintenance is critical in maximising the price/rent you will recoup from the property.

Aging can be graceful if you put in the time, effort, and money into your body. Why not your property? As for the faulty wiring, it is kind of like having an artery replaced with a defective tube. The only difference is you can't on-sell your heart and just forget about the problem.

# Appliance Retailer 03/11/2014 # Sydney Morning Herald 30/05/2017

**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.



## Record year for new homes starts

On 19 January ABS released its building activity data for the September 2021 quarter. This data provides estimates of the value of building work and number of dwellings commenced, completed, under construction and in the pipeline, across Australia and its states and territories.

HIA Economist Thomas Devitt said "Lockdowns in Sydney and Melbourne resulted in a sharp contraction in new detached home starts in the September quarter, with a 16.5% contraction compared to the record high of the previous quarter.

"The decline in new home commencements in the September quarter was not a reflection of a slowing market, with other indicators, such as building approvals, showing a continued strong pipeline," added Mr Devitt.

"There were almost 36,000 new house commencements in the September quarter. Despite the decline, this is still stronger than any quarter before the mid-2020 introduction of the HomeBuilder grant.

"This puts detached house commencements over the last 12 months at 149,345, a new record high and 12.8% above the pre-HomeBuilder record of 132,377 in 1988/89.

"There were also over 20,500 new multi-unit commencements in the September quarter. This was down by 15.8% on the previous quarter.

"Despite this September quarter contraction, multi-unit commencements were also still up by 11.7% for the year.

"The current boom is expected to continue supporting strong levels of employment into 2023, aided further by record low interest rates and the pandemic pushing households towards lower density living.

"Strong employment conditions, rising house prices and consumer confidence are also continuing to support housing demand.

"The constraint on home building is not demand but the availability of land, labour and materials. The shortage of labour and materials has led to construction timeframes increasing significantly. Under normal circumstances, the surge of HomeBuilder projects would have translated into an increase in completions from the June 2021 quarter. However, completions have been slower to respond. As a result, the volume of approved-but-not-yet-commenced work is at its highest level in over a decade," concluded Mr Devitt.

All states and territories saw declines in the September 2021 quarter in new house commencements, led by the Northern Territory (-65.5%), Western Australia (-28.0%), Queensland (-24.6%), Tasmania (-24.2%), the Australian Capital Territory (-11.9%), and New South Wales (-11.3%), Victoria (-11.0%) and South Australia (-8.6%).

A few states saw increases in multi-unit commencements in the quarter, led by Tasmania (+240.4%), Western Australia (+37.2%) and Victoria (+17.0%). The other jurisdictions saw declines, led by the Northern Territory (-46.7%), the Australian Capital Territory (-42.4%), Queensland (-35.2%), South Australia (-33.4%) and New South Wales (-32.6%).



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\*Approximate

## Struggling to find time to exercise?

**Dr Tent Watson**  
**Ethos Health**

Balancing our needs with those of our loved ones can sometimes feel like an impossible balancing act, particularly when children are young and parents' needs often fall to the bottom of the priority list. Knowing when to prioritise our own needs is a constant and ongoing process between ourselves and others. However, addressing some of our own needs enables us to meet others needs more effectively.

On an aeroplane during an emergency, adults are instructed to secure their own oxygen mask prior to offering help to others. The reason for this is simple: if we are not fit and healthy, we cannot assist and support others. Making time for our own health and wellbeing can enhance our ability to help others and can benefit everyone in our life, including ourselves.

### Why exercise is important

Exercise has a positive effect on mood and energy levels, as well as long term benefits for health and wellbeing. Exercise can feel like a lot of effort, but when you think there's not enough time to exercise, consider the following reasons to prioritise a short walk or something active.

### Improved Mood

Exercise is a great way to improve mood. When we exercise our body releases serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine which are the feel-good hormones that leave you with a euphoric feeling. Endorphins are also released during exercise which help with reducing stress and promote relaxation. Exercise can help reduce tension, improve mental clarity and increase energy levels, lifting your overall mood.

### Reduced fatigue, increased energy

Twenty minutes of physical activity per day can increase energy levels by 20%!! Physical activity increases blood flow which carries oxygen and nutrients around the body, it also releases endorphins causing us to feel energised. This means you'll have more energy to do things with your children and loved ones, as well as increased patience to deal with meltdowns!

### Reduced chronic disease

If you hear yourself saying you don't have time to be sick, then you need to make time to exercise! Fifty percent of adults suffer from one of the eight chronic diseases: arthritis, asthma, back problems, cancer, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), CVD (cardiovascular disease), diabetes, and mental health conditions. Physical activity reduces modifiable risk factors (such as body mass, blood pressure, cholesterol, insulin resistance), which reduces the risk of developing chronic diseases.

Physical activity is also key in weight management. Being overweight is associated with increased pain and pressure in load bearing joints, such as knees and lower back. By remaining within the healthy weight range (BMI 18.5-24.9 for adults) you reduce the load through your joints. A decrease in weight by 1kg has been proven to decrease the load through joints four-fold, making basic activities of daily living more comfortable with every kilo lost.

### Additional benefits:

- Increased self-confidence
- Improved body image
- Increased strength and endurance
- Improved mobility
- Improved lung function

- Improved cardio fitness (for chasing runaway kids)
- Improved reflexes

### So now you know why, let's discuss how!

Most people report that lack of time and putting the needs of others above their own as the biggest barriers to participating in exercise. Here are some tips to try overcome your barriers to exercise.

