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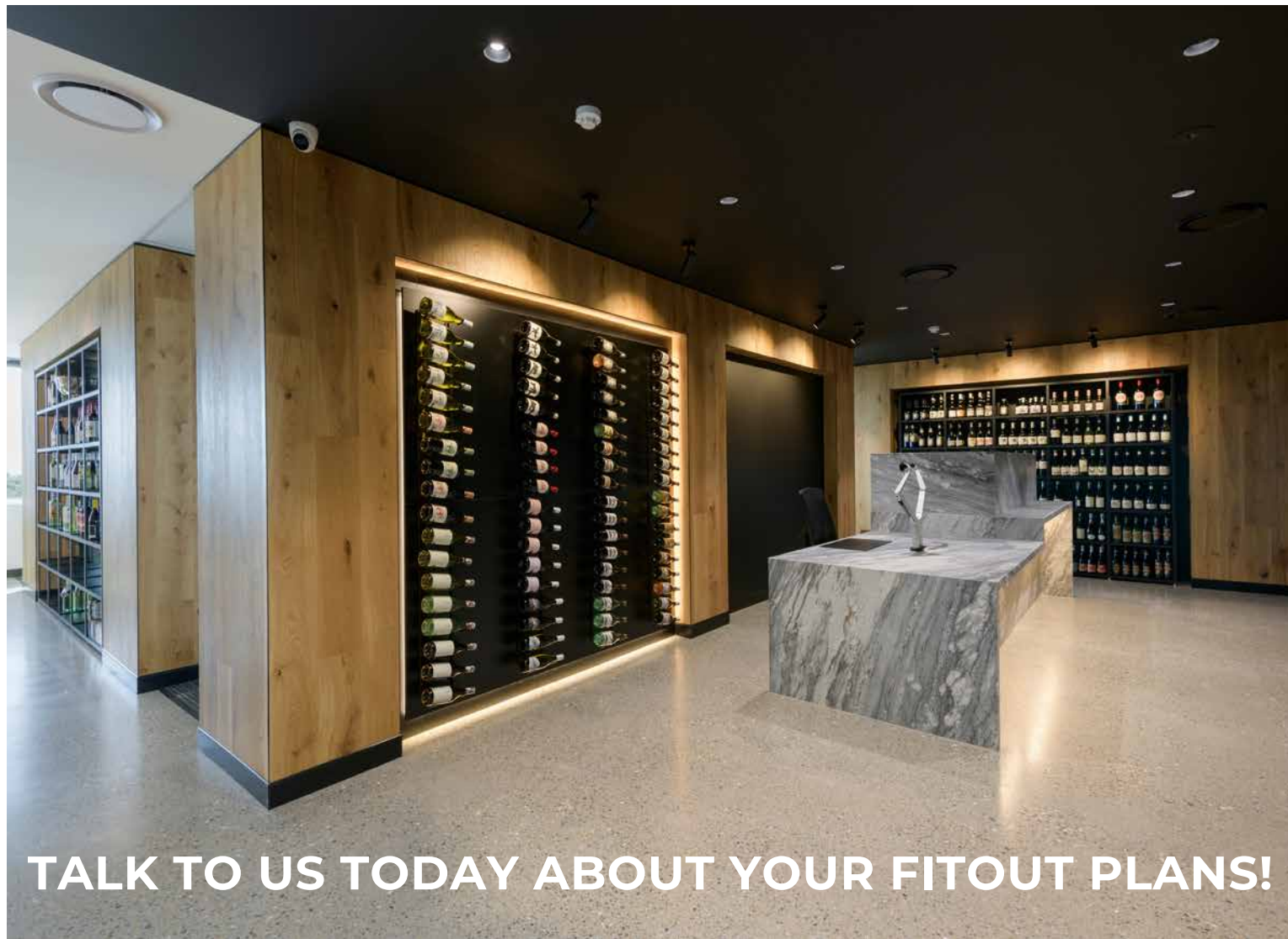
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 265 King Street  
 Newcastle NSW 2300  
 PO Box 853, Hamilton NSW 2303  
 Phone: (02) 4062 8133

**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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- 4** From the Editor
- 5** Business News
- 16** New Appointments
- 17** Property
- 20** Sales & Marketing
- 25** Business Technology
- 30** Business Services Directory
- 31** Funny Business

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# From the Editor



It has been a strange year for business, with Covid, the Federal election, higher inflation, rising interest rates and the Ukraine war all having their impact and adding to a feeling of uncertainty in many sectors of the economy.

In this environment, it is interesting that most business surveys are still showing a net positive sentiment for business.

We should be cautious,

however, as these surveys usually do not indicate how solid these sentiments are. Many business sectors are still quite fragile and it will not take much to destroy some of the positive sentiment.

With inflation hitting the highest level since 2000, it is almost certain that the RBA will raise interest rates further. The benefit of using interest rates to control inflation is that it has a very quick impact. The problem is that it is such a blunt tool and affects all sectors of the economy, including those that are already struggling. Much of the inflationary pressures is of a cost-push nature, with higher input costs forcing businesses to raise their prices. Interest rates are only effective on the demand-pull aspect

of inflation – higher rates reducing demand. Raising interest rates will actually add to the cost-push component for many businesses. So with costs rising and potentially demand falling, the profitability of many businesses will be under threat.

Interest rates have been low for so long that many businesses and consumers have probably become a bit relaxed about the threat of higher interest rates. There will be a significant number of highly geared businesses and home loan borrowers where even the current quite small interest rate increases will have a major impact on their finances.

The RBA will have to tread very carefully that it doesn't push the economy into a recession in the quest for lower inflation.