### Be organised

Have a look at the family weekly schedule to find any blocks of time that you can use for some "me time"? If your kids play sport or do other after-school activities, is there anywhere you can walk or do some body weight exercises while they are busy? What about using your lunch break for some exercise or get outside with the kids to kick a ball or be active together. If something comes up and you're thinking about cancelling your exercise time, ask yourself would you cancel a doctor's appointment or skip medication?

### Make the most of the small windows you have

High intensity interval training (HIIT) has been shown to produce health benefits similar to moderate intensity exercise. HIIT involves performing alternate periods of high-intensity, short duration exercise with low-intensity recovery activities. Studies into HIIT have shown that it can burn 25-30% more calories than other forms of exercise. HIIT also increases your metabolic rate leading to calories being burnt long after you've stopped exercising. HIIT has also been shown to increase oxygen uptake (VO2 max), which is the body's ability to transport and utilise oxygen. The higher your VO2 max, the better you can supply your muscles and organs with oxygen, which results in more energy during activity. The most popular reason for people choosing HIIT over other forms of exercise is that it achieves the same health benefits in a shorter period of time.

You can also try incidental HIIT, turning common household tasks into exercise, such as squatting or lunging to pick up toys or washing – or even push ups on the kitchen bench while waiting for dinner. There are several apps (7-Minute Workout, Daily Workout Fitness Trainer) which provide 7-15 minute workouts that can be performed anywhere, with the aim of helping you achieve the health benefits of physical activity.

### Grab a friend

Do just that, grab a friend and do something you both enjoy (walk, bike) or try something completely different (yoga class). Having a buddy can help the time pass quickly and they can help keep you motivated and accountable. Set up a fine system for when one cancels or doesn't show up at all.

### Time to get up and get moving

Aim for 150 minutes a week of moderate intensity activity. Moderate activity is any movement that increases your heart rate and breathing so that you can still have a conversation but can't sing a song. Start with getting up and doing something. The aim to do 150 minutes a week is just a guide. Anything you can manage will be beneficial and it doesn't have to be done in big blocks. Five minutes here and 10 minutes there all adds up across the week.

Below is a short home exercise program to try throughout your day, it requires no equipment and can be performed in short bursts:

- Squats
- Incline push ups (on the bench)
- Lunges
- Plank (on the bench)
- Triceps dips
- Perform all exercises for 30 seconds before moving onto the next, without rest.

Once you've completed all, rest for 1 minute. Repeat 5 times.

**For further information contact Ethos Health on (02) 4962 8700, email [twatson@ethoshealth.com.au](mailto:twatson@ethoshealth.com.au) or visit [www.ethoshealth.com.au](http://www.ethoshealth.com.au)**



## Coping with anxiety

**Christine Field**  
**Hunterlink**

For more than ten years, Hunterlink has provided mental health and wellbeing support as an employee assistance provider (EAP).

As an EAP, Hunterlink supports workplaces by delivering a holistic mental health and wellbeing program that includes 24/7 phone counselling support, brief intervention, management and outplacement services, mental health and wellbeing training and onsite critical incident support.

We work with employers to tailor our services and provide a range of mental health and wellbeing training programs that are onsite or webinars that are live and recorded for greater delivery.

A common thread, as a presenting issue from people contacting Hunterlink is anxiety.

### Anxiety – What is it?

It is understandable to feel anxious during a pandemic; anxious to return to work, and anxious as parents for students returning to school.

Everyone feels anxious now and then, it is an important feeling to have as it helps us to avoid dangerous situations. It is the fight or flight sensation that is innate in all of us.

For some people, the anxious feelings don't go away, they feel an overwhelming sense of worry and dread that affects their ability to concentrate, sleep and carry out ordinary tasks; at work, school and in one's personal life. At times an anxiety attack can be so severe it is immobilising and may include obsessive thoughts that you are unable to control.

The ABS National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing found 1 in 4 Australian's experience anxiety at some stage of their lives; one in three women and one in five men, and over 2 million people experience anxiety a year. Of the number of people experiencing anxiety the majority are aged between 35 and 44 years of age. For Hunterlink, these statistics are not unusual, as our calls are predominantly anxiety related, especially when we first commenced the early stages of Covid-19 and as people return to work, return to school and start to re-socialise following periods of lockdown.

Just know you are not alone and help is only a phone call away to provide the tools to assist you manage anxiety. We can talk through the symptoms you are having and discuss your feelings of not being in control and how unsettling that can be. At Hunterlink our counsellors can help you understand the feelings you are having and provide the necessary tools required to help you prepare for when feelings of anxiety present.

**Hunterlink can be contacted 24/7 on 1800 554 654, in business hours on (02) 4929 6625 and by email at [enquiry@hunterlink.org.au](mailto:enquiry@hunterlink.org.au)**

**Christine Field** is an experienced leader with a demonstrated history of managing small teams and working across the three tiers of government. During her time in federal government, working for the Minister for Mental Health, she developed her passion and understanding for this sector. Christine is skilled in governance, leading teams, policy development, stakeholder engagement, strategic thinking, government relations, communications and business administration. Christine holds a Bachelor of Arts and International Studies, and a post graduate certificate in business administration.



### ANXIETY – SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Hot & cold flushes
- Tightening of chest
- Quick breathing
  - Racing heart
  - Panic attacks
  - Worry
- Excessive fear
- Obsessive thinking
- Catastrophising
  - Restlessness
- Avoidance of situations that make you feel anxious - work, study or social life.

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# Masks protect against COVID-19, but which mask is best?

## Hunter Medical Research Institute

Masks are a key measure to reduce transmission of all variants of COVID-19, including Delta and Omicron. A well-fitted mask can protect a healthy person and also stop an asymptomatic person, who may be unaware they have the virus, from passing it on.

Since the beginning of the pandemic there has been different advice given about masks, but with the advent of the Omicron variant facemasks are again mandatory in NSW in some settings.

Since 24 December 2021, all people in NSW over the age of 12 are required to wear a face mask:

- in an indoor area of premises other than a place of residence
- in an indoor area on common property for residential premises
- at a public transport waiting area
- in a vehicle or vessel being used to provide a public transport service
- working at a hospitality venue and dealing directly with members of the public
- on a domestic commercial aircraft, including when the aircraft is flying above NSW.

There are many types of masks available, but their effectiveness varies. A scarf or bandana is not a mask. While any mask is better than no mask, there are two essential qualities that determine how much protection you'll get – filtration and fit. To work properly, it must cover the nose, mouth, cheeks and chin without leaving gaps on the sides. It's not a chinstrap.

### Cloth masks

Well-fitting, non-medical, multilayer cloth masks may be an acceptable option when other options are not available. Three-layer masks should be considered the minimum standard, preferably with a fluid repellent layer on the outside layer. Best practice is to have multiple masks for the day, and to wash the masks after each use in soap or detergent in hot water. According to research by the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists

(ACGIH) cloth masks have 75% inward and outward leakage. Inward leakage is the percentage of particles entering the facepiece when the wearer is inhaling. Outward leakage refers to the percentage of particles exhaled by the wearer exiting the facepiece. Some places such as medical facilities will not allow entry to people wearing cloth masks.

### Medical or surgical masks

Medical or Surgical masks have three layers of synthetic, nonwoven materials with filtration layers sandwiched between. Because these masks are one size, there are often gaps at the sides which reduce their effectiveness. But this can be fixed with simple hacks like knotting the ear loops. These are superior to cloth masks and are an important measure in reducing transmission. Inward and outward leakage is 50%.

### Respirators

Respirators, usually known by their performance levels like P2, N95, KN95 or KF94, when worn correctly provide excellent protection against COVID-19. P2 is the Australian standard, N95 is American, KN95 meet Chinese specifications and KF94 is the Korean equivalent. Be aware of fake masks. Masks that meet the Australian Standard (AS/NZS 1716:2012) or international equivalent:

- have the manufacturers name, trademark or trade name on the mask
- are certified by an independent body such as SAI Global, and have their licence number marked on the packaging
- are certified by the US National Institute for Occupational



Safety and Health (NIOSH), if from the United States of America.

You can buy them from reputable online or retail outlets including chemists and supermarkets.

Don't use masks with holes or a valve, you'll breathe out the virus if you're infected and won't protect other people.

To ensure the best fit and in particular when used in healthcare or industry, fit testing is often undertaken. Professional fit tests are carried out by someone with appropriate training, but you can perform a positive-pressure seal check by covering the respirator surface on a filtering facepiece, usually by using your hands, and trying to breathe out. If slight pressure builds up, that means air isn't leaking around the edges of the respirator. A negative-pressure check involves covering the respirator surface on a filtering facepiece, typically using your hands and trying to breathe in. If no air enters, the seal is tight.

### Can I reuse disposable masks?

Medical staff should not reuse masks. Most masks are rated single use only, so always follow the manufacturers recommendations. However, if you really need to re-wear your P2, N95, KN95 and KF94 mask, you should be able to if it is not damaged, soiled or wet.

### Exercise

It's very difficult to wear a mask during vigorous physical activity. Masks also lose their effectiveness as moisture increases from heavy breathing or perspiration.

Well-fitted respirator masks such as P2 or N95 offer the best protection against COVID-19. If unavailable, then well-fitted surgical or medical masks are the next best. If neither of those options are available, then opt for a well-made and fitted cloth mask.

Remember, masks are just one part of the 'do it all' approach to help stop the spread of the virus and won't be effective used alone. You should also practice social distancing and avoid crowded, close-contact and closed-in venues, ensure good ventilation of indoor spaces (open windows or have gatherings outside), follow the QR code check in procedure, maintain good hygiene practices (hand washing and sanitiser and regular cleaning of high touch surfaces and items) and get vaccinated including your booster shot as soon as you're eligible.

### References:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/rules/face-mask-rules>  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-masks>  
<https://www.acgih.org/covid-19-fact-sheet-worker-resp/>  
<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/face-masks>



# Reducing spine and nervous system issues

**Dr Nick Ruffin**  
**Healing Wave Chiropractic**

Many people when asked what the most important part of their body is will reply, the heart.

While the heart is essential to your health it is an organ that can be both replaced and, in some scenarios, be brought back to life. Your brain however cannot be replaced, and when it stops working completely, cannot be turned back on. Your spine and nervous system are the conduits from your brain to the rest of your body which makes them essential to your health as well. Some of the most common issues with the spine and the nervous system that I see in the clinic are easily preventable by changing a few bad habits.