With the Federal election out of the way, the new Government will also face a challenging economic environment. It can also attempt some measures to combat inflation, including structural reform and easing supply chain issues. These measures will take some time to impact but perhaps the knowledge that there is action on this front will slightly reduce the RBA's inflation outlook and limit rate rises to some degree.

Businesses, consumers and politicians will certainly keep a very keen eye on ABS inflation figures and RBA interest rate decisions for at least the next year.

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

## Planning a business FUNCTION?

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## \$55 million announced for Newcastle Airport for terminal upgrade

On April 14 the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, The Hon. Barnaby Joyce, announced \$55 million in funding for a significant upgrade and expansion of Newcastle Airport's international passenger terminal.

Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock said the terminal upgrade was the final piece of the puzzle for the Newcastle, Hunter Valley, Central Coast and North Coast regions in their path towards global connectivity.

"Coming on the back of the Government's \$66 million in funding for our airfield in May last year, this additional infrastructure will ensure nothing holds us back from our global potential," he said.

"The significance of this moment shouldn't be underestimated. It gives certainty and confidence to Australia's largest regional economy at the perfect time.

"This upgrade is essential to process the long-haul aircraft, which can carry close to 400 passengers – this is an entirely different scale to our domestic fleet, which is closer to 180 passengers."

"I also want to thank our key regional partners, who have been consistent and persistent in their advocacy efforts, and everyone across our region who has assisted our advocacy.

"The Hunter Joint Organisation has been key, and their coordination of our recent Hunter Global Summit was exemplary.

"Our two shareholder councils have, as always, been incredibly supportive, and the support of Business Hunter has also been instrumental in today's outcome.

"We know there is plenty of work ahead, but we're confident we'll be connecting to a significant Asian hub by 2024. This will present opportunities that are difficult to quantify.

"Of course the new terminal will offer convenience for travellers from our catchment who want to fly internationally. But more importantly, it will drive huge, sustainable economic benefits



***"This truly is a project of national significance"***

*Dr Cock Newcastle Airport CEO*

throughout the region through inbound tourism, and freight related industries, including import and export.

"By providing greater access to the global economy, the upgrade will help generate 850,000 additional visitors, 4,410 jobs and \$12.7 billion in economic activity for the Hunter and Northern NSW across the next 20 years.

"This truly is a project of national significance", Dr Cock said.

"It's critically important that we now continue to advocate for our region and our growing Airport precinct, particularly as we strengthen our capacity in the Defence and aerospace industries."

Newcastle Airport has appointed Cox architects to design the new terminal. Works on the upgraded airfield began in April, with the first terminal works to commence in October.

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## Applied Virtual Simulation awarded multi-million-dollar Defence contract

Applied Virtual Simulation has been awarded an AUD \$17.9 million contract by the Australian Defence Force to deliver a suite of Common Simulation Software (CSS) and associated technologies to the Australian Army. The project, Land Simulation Core 2.0 Tranche 1, will provide the Army with a suite of CSS for use by future simulators and in simulation-based combined arms training.

Applied Virtual Simulation (AVS) Director Martin Carr says the platform will allow Army to train within an integrated virtual environment.

"Land Simulation Core 2.0 will be the most comprehensive modernisation of simulation technology in the history of the Australian Army. It will be a key enabler of Army's Future Ready Training System.

"The Army is making substantial investments into procuring new land combat platforms and it is essential that the training systems for these platforms are able to interoperate in order to achieve combined arms training effects. Land Simulation Core 2.0 will enable this by providing a suite of Common Simulation Software and associated applications which will provide a baseline for current and future simulators and simulation-based training systems.

"AVS formulated our approach to delivering the CSS by selecting the best applications available from around the world including US based MAK Technologies and UK based SimCentric.

"In addition to delivering the software applications, we will be creating hundreds of 3D models and mapping thousands of square kilometres of real-world terrain into the simulation. This will allow soldiers to train together whether they are using a simulator in a barracks environment or deployed to a field training area."



## Compass Housing becomes Home in Place

Hunter-based community housing provider Compass Housing Services has been renamed Home in Place to position it for further national and international growth.

Group Managing Director Greg Budworth said the name change was part of an exciting new chapter for the not-for-profit housing provider. Mr Budworth said Home in Place better reflects the full range of services it provides to tenants and communities.

"Home In Place is not just a name; it is an expression of our value and a statement about who we are, and what we do," Mr Budworth said.

"Our belief that social housing is about more than accommodation means we have always focussed on providing homes rather than houses or dwellings," he said.

"Place is central to our philosophy of helping people feel connected to and active participants in their communities.

"Although social housing is still our core business, we also do property development, community development, facilities management, and disability housing. Our new name will better support us with the new business opportunities and expansion into new markets domestically and internationally."

Mr Budworth said there will be no change for existing tenants, residents, clients, partners or staff. The change to the trading name will not impact its legal status and existing contracts and tenancy agreements remain in effect.

Home in Place is a Tier 1 community housing provider and registered Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) provider. It currently manages more than 7600 social, affordable and disability housing homes in NSW, Queensland and New Zealand.

*Greg Budworth group managing director Home in Place*



## Green Hydrogen Hub set for phase 1 construction

The Port of Newcastle Green Hydrogen Hub Project received a further vote of confidence following announcement by The Hon Angus Taylor MP, Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction that the project will receive \$41 million in funding.

The project is a joint venture with Macquarie Capital and Macquarie's Green Investment Group and is currently progressing an ARENA funded feasibility study. The project is being developed with a phase one minimum 40 MW electrolyser that over time could increase to a capacity of over 1 GW.

The project has been working with a range of project partners to develop a comprehensive range of use cases for green hydrogen in the Hunter which build on the region's strong industrial heritage. These include, mobility, bunkering, energy production and industrial uses at the scale necessary to

position the Hunter at the centre of the emerging global green hydrogen opportunity.