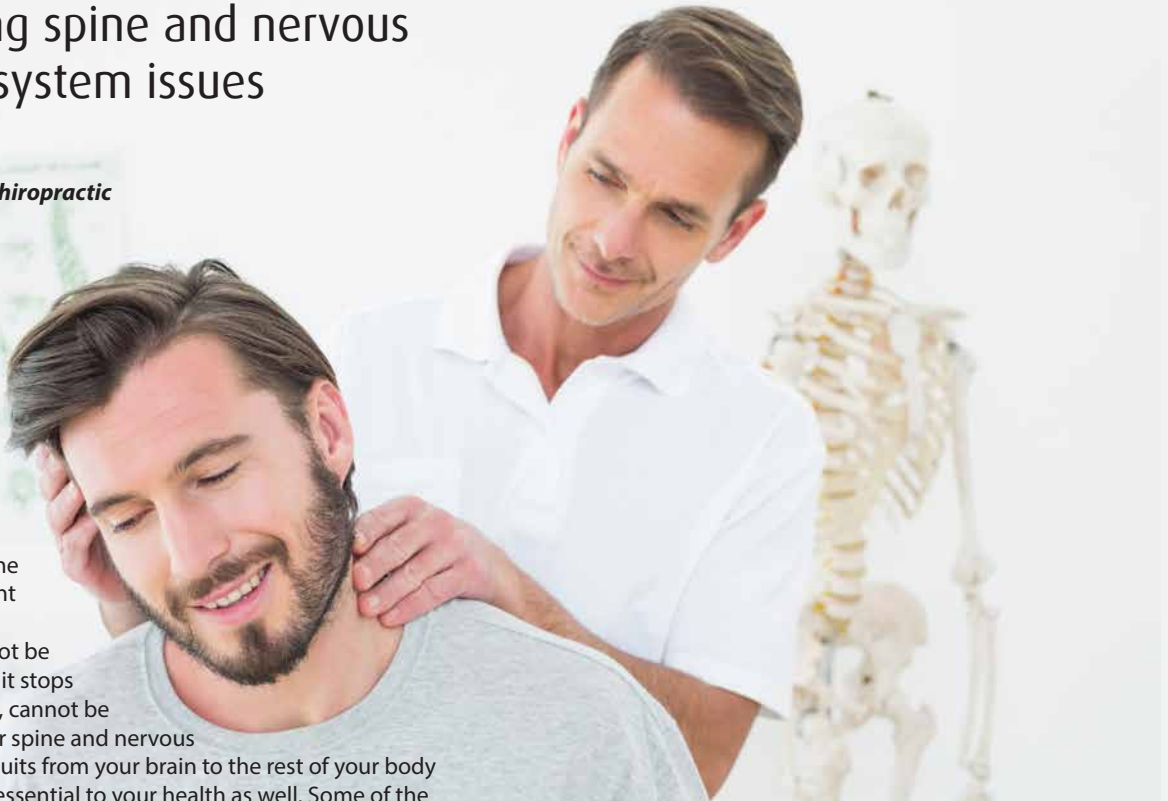
One of the most common and the most easily preventable issues is neck pain and tightness caused by bad posture, which is also known as "Tech Neck". Good posture means good spinal health which means better general wellbeing. Good posture also prevents headaches, vertigo and back pain. A few things that you can focus on to improve your posture are sitting up straight, ensuring your chin is tucked in, and pulling your shoulders down and back.

One of the main causes of bad posture is our tendency to spend hours looking at our phones, tablets, televisions and computers, usually while sitting down. It is estimated that the average Australian is seated for 80% of their working day. So as well as working on sitting up straight and having better posture, it is also beneficial to get up and move around during your working day and to reduce your screen time as much as possible. Investing in a sit stand desk is also a great way to be more active at work.

Another extremely common symptom that I see in the clinic is lower back pain. Lower back pain can be caused by many different things such as, inactivity, being overweight, or having an office job. Something very simple that you can do to prevent or help lower back pain is join a gym. Resistance based training is the single best form of exercise that one can do to prevent lower back pain, prevent falls and to increase muscle mass around their lower back legs and core. It is also the most researched exercise to prevent lower back pain. When in the gym, focusing on full body and core exercises such as barbell squats or planking will be the most beneficial for building lower body muscle and preventing lower back pain.

These are just a few issues that one may encounter with their spine. If you'd like to learn more tips and tricks on improving the function of your spine and nervous system, a consultation with a local chiropractor is a great first step. There are many health-related things that a chiropractor can help you with that you may not have initially considered.

**For further information contact Healing Wave Chiropractic on (02) 4940 8811, email [sharlene@healingwave.com.au](mailto:sharlene@healingwave.com.au) or visit [www.healingwave.com.au](http://www.healingwave.com.au)**



**Dr Nick Ruffin** graduated from RMIT University with a Bachelor of Health Science and a Bachelor of Clinical Chiropractic in 2018. He has been lucky enough to receive chiropractic care his whole life, his mother also being a chiropractor. Nick believes that health comes from within and that chiropractic can enhance people's lives naturally and holistically.



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## Workplace health tips

### Healthdirect

Most of our waking hours are spent at work, which means the working environment can play a big part in our health and wellbeing.