The funding announcement positions Port of Newcastle as a leading site to establish a hydrogen hub, with connectivity to domestic and export infrastructure, proximate demand, and access to renewable energy.

Craig Carmody, CEO, Port of Newcastle said, "This funding is a vote of confidence by the Federal Government, which recognises the role of the Port as a key player in the emerging global green hydrogen economy."

"The significance of this funding cannot be understated. By 2025, we hope to have Phase 1 of the Hydrogen Hub complete, which will benefit a range of local industry and position the Hunter Region to be a key player in the emerging hydrogen opportunity," Mr Carmody said.

## 70th anniversary marks huge milestone and end of an era for Hamilton Taggart

This year marks a significant milestone for accountancy practice Hamilton Taggart Business Advisors, with the celebration of their 70th anniversary and the retirement of Managing Director, Ross Taggart. Ross has been at the helm of the business for 43 years and has worked as the Managing Director since 1990 after taking over from his father.

"I've had the privilege to work and learn alongside a talented team and many great business clients," Ross said.

"It's always been important to me that my team share the same values, goals and passion for helping our clients to thrive, and I couldn't have asked for a better group than those who work at Hamilton Taggart."

Ross leaves the business in the hands of his fellow Managing Director, Melanie Hamilton who has worked with Hamilton Taggart for the past 20 years.

"I have mentored Melanie throughout each stage of her career development and together we have grown the business to where it is today," Ross said.

"Melanie is a Fellow of CPA Australia and is an inspirational leader that has made a remarkable impact on our community.

"I took this business over from my father and it's a privilege to be able to pass it on to someone who has been here for so long and has such a deep knowledge of our systems, processes, and clients – someone who feels like family and can carry on these traditions," he continued.

While Melanie is sad to see her colleague, mentor and friend go, she's excited to usher in a new stage of the business.

"Ross has been an integral part of our business's growth, and it seems only fitting for him to retire as we celebrate a huge milestone – our 70th anniversary," Melanie said.

"Having been with the business for over two decades I've seen our team grow and become a group of amazing accountants and

support staff that are focused on assisting our clients to create successful business ventures.

"We're excited to see this continued growth trajectory and to work with the legacy Ross will leave behind," Melanie said.

Ross leaves behind a remarkable foundation of values that are at the heart of Hamilton Taggart, which is shown further through the work he has done in the community.

He has been heavily involved with the Merewether Surf Club, holding the role of President for three years as of 2010, and was Director of Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service for 12 years, as well as President of the Hunter Business Chamber (now Business Hunter) for two years and a Board Director for ten years.

Seven decades is a long time and a well earned success for any business. During this time there's been quite the evolution. Beginning as Alan Taggart Gibbs & Co in 1952 by Ross' father Alan, and business partner David Gibbs, it was then changed to Alan Taggart & Co in 1988, followed by Taggart Partners in 2000.

As part of the succession plan, in April 2018 the business rebranded from Taggart Partners to Hamilton Taggart.

Despite looking forward to his retirement from the business, Ross looks back on his time fondly at Hamilton Taggart.

"I feel incredibly lucky to have found my 'forever role' at the start of my career and to have been able to stay with the one organisation, whilst still growing and learning about the industry I love.

"Farewells are always difficult, but my retirement has been made easier knowing our team of amazing accountants, bookkeepers and support staff are focused on assisting our clients to meet compliance requirements and to create, manage and grow successful business ventures," Ross concluded.

Established in 1952, Hamilton Taggart Business Advisors is a proudly family-run Newcastle business that has been helping small and medium businesses thrive in the Hunter Region.

*Celebrating 70 years*

of providing accounting, taxation and business advice to businessowners throughout the Hunter region.

*"We would like to wish Ross Taggart all the best in his retirement - so much more than an accountant - he's a mentor, adviser and a friend to many."*

**Melanie Hamilton,**  
Managing Director, Hamilton Taggart

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## Stage 2 Oncology Treatment Centre opens in Maitland

The Maitland, and lower and upper Hunter communities will now be able to receive world-class integrated cancer care closer to home, thanks to the opening of the second stage of GenesisCare and Hunter Imaging's oncology treatment centre in Maitland.

Hunter Imaging's multi-million dollar investment into this new flagship diagnostic imaging centre will help patients with their cancer journey, as they will no longer need to travel into Newcastle to receive the best oncology treatment.

As part of the GenesisCare integrated cancer care service, which opened its doors in February this year, the opening of the Hunter Imaging section will ensure patients have rapid access to diagnostic technologies and specialised oncology treatment, under the one roof. Patients who are referred to the centre will have access to world-class PET CT - an essential tool for diagnosing and measuring the response to cancer treatment, as well as MRI, general nuclear medicine, diagnostic CT, comprehensive diagnostic ultrasound, mammography and general X ray.

Douglas Hanly Moir Pathology will soon join Genesis Care and Hunter Imaging, opening the doors to their pathology services in due course.

*Hunter Imaging COO, Todd Forbes, says their PET-CT machine is a crucial diagnostic tool, as it detects and monitors cancers from very early on, and at a cellular level.*



## Work to begin on strategic fuel storage tank at Port of Newcastle

Park Fuels is leading the charge in a plan to secure Australia's long-term fuel supplies, with construction to begin at Kooragang on one of the country's first strategic diesel storage facilities.

Park Fuels CEO Brett Fletcher joined Federal Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction, the Hon Angus Taylor MP to turn the first sod on the 30 ML storage tank at the company's Walsh Point terminal.

"Today marks a significant milestone for Park Fuels and for the future security of Australia's fuel supplies," Mr Fletcher said.

"Diesel is the lifeblood of our heavy industries. It fuels our trucks, our mines and our farms, so by investing in strategic storage facilities like this one we are helping to safeguard domestic supplies during peak periods and emergencies, while also keeping costs down for consumers.