All workers, no matter where they work or what they do, have the right to a healthy and safe workplace. A well-designed, healthy and safe workplace allows workers to be more productive.

There are many things you can do for your health while at work.

### COVID-safe workplace

There are certain things that you should do at work to minimise your risk of catching COVID-19.

**Physical distancing:** make sure you are at least 1.5m apart from other workers and limit physical contact as far as possible. If possible it is safest to work from home.

**Hygiene:** practise good hygiene by washing your hands, using hand sanitiser, and covering coughs and sneezes with an elbow.

**Cleaning:** workplaces should use appropriate cleaning and disinfecting measures at least once a day.

**To find out more about a COVID-safe workplace, visit [Safe Work Australia](#).**

### Stress

Dealing with stress at work is important. It can affect you both personally and professionally. Learn to identify the symptoms of stress and don't wait for it to make you ill before you do something about it. One of the best ways of dealing with stress is knowing how to prioritise your workload and not take on more than you can handle.

### Back pain

One of the biggest causes of back injury, especially at work, is lifting or handling objects incorrectly. You can also develop back pain due to poor posture or an awkward twisting movement (bending or reaching), or a combination of the two.

Learning and following the correct method for lifting and handling objects at work can help to prevent back pain.

- think before you lift
- start in a good position
- keep the load close to your waist
- avoid twisting your back or leaning sideways
- keep your head up
- know your limits
- push, don't pull
- distribute the weight evenly

The best treatment for low back pain is to stay active and, if necessary, use over-the-counter painkillers. You may feel like going to bed, but this won't help and could make things worse. The longer you stay immobile, the weaker your back muscles will become and the more they will hurt in the long term. Be as active as you can and get moving as soon as possible.

### Repetitive strain injury

Repetitive strain injury (RSI) is when you damage tissues in your body by repeating the same movement again and again. It is more likely to occur if you spend long periods of work without a break, or if you sit on an uncomfortable chair or at a poorly arranged workstation. Incorrect technique when using a computer keyboard and mouse, mobile phone or hand-held device can all cause RSI. Modern technology isn't solely responsible. Anyone who uses certain muscles repeatedly can get RSI. This includes factory assembly-line workers, musicians, tailors and cleaners.



If you develop RSI, you will need rehabilitation including physiotherapy and occupational therapy, as well as painkillers. Your doctor may advise steroid injections into the affected joint. In extreme cases, surgery may be necessary.

### Sitting

Sitting for a long time at work can be bad for your health. It can lead to heart disease, diabetes, obesity, poor mental health, some cancers, and problems with your muscles and bones.

If you spend a lot of your time at work sitting at a desk, make sure you're sitting in the right position in relation to your computer. If you're unsure about correct posture, ask your line manager for a workplace assessment.

It's important to minimise the amount of time you spend sitting, and to break up long periods of sitting as often as possible by taking regular breaks. That means for every hour at your keyboard you should move around for at least 5 to 10 minutes.

Tips for reducing the amount of time you spend sitting include:

- switching to a standing workstation
- standing up to read a document or talk on the phone
- walking over to talk to someone rather than emailing them
- having a standing or walking meeting

### Exercise

Many of us spend long hours at work and may have a long and tiring journey from home to the workplace. But getting active at work is easier than you might think. Here are some tips for building exercise into your working day:

- Cycle or walk part, if not all, of your journey to work. Get off one bus or station stop before your final destination.
- Walk over to someone's desk at work rather than speaking to them by phone.
- Take the stairs instead of the lift. Or get out of the lift a few floors early, then use the stairs.
- Use your lunch break to exercise. Your office may have a gym, or you may have access to a nearby swimming pool or squash courts.

Improving your general fitness and losing weight if you need to will also benefit your posture and help to prevent injury.

### Eating

We consume at least one third of our daily calorie intake while at work. What we eat and drink affects not just our health but work performance too. Lack of regular, well-balanced meals or water may result in headaches, feeling sluggish or difficulty concentrating.

Whether you buy your lunch from a sandwich shop, cafe, supermarket or work canteen, there are usually plenty of healthy lunch options available. Bringing in your own lunch is also a good idea because you know exactly what's in your lunchbox and it'll save you money. You could either prepare sandwiches or a salad, or bring leftovers from your evening meal.

**Sources:** *Workplace Health Association of Australia (Best-Practice Guidelines Workplace Health in Australia), Department of Health (Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour), Safe Work Australia (Lifting, pushing and pulling (manual handling))*



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## 2022 – OUT WITH THE OLD AND IN WITH THE NEW!

**Jerry Kennard**  
**Evoke Projects**

Workplace design company Evoke Projects takes a look at the most interesting design trends for 2022.

### Hybrid working or work from anywhere?

The pandemic turned traditional ways of working on its head. 2021 saw the growth of hybrid working where employees split their time between the office and home. The 'who, where and when' of hybrid working is usually organised by managers, setting a timetable for remote working and bringing the team together for collaborative time.

While it is likely that hybrid workplace solutions will continue in 2022, some companies have gone much further in employee autonomy. Already renowned for their flexible working policies in Australia, PwC has recently offered United States employees a permanent work-from-anywhere option. Given that data suggests online job searches for remote positions jumped 460% in the two years between June 2019 and June 2021, PwC has obviously read the room!