"The new tank, which will be built within the grounds of our state-of-the-art terminal at Port of Newcastle, will increase our diesel storage capability at Kooragang from 54 ML to approximately 84 ML.

"As an Australian owned and operated company, we are proud to deliver a project that will not only double our workforce during the construction phase but will increase our existing team by 10% upon completion, ensuring Australian families and industries

have continual access to the fuel they need, when they need it."

The new tank has been jointly funded by Park Fuels and the Commonwealth Government's \$260 million Boosting Australia's Diesel Storage program, which aims to build around 780 ML of diesel storage across the country.

Port of Newcastle CEO Craig Carmody said Newcastle and the Park Fuels facility at the Port will play an important role in strengthening Australia's fuel security by increasing the volume of diesel stock that can be kept onshore to meet future needs.

Construction is expected to be completed mid next year with the new strategic storage tank operational by late 2023.

## \$1.6 million for Cessnock Airport Aviation Fire Base

Cessnock City Council has been successful in obtaining a \$1,651,260 grant under the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program to fully fund an Aviation Fire Base at Cessnock Airport.

Cessnock Airport played an important role in fighting the 2019/2020 bushfires via the Rural Fire Service operating the AT-802 Air Tractor and helicopter water bombers. These operations highlighted areas for improvement if aerial firefighting operations are to continue at Cessnock Airport in the future.

The works will include:

- construction of a taxiway to the water bomber apron
- construction of a 5700 sqm water bomber apron with lighting
- connection of the water main to the water holding tanks
- installation of 150,000 litres of water storage and an associated pumping system
- repositioning of the airside security fence
- construction of a 3120 sqm helicopter landing area.

The Aviation Fire Base will complement the \$8.8 million upgrade to Cessnock Airport. The project is scheduled to start in May 2023 and be completed by December 2023. Council is seeking opportunities to expedite the works using expertise obtained during the current Airport upgrade project.

## Knights Centre of Excellence opens

The ribbon was officially cut on the Newcastle Knights' new \$20 million Centre of Excellence at District Park, Broadmeadow recently. The Centre provides an integrated world-class high-performance training, administration and community facility for the identification, development and fostering of rugby league talent in the Hunter.

It includes three full-sized training fields, a state-of-the-art gym, multipurpose community and function area, lap pool and sauna, theatre and players' lounge, rehabilitation space and office areas, and precinct walking and cycle path.

The Office of Sport contributed \$10 million towards the project through its NRL Centres of Excellence Program which was matched by Wests Group Australia on behalf of the Newcastle Knights.

The opening of the Centre of Excellence is a game-changer for rugby league in the Hunter, providing the region with the leading rugby league facility in regional NSW. It will improve male and female pathways and player development in the Hunter, ensuring the Knights challenge for NRL and NRLW premierships in the years to come.

The Centre includes dedicated female programs and facilities to improve pathways for women and girls in line with the Office of Sport's women in sport strategy, Her Sport Her Way as well as multi-purpose facilities that will enable the club to expand its community programs and better engage with the community.



# 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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## Engineering and professional services firm purchases Hunter H2O

Beca has agreed to purchase Hunter H2O to create one of Australasia's leading water industry consultancies. The combined entity will provide the strength of more than 300 water specialists across the Australian eastern seaboard, New Zealand and the Pacific. Headquartered in Newcastle, Hunter H2O is an employee-owned specialist water industry consultancy providing professional engineering and project management services. Hunter H2O is well known for its industry leading strength in process engineering and its work in regional areas and the Pacific supporting healthy and sustainable communities.



Hunter H2O's Managing Director, Peter Dennis & Beca's Australian Managing Director, Craig Lee.

The Beca and Hunter H2O group will offer industry leading expertise in water, wastewater and stormwater management. The combined expertise of the water teams will give access to some of the best minds in master planning and advisory services through to civil, mechanical, electrical and control system design, as well as project management and commissioning, backed by strong front-line experience in water utility operations and training.

The new group will be known as Beca Hunter H2O in Australia. The 300 water specialists will be backed by the 3,800+ strong multidisciplinary professional services practitioners from across Beca.

## \$41 million and 80 new jobs for Hunter Region to transform ADF deployable infrastructure

The Federal Government will create 80 new jobs in the Hunter by signing a \$41 million contract with a local company that will strengthen the Australian Defence Force's deployable infrastructure capability.

Minister for Defence Peter Dutton said the contract signing with Varley, based in Tomago, secured critical upgrades that would support Defence personnel while on operations. The contract is part of a wider \$89 million investment in the ADF's deployable infrastructure capability.

The ADF uses deployable infrastructure for a range of operations, including during conflicts and disaster relief. The Government's investment will include upgrades to power generation, hygiene and essential catering, and the acquisition of new kennels for military working dogs.

"This investment will significantly upgrade capability and enhance the ADF's ability to deploy rapidly on a wide range of operations, as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts, both domestically and internationally," Minister Dutton said.

"We are committed to protecting our nation by equipping the ADF with modern capabilities to best meet future challenges.

"Sovereign defence manufacturing is a critical part of the Government's commitment to keeping our region safe, while protecting our national and strategic interests in a rapidly changing global environment."



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## Awards poised to recognise Lake Mac business boom

Lake Macquarie's business growth forged ahead despite the COVID-19 pandemic, new figures reveal, as the city prepares to recognise its best and brightest in the commercial sector.

The number of registered businesses grew from 12,571 in June 2020 to 13,113 in June 2021, with the number of businesses with a \$10 million-plus annual turnover also increasing, from 94 to 112.

"The pandemic has presented an enormous challenge for many businesses in our community, but for others it has been a chance to consolidate or grow," Lake Macquarie Mayor Kay Fraser said.