### Resimercial workplace design and fit-out

The blending of residential and commercial life defines our working patterns over the last two years. As a workplace design style, resimercial design is not new but it feels so natural now. However, it is no longer enough to pop a two-seater sofa in reception and call that resimercial design. Add some table lamps, funky drink coasters and rugs. Design your work zones to encourage comfortable movement around the office, emulating the way people move around at home to suit the activity.

Make the office fit-out inviting and engaging to encourage people back to the office, particularly when they have a choice of where to work.

### Minimalist office furniture

Sleek storage cabinets and slimline chairs create an open feel throughout the office fit-out. With hybrid working and desk-for-a-day occupancy schemes, desks will be utilised by different people so clean, clutter-free workspaces will feel COVID-safe. The resimercial office design trend can still work with minimalist furniture. Work desks and chairs are kept streamlined while collaborative areas and nooks enjoy the homely touches.

### Colour me happy

Colour undoubtedly has an impact on our mood, creativity and productivity. The same colour can be used in the office design for different effect by choosing warm or cold undertones, and pale or bold hues. Think about the different impact of calming pale pastel-blue versus energising vibrant teal-blue.

Dulux is always the trend-setter when it comes to wall colour. For 2022, the Dulux themes are Flourish, Restore and Wonder. Flourish has rich, sensual hues, warm neutrals and pops of gold. Restore will create a calm and reassuring backdrop with earth-based neutrals and natural tones. For joyful, inspiring office interior design, embrace Wonder with its playful, summery, 80s-inspired colours.<sup>2</sup>

### Biophilic and sustainable office design

Biophilic office design remains on-trend for 2022. Sustainable and natural materials are in the spotlight this year, giving every business an opportunity to make a difference. Let employees know about the materials being used in the office fit-out and the positive impact on the environment.

Eco-friendly natural wood is a classic style choice that will not date. Natural wooden office furniture just oozes class and easily complements other commercial interior design choices.

Living walls, peaceful courtyards and panoramic windows to let in natural light are very 2022!

After the difficulties that workplaces have faced during the last two years, the office design team at Evoke Projects are feeling confident about 2022. It's time to plan, time for change, time to get back to normal, all at once!

***For workplace design and fit-out ideas to take your business into 2022 and beyond, please call Evoke Projects on 1800 080 687.***

1. Tim Oldman, Founder & CEO, Leesman Review writing about data from Glassdoor: <https://www.leesmanindex.com/let-the-battle-commence/>

2. <https://www.dulux.com.au/colour/colour-trends/2022>

3. <https://www.afr.com/work-and-careers/workplace/executives-fear-rising-workplace-surveillance-will-spark-resistance-20210921-p58tjg>

**Jerry Kennard** is a highly focused and results driven Managing Director who leads through example and motivates the Evoke team to work to their full potential. He inspires his team to think outside the box when delivering creative and visionary office design and fit-out solutions to ensure that every client not only achieves their operational objectives but also increases the engagement, productivity and retention of their team. He believes the physical environment is like the soil for every team to grow in, and ultimately the determinate of their success.





# Workplace Design 2022

The pandemic turned traditional ways of working on its head; while it is likely that hybrid workplace solutions will continue this year, some companies have gone much further in employee autonomy. Already renowned for their flexible working policies in Australia, PwC has recently offered United States employees a permanent work-from-anywhere option. Given that data suggests online job searches for remote positions jumped 460% in the two years between June 2019 and June 2021, PwC has obviously read the room!

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For workplace design and fit-out ideas to take your business through 2022 and beyond, please call Evoke Projects on **1300 720 692**.



## LAKE MACQUARIE CITY COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING REFURBISHMENT

Well before COVID impacted the way we worked onsite and off, there was an appetite for workplace design change. Shifts in design began to favour spaces created for collaboration and flexibility, rather than the insular, fixed cubicle workspaces of the past. Spaces we not only work in but like to be in.

It was this new approach that informed the design of the refurbishment of Lake Macquarie City Council's Administration Building. EJE worked closely with Council to determine the most cost effective but well-designed solution to create a modern office environment that would serve their needs now and into the future.

At the heart of the design was the need to create spaces conducive to activity-based working. The overriding objective was to provide a variety of workspaces that supported a wide range of business activities and at the same time, were as flexible as possible to allow for unknown changes to the workspace in the future.

EJE opened up the office space, simplified the circulation paths and rationalised the layout of the various working teams throughout Council. The team created a uniform approach to many aspects of the office environment. This included an open plan layout allowing a significant increase in desk numbers with uniform desking for all staff, including the Directors. The space was decluttered, with less storage space for hard copy files in keeping with a more sustainable, online and paperless way of doing business.

Council opted for an agile work environment, where staff have a designated team neighbourhood, but as projects end and new ones start, they have the flexibility of moving to new desks, new teams and new work hubs.



**Design Team:** EJE Architecture with LMCC Project Management Team.

**Builder:** Built Newcastle

**Photography:** Alex McIntyre Photography

The focus was all about creating a space that allowed staff to deliver for the community. For EJE, this meant creating an attractive efficient workplace using natural materials, biophilic design, and quality amenities. It is a space that above all is flexible, modern, filled with light and a pleasure to work in.