"This year's Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards will recognise the city's top performers across 14 categories, from micro business to companies excelling in sustainability and innovation."

Lake Macquarie City Council data shows the construction and retail industries continued to grow throughout the pandemic.

So too did the hospitality sector, despite the significant impact of lockdowns and other COVID-related restrictions.

"We know how hard business owners and employees have worked over the past 12 months, and how quickly they have adapted, and our annual business awards help shine a light on those efforts," Cr Fraser said.

Entries to this year's awards are open 13 May-6 June. Winners will be announced at a gala ceremony on Friday 29 July, with winners progressing to the Hunter Business Awards.

This year's awards feature a new category – Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion, recognising businesses that address the needs of a diverse community, including seniors, people with disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

And for the first time, Dantia, the city's economic development company, will provide in-person and online support for all award

applicants, including training sessions to help with application writing and walkthroughs of the application portal.

"Businesses can go in and sit with a member of the Dantia team to complete their online application to give them the best chance of progressing," Dantia CEO Josh Sattler said.

"We're hoping this encourages more businesses to get involved and get recognised for the wonderful work they do in our city."

Peter McCarthy, whose Precision Taxation, Accounting and Management took out the 2018 Lake Macquarie Business of the Year award, said the accolade helped his business grow and thrive.

"Just being in the competition spurs businesses on to excel and improve, ultimately benefiting our local economy and community," he said.

### Go to [lakemac.com.au](http://lakemac.com.au) to apply for this year's awards.

- Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards 2022 categories
- Outstanding Employee
- Outstanding Young Business Leader
- Outstanding Business Leader
- Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality\*
- Employer of Choice
- Excellence in Innovation
- Excellence in Sustainability
- Outstanding Community Organisation
- Outstanding Start Up
- Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion
- Excellence in Micro Business
- Excellence in Small Business
- Excellence in Large Business
- Business of the Year\*

*\*these awards are for Lake Macquarie only*

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## Water security plan for Lower Hunter

Water security is at the heart of a new 40 year strategic water plan that will provide confidence for communities and businesses in the Lower Hunter area. The strategy will ensure the region has a resilient, secure and sustainable water supply now and for future generations. The NSW Government's Lower Hunter Water Security Plan (LHWSP) sets the region up for economic prosperity and underpins growth, liveability and quality of life in considering new sources of water. It includes new ways to reduce the water used to effectively balance water supply and demand.

The LHWSP includes a range of supply and demand measures to ensure there is enough water to supply homes, businesses and industry in the region for the future and during drought.

The LHWSP has been developed with significant engagement with the Hunter community and reflects community values and priorities while being both robust and adaptable in the long term, ensuring a resilient and sustainable water future for the region.

Minister for Lands and Water Kevin Anderson said the Lower Hunter community has been overwhelmingly supportive of the plan.

Hunter Water Managing Director, Darren Cleary, said all LHWSP actions attracted support from the community, with strong support (97%) for water conservation and leakage reduction, which are foundational elements of the plan.

The LHWSP will deliver:

- Increased investment in water conservation, efficiency and leakage reduction actions
- Construction of a permanent desalination plant at Belmont to supply up to 30 million litres of water per day
- Assessing the viability of a Hunter Water connection to the Glennies Creek Dam-Lostock Dam scheme in the Upper Hunter
- Increased investment in new, highly-treated recycled water schemes to support community green spaces and local industry

## Ampcontrol acquired By Washington H.Soul Pattinson

On 26 April Ampcontrol, Australia's largest privately-owned electrical engineering company, announced the agreement with Washington H. Soul Pattinson and Company Limited (WHSP) to acquire 100% shareholding.

The acquisition comes as Ampcontrol accelerates its strategy to be at the forefront of developing and supplying advanced technology, products, and services to the resources, infrastructure, and energy sectors that enable a competitive advantage in a net-zero carbon environment.

Australia's second-oldest public company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange, WHSP has significant investments in a diverse portfolio of assets across a range of industries. With origins in owning and operating Australian pharmacies, WHSP today has a much broader investment portfolio encompassing investments in natural resources, building materials, telecommunications, retail, agriculture, property equity, investments, and corporate advisory.

Ampcontrol Managing Director & CEO, Rod Henderson, said the investment acquisition marks a new era for the Australian manufacturing business and the next chapter in its growth story.

"The increased investment by WHSP cements ongoing commitment to our strategic business plan for the continued growth of our business, as well as allowing us to take advantage of various synergies, partnerships, and expansion opportunities across new and emerging domestic and international markets that will better serve our customers, industry, and community in an ever-changing global landscape."

"Our commitment to R&D, and our talented workforce, will result in our customers benefiting from a rapidly expanding portfolio of products and service capabilities, cutting-edge digital technology, and accelerated innovation to help solve some of the greatest challenges facing our future such as decarbonisation

and renewable energy solutions. We want to make a meaningful difference and improvement to people's lives and communities, the way they live and work by providing solutions that enable a sustainable future for everyone. We are pleased to be working with WHSP in this shared vision," added Mr Henderson.

Washington H. Soul Pattinson Managing Director, Todd Barlow said "Ampcontrol is uniquely positioned to capitalise on the decarbonisation thematic with its people, technology, and services. The founders of Ampcontrol, in particular Peter Cockbain, have created a great platform business and WHSP is excited to be investing further in its next stage of growth."

WHSP has held a major shareholding in Ampcontrol Limited since investing in the company in 2005 and will now acquire the remaining shareholdings from other investors including Ampcontrol Co-Founder Peter Cockbain.

Acknowledging the successful history of Ampcontrol, Rod Henderson thanked the foresight of co-founders Neville Sawyer, Peter Cockbain, Keith Grant, and Tony Studdert who started the business in a small shed in Newcastle NSW in 1968.

## New owners for Pride Dry Cleaning

Islington based business, Pride Dry Cleaning has recently taken on new owners, after 12 years under the management of Jennie and (the late) Phil Lyons. The Islington location has been a dry cleaner since 1942.

In 2011 Phil and Jennie started the renovation of their business, updating systems and adapting the store and its machinery. The factory is now completely ability-adapted, it also has the honour of being the first registered NDIS dry cleaning and laundry provider in the Hunter Region.

Sadly a few years later, Phil passed away, but Pride Dry Cleaning remained committed to ensuring people of all ability have equal access to care and quality services. This is a philosophy that new owners David and Cathy Marshall will continue to uphold through their purchase of the business.

Cathy Marshall applied for a job at Pride Dry Cleaning 18 months ago, in the middle of the first lockdown. She was in awe of the business, the values that it upheld, and the incredible community that supports and is Pride Dry Cleaning.

"I said to one of the girls that worked there, jokingly, if Jennie ever sells this place, I'm going to buy it," Cathy Marshall explained.

Almost a year and a half later, after battling health issues for some time, Jennie made the tough decision to sell the business to focus on herself and her health.

Selling the business is an emotional process for Jennie, but something she says is necessary, "For the business to evolve, I have to step down as I physically cannot run it and it will be wonderful to see the new direction it will take" she said."

Pride Dry Cleaning is known in the community for the work they do for people living with disabilities as a NDIS provider. This is a core principle for the new owners, who plan to continue on as registered NDIS providers.

"We have no plans to change anything about the store. That includes its values, the customers, and how Jennie set up things," Cathy explains.

Cathy & Dave Marshall





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

## Vision for Newcastle announced

An ambitious long-term vision for Newcastle shaped by more than 5,000 community members was unanimously endorsed at Council Meeting On 26 April. A record number of people contributed their thoughts on achieving a liveable, sustainable inclusive global city, as part of extensive community consultation undertaken over a 12-month period for Newcastle's new Community Strategic Plan, Newcastle 2040.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said Newcastle 2040 reflects the community's values and vision for Newcastle, and will guide City of Newcastle's planning, projects and policies in future years.

"Newcastle 2040 has been developed with the input of more residents than ever before with an engagement program, which met people where they were through outreach at events, schools and community facilities in addition to surveys," Cr Nelmes said.

"We were committed to ensuring a true representation of our community was reflected through consultation by listening to people from all stages and walks of life regarding their ideas and priorities for our city's future.

"I'd like to thank every one of the 5,440 people who gave input during the development of Newcastle 2040.

"Although Newcastle is already incredible, we must continue to plan and implement actions to ensure we maintain the city's liveability while managing population growth, providing opportunities for economic development and diversification and making Newcastle a place for all as we become a global city."

Community collaboration undertaken to inform Newcastle's updated vision included thousands of interactions such as face-to-face conversations, workshops, surveys, online feedback, advisory committees and stakeholder engagement.

Priorities and objectives set out in Newcastle 2040 focus on four key themes including Liveable Newcastle, Sustainable Newcastle, Creative Newcastle and Achieving Together.

A commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture, our planet, inclusion, supporting local, innovation and social justice principles underpins Newcastle 2040 and informs the actions City of Newcastle undertakes.

The shared vision for Newcastle 2040 includes a commitment to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, a macro blueprint for peace and prosperity that will be championed by City of Newcastle at the local level.

Local Councils are required to prepare a Community Strategic Plan every four years and they must be adopted by June 30 of the year following a local government election.

## New University campus for Gosford

On 11 April the NSW Government announced that the University of Newcastle will be its university partner to deliver a new university campus in Mann Street, Gosford.

The University of Newcastle's Vice-Chancellor Professor Alex Zelinsky joined Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport Hon. Rob Stokes MP, Minister for Skills and Training Hon. Alister Henskens MP, Parliamentary Secretary Adam Crouch MP and Federal Member for Robertson Lucy Wicks MP in Gosford to welcome the news.

"We are delighted to be selected to partner with the NSW Government to realise our shared vision for the creation of a new University of Newcastle campus in the heart of Gosford," Professor Zelinsky said.

"We know young people on the Central Coast want more opportunities to study at university without leaving the region, and we know that businesses need qualified staff to help them thrive. Our new campus in the heart of Gosford will meet both of those needs.

"Today's announcement is part of a three-way collaboration between the University of Newcastle, the Federal Government and the NSW Government. In 2019, the Federal Government injected \$18 million into the project – which the University has committed to at least matching. Design work will now commence.

"We expect to see more than 1000 students studying at the Gosford campus once complete, with this figure growing to around 3000 students located in Gosford over the next decade.

"We'll offer courses to support the development of a health, innovation and education campus and will work with business and industry in the area to identify skill needs and gaps, and to provide work integrated learning opportunities for students.

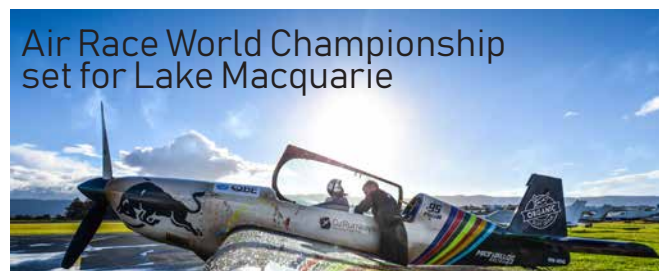
"We are proud to have been on the Central Coast for more than 30 years at our Ourimbah Campus, educating more than 40,000 students during that time. Today marks the next stage of our partnership with the people of the Central Coast – a new campus that demonstrates a commitment to our young people and assurance that they will be able to complete their university study without leaving the region.