**EJE** architecture

**LAKE MACQUARIE  
CITY COUNCIL  
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Speers Point, NSW

Tasked with a total refurbishment, EJE have designed a modern, flexible and collaborative space in which teams can thrive. The warmth of timber battens with planting creates a peaceful and healthy workspace, while clear, simple circulation paths open up the three floors to become a more connected and harmonious work environment.

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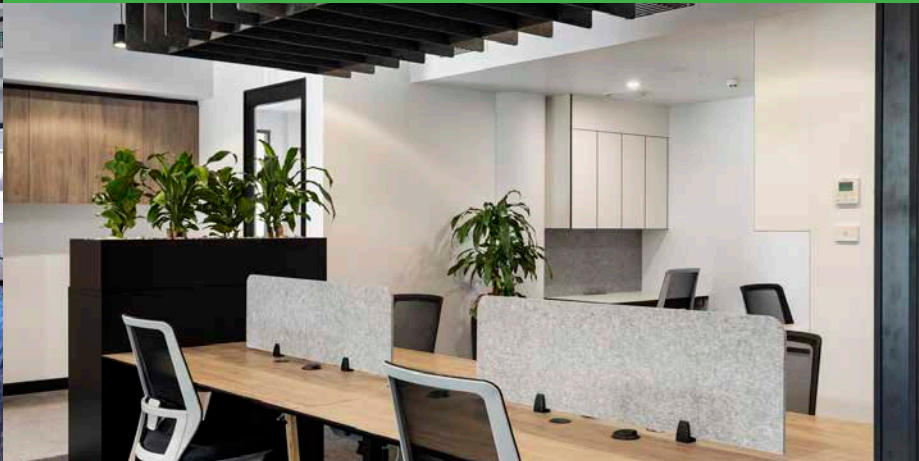






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Soft and cool to touch, moss walls are much more than just a wall of luxuriance. They are biophilic. No, it is not a disease. It's our affinity to be around nature. The lasting effects will be on those who see the moss walls daily...your employees. When productivity rises, so will your bottom line.

Green walls and vertical gardens are a wonderful way to offer your employees a dose of medicine for their biophilia. They are calming yet invigorating and will entice your employees to want to come back to the office environment.

With our NextGen green walls, we support both indoor and outdoor projects even without plumbing or drainage. Typically installed in just one day, they can even be installed around corners. For flexibility, use our mobile green walls for partitioning, moving them around to suit your needs.

As you pioneer your designs for innovative workspaces, **Green Design** will collaborate with you to bridge the gap between the natural world and corporate cityscapes. Clients will be in awe and impressed with your 'green' approach to business. The feeling is one of luxury, yet the economic benefits of office plants is undeniable. Your bottom line will improve.

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Our range of indoor plant hire services includes installing modern planters that are not only made from recycled materials, but are recycled again and again. Our in-house paint shop restores planters to your specific colours.

Introducing plants into your workplace has more than just a healthy effect on staff and visitors. Our solutions are creative and affordable, sustainable, and fit for purpose. To achieve outstanding results, we visit you on site, consult and recommend a perfect match for your office. We provide an office plant hire service in Sydney and throughout Australia.

With 40 years industry experience and over 35 staff, **Green Design** is now one of Australia's leading, indoor plant hire and vertical garden companies.



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# ACOUSTICS IN THE WORKPLACE



The ever ubiquitous buzz word we are hearing at the moment in the Commercial Interiors sector would have to be “acoustics”. Whether trying to dampen or absorb sound in an open plan space or soundproof management offices or meeting rooms for the purpose of sensitive or private conversations, most clients we visit seek visually appealing and effective solutions to deal with this issue. With increased demand comes increasing options to facilitate the individuals particular and often very specific needs.

**Newcastle Office Interiors ( NOI )** factor this requirement in when surveying all interior fit outs and will provide a number of options to counter sound reflection, collision and leakage, three of the primary “nuisances” in an office environment. Using a range of acoustic materials in various applications will allow a substantial amount of sound to be absorbed opposed to the general chitter chatter being bounced around the office.

The modern day workplace is filled with Hi-fidelity hard surfaces, timber/gyprock/glass/polished concrete/wooden floors, conditions not ideally suited for the practical purpose of a peaceful and ambient work space but the good news is there are numerous ways to absorb or diffuse this problem whilst also enhancing the visual aesthetic.

You can take comfort in the knowledge that when NOI come to inspect your premises for the purpose of a new fit out or indeed a strip out and refurbishment, all factors of comfort will be considered and all viable options brought to the table for your consideration.