Professor Zelinsky thanked the NSW and Federal Governments for their ongoing support of education and the people of the Central Coast region.

"In partnership, we see an incredible opportunity for people on the Central Coast that will activate the Central Coast Education and Employment Precinct and further revitalise the Gosford CBD.

"Our vision for this campus is underpinned by our University's values and we are excited by the opportunities it will create to increase educational participation rates, generate new jobs, support emerging industries, develop the health services workforce, and foster innovation and entrepreneurship.

"We look forward to working with business – the Chamber of Commerce and Business NSW – our partners the Local Health District, with TAFE NSW, and with the NSW and Federal Government to open this new chapter for the Coast."



The sky over Lake Macquarie will soon be filled with some of the world's best pilots, racing at speeds of over 400km/h, and demonstrating serious precision flying thanks to the NSW Government's Regional Events Acceleration Fund.

Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter Taylor Martin said \$2.5 million in funding would allow the Air Race World Championship to host the high-octane aviation event in the Lake Macquarie region, putting the area on the international stage.

"This will be a fantastic event and a great opportunity for locals to get out and see some of the best pilots in the world compete against the clock racing through inflatable airgates at more than 400 kilometres per hour," Mr Martin said.

"One of those pilots is the Lake Macquarie local and reigning world champion Matt Hall who will be competing in front of a home crowd.

"The Air Race series has held 94 races in 21 countries attracting more than 24 million viewers, and the Lake Macquarie event is expected to attract thousands of spectators and contribute more than \$8 million into the local economy.

"The event will also feature world-class entertainment, with live open-air concerts from high profile musicians and performers."

The Air Race World Championship will be held in Lake Macquarie from 18 – 20 November 2022.

The \$40 million Regional Events Acceleration Fund is part of the \$2 billion Regional Growth Fund, designed to support growing regional centres, activate local economies and improve services and community infrastructure for regional communities.

Applications for Round Two of the Regional Events Acceleration Fund are now open and close 5 pm Tuesday, October 4, 2022.

**For further information visit [www.nsw.gov.au/REAFund](http://www.nsw.gov.au/REAFund)**





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HUNTER MANUFACTURING AWARDS

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Showcasing organisations small and large, the Awards highlight excellence across innovation, product design, technology, emerging talent and more. The Hunter Manufacturing Awards inspire and encourage the region to secure its place as Australia's leading manufacturing hub.

Hurry! Don't miss the opportunity to be a part of the 2022 Hunter Manufacturing Awards. Visit [www.hma.org.au](http://www.hma.org.au) or call **0438 242 899** to find out more.

## REGISTRATION AND NOMINATIONS

Opens 4 May 2022

## APPLICATION PERIOD

Closes 19 Aug 2022

## AWARDS NIGHT

Friday 28 Oct 2022

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### TANTRUM YOUTH ARTS

Tantrum Youth Arts has announced their new Creative Director, **Penelope 'Nel' Kentish**. Nel first joined the company as an intern in 2009. She went on to co-found the award-winning art company Big One Little One and to create and tour immersive performance across the country. For the past nine years Nel has been based in Bathurst, where she founded a youth theatre company, worked as a sessional academic and engaged with community as a theatre maker and teaching artist.



### MONICA CLARE RECRUITMENT

Monica Clare Recruitment recently welcomed **Jillian Heggart** to the team. Jillian brings 20+ years of experience to her role as Recruitment Consultant, working in sales, project management, operations, and property development. She is looking forward to applying her property experience to continue to build MCR's construction recruitment desk.



### THE MUTUAL BANK

**Steve Meyn** has been elected as the 11th Chair of the Mutual Bank following the retirement of long standing Chair Trevor Robinson. Born and bred in Maitland where he still lives, Steve brings a wealth of knowledge to the role with more than 33 years' experience as an accountant and business adviser, developing specific expertise in the field of, business, governance, IT and strategic planning. He is currently the Chair of PKF Australia, one of Australia's leading business advisory, accounting and assurance providers.



### NEWCASTLE AIRPORT

**Marcus Polites** has joined Newcastle Airport as Business Development and Leasing Manager. He has extensive specialist experience as Retail Leasing Director in South Australia's and Queensland's premier retail precincts, shopping centres and commercial development projects. Marcus is responsible for fostering mutually beneficial relationships with business leaders across the defence, innovation and aerospace sectors as part of the growth of Astra Aerolab.



### NEWCASTLE AIRPORT

**Andrew Warrender IAP** is the new Commercial Development Manager at Newcastle Airport. Andrew is an award-winning Airport Commercial Leader and the recipient of the 2018 Airports Council International Young Executive of the Year. Andrew brings knowledge from a variety of positions within airport operations, retail plus the property and commercial teams at Edinburgh, Darwin and Cairns Airports. In his new role, Andrew will focus on commercial opportunities as part of the terminal redevelopment works.



### MONICA CLARE RECRUITMENT

Monica Clare Recruitment has added **Rachael Findley** to the team as Recruitment Consultant. Rachael has nine years specialist recruitment experience in accounting and finance and an additional 10 in HR. She is pleased to continue to provide opportunities to her vast network, specialising in finance recruitment at MCR.

## 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.





## Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle launches next chapter of growth

Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle is back in Hunter Street, Newcastle and will be led by Cody Bice and Brad Wallace.

The real estate duo will lead Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle on its next phase of expansion, including ramping up in commercial sales and leasing team in rapid fashion.

"Raine & Horne Commercial is part of the fabric of commercial property markets in Newcastle, and it's exciting Brad and Cody will lead the next chapter of our brand's expansion in Newcastle," said Angus Raine, Executive Chairman, Raine & Horne Group.

"With so many major businesses and SMEs from Sydney seeking to move to NSW's second capital, their knowledge of the Raine & Horne Commercial brand will make the shift to Newcastle far more seamless for them.