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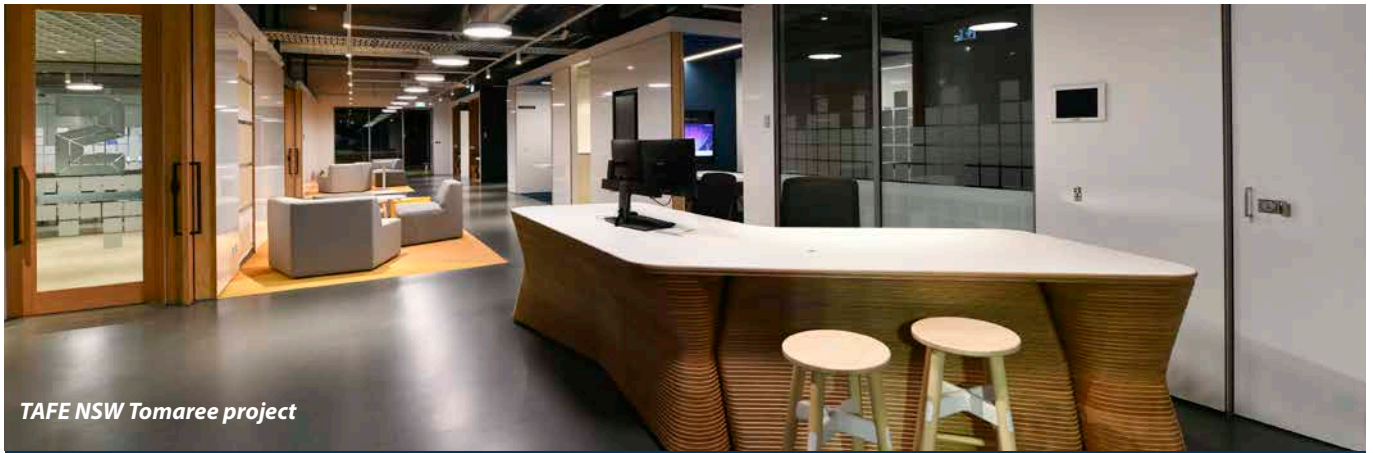
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TAFE NSW Tomaree project

**Collaborative Construction Solutions Pty Ltd**, as a company was formally started by Todd Bacon & Andrew Fisher on 14 February 2014. The key objective of the new company was to create & promote a better way of undertaking the building & construction process. The name Collaborative was specifically chosen to clearly tell their clients, contractors, suppliers & staff "this is how building projects should be completed". Todd & Andrew knew from first-hand experience that the most successful projects were the projects where the entire project team, the client, the architect, the project manager, the engineers & the builder all pulled together as a team and worked towards the common goal. The old attitude of the Builder Vs the Architect Vs the Project Manager was inefficient, unproductive and redundant.

Collaborative was created to provide a flexible & adaptive building & construction service which prioritised strong working relationships with their clients & strong client involvement in their projects to ensure the final result not only met the client's needs, but provided them the best value for money result, while at the same time making the building process an rewarding experience. Collaborative was established with some very clear goals & objectives as a company and they are proud to confirm the company goals and objectives, detailed in their 10 year strategic plan, were achieved within 5 years of trading.

Culture is an important and fundamental element in the DNA of COLLABORATIVE "Getting the right people on the Bus in the right seat with the right culture" is a clear goal organisationally. COLLABORATIVE Vision is to be "a professional builder who has a reputation for delivering practical solutions with and trustworthy and simple approach". It is essential for all staff to embrace the "Collaborative Way".

Our company ethos is to work closely with our clients to provide them with the best value for money result, while at the same time maintaining an enjoyable client experience. We find that by collaborating with our clients, consultants and trades we are able to provide a unified approach to any building project. We work hard to recruit and motivate people that have the skills and experience needed to deliver a superior experience for our clients, but just as importantly we seek to employ people that pursue our company philosophy and want to be part of a team. Each of our projects is actively monitored and controlled by the actual owners of the company, who personally oversee the delivery of your project. Our focus is on long-term relationships with our clients, not just for one project, but for the next 10-15 projects. As a result, over 82% of our business comes from long-standing relationships with repeat clients.

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During his physical, the doctor asked the patient about his daily activity level. He described a typical day this way.

"Well, yesterday afternoon, I waded along the edge of a lake, drank eight beers, escaped from wild dogs in the heavy brush, jumped away from an aggressive rattlesnake, marched up and down several rocky hills, stood in a patch of poison ivy, crawled out of the quicksand and took four leaks behind big trees."

Inspired by the story, the doctor said, "You must be one hell of an outdoors man!"

"Nah," he replied, "I'm just a terrible golfer."

The boss comes out of a BMW 7 series and a junior employee remarked, "Wow Boss, this is great!"

The boss puts his arm around the man & says, "If you also work hard, be punctual, put in more hours of work on weekends, take fewer holidays, achieve your targets then who knows ....maybe I will be able to buy an even better car next year!!!"

Three kids argue, whose father is the fastest.

One says "My father is the fastest, he can overtake an arrow that he shot with the bow."

The second one says "My father is even faster - when he hunts, he can shoot at an animal and run up to the animal before it falls down."

The third says "You actually don't understand what speed is. My father works for the council. He finishes work at 4:30 pm, but he's back home by 3:45 pm already!"

The boss says to his employee "What are you doing here?"

"Executing your command," replies the employee.

"But I haven't told you anything," say the boss.

"That's why I am doing nothing."

A woman gets into a taxi and says "To maternity hospital, please."

The driver takes off as fast as he can, dodging traffic and running red lights.

After a while she asks the driver "Do not drive so fast, please, I only work there."

A politician is late to the meeting. He drives his car into a car park but can't find a place anywhere.

Then he raises his eyes to heaven and asks God "Please help me to find a place God. If you help me, I promise I'll go to church every Sunday, quit drinking and always tell the truth!"

Then, suddenly, as if by magic, he noticed a place for a car.


He raises again his eyes to heaven "Don't worry, I have found it myself and don't need your help anymore."

### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"To keep the body in good health is a duty, otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear."

- Buddha


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