"Brad has more than a decade of commercial sales and leasing real estate experience following a stint in business broking, and Cody's been in property management since 2015 and together, they know the Newcastle commercial market like the back of their hands."

Before launching Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle, Cody Bice and Brad Wallace worked as part of the team at Raine & Horne's offices at New Lambton, Wallsend and Mayfield, co-owned by Colin Bice, Tony Tolazzi and Craig Fennings. Colin, Tony and Craig are co-owners of Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle.

Brad Wallace said, "Raine & Horne Commercial will not only deliver commercial property sales, leasing and property management but will also provide business sales services to the city's small business owners.

"Business broking and commercial property services are all intertwined as small business owners are usually part of these transactions," he said.



"We are one of the only agencies in Newcastle that can sell businesses, such as cafes and restaurants, as well as the commercial properties where they operate. We will also sell freehold businesses and buildings."

He continued, "We will also keep growing this service combination through the Raine & Horne Commercial brand and with the support of our Group's systems and technology, which we believe is second to none."

Brad Wallace said the timing of the Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle move was impeccable. He noted, the commercial property market in Newcastle will benefit from developing the CBD and the light rail, while there are plans to start livening up the Hunter Street precinct soon.

"We've got our high-rise residential apartments popping out of the ground, 13, 14, 15, 20-storeys high and had hundreds of millions of dollars pumped into the Newcastle economy in the last five years.

"Consequently, there's a lot of major national organisations looking to move their head offices to Newcastle, due to their employees wanting to get out of the major cities yet still have all the amenities associated with big city living."

## FOR SALE BY AUCTION

10.30AM, WEDNESDAY 25TH MAY 2022

**DOWLING**  
COMMERCIAL

### COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT IN HONEYSUCKLE

Lot 5/ 14 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle



National engineering firm on 2 x 2 year Lease. Modern ground floor strata office of 176m<sup>2</sup> (approx) plus 4 undercover secure car parks. Net annual income as at 1st May 2022 of \$61,800 (approx). Potential for owner/ occupier to benefit from this prime location in the future or the investor to realise on future rental upside.

### STRATA INDUSTRIAL UNIT

Lot 44/ 8 Murray Dwyer Circuit, Mayfield West



Very modern unit of 71m<sup>2</sup> (approx) inclusive of 20m<sup>2</sup> (approx) mezzanine plus 2 car spaces. Comprises large remote controlled roller door, 6m high at the eaves & internal toilet. Secure & gated complex in handy location with easy access to all major rds. Offered with vacant possession making it suitable to both owner/occupier & investor.

### INVESTMENT IN JUNCTION VILLAGE

Lot 8 (Shop 9)/ 10-16 Kenrick Street, The Junction



Well established newsagency on 5 x 5 year Lease. Strata shop of 134m<sup>2</sup> (approx) with new shopfront recently installed, situated in popular and sought after location. Has been used as a newsagency since the Centre was built approximately 40 years ago. Free onsite parking for customers. High traffic flow and exposure. Current net annual income of \$63,654 approx.

### A PORT STEPHENS RURAL GEM

3 Fairlands Road, Medowie



Land area of 5.3 ha (approx), zoned RU2 Rural Landscape. Improvements comprise a previously renovated 3 bedroom home (currently rented to 11.12.22), 6 fully fenced paddocks, 4 horse stables, horse walker, storage shed & underground bore. Rezoning and subdivision potential STCA for the developer. Also suitable to horse owners and trainers or home owners looking for acreage.

Contact: DAVID ROGERS 02 4969 8000 | admin@dowlingcommercial.com.au

**WWW.DOWLINGCOMMERCIAL.COM.AU**

## The great sell off continues

**Steve Dick**  
**Movable**

In the shadow of Elon Musk's private acquisition of Twitter and the lack of oversight that it creates, Australia has two converging events that pose a similar conundrum. They are high wealth private equity trusts and superannuation funds acquiring public assets.

In 1992 Paul Keating's legacy to the Labor movement was the establishment of compulsory superannuation, providing the ACTU with control of industry-based super funds. It became the most lucrative club in town. Once appointed to the board or upper echelon of management, you were in a business with unstoppable expanding wealth.

Then began the great government sale of public assets such as Qantas, Telstra, the Commonwealth and State Banks. This sell-off included just about anything that stood still, whether poles and wires, air and seaports, and roads in the cash grab, now entering a more subtle yet potentially devastating phase.

An interesting article by News Limited's Janet Albrechtsen brings these two events together, exploring the risks posed by "Unregulated private [investors] taking over public assets". The Albrechtsen piece exposed the potential decline of the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) or its influence on the top end of town with the growing strength of Private Equity Trusts and Superannuation Funds. The article focused on trusts and superannuation fund's acquisitions of assets that were once subject to the governance standards provided by the ASX.

### The ASX, as a quasi-regulator

A listing on the ASX provides checks and balances for the investors, with the company's top echelon, the directors, and

senior executives, forced to face shareholders annually and explain the company's performance and direction.

Trusts and superannuation funds have no such oversight. What happens when the asset or company is part of our nation's critical infrastructure, such as a seaport, airport, electricity grid, road system, telecommunications, gas, water, bank, you name it? when an asset is acquired by a trust or superannuation fund, whom do we complain to when we have an issue?

The hegemony of the trusts and super funds may only be a quiet ripple presently. However, as with some ripples, they can turn into waves that may ultimately change our financial landscape. We can swap governments, but we have no say over who is directing our superannuation funds or maintaining the assets critical to our society. Democracy, in this sense, is a form of oversight.

### Buying a house as a professional service

The following views will assuredly anger some of my real estate brethren. With that spoiler alert out of the way, real estate agents must undertake hours of Compulsory Professional Development (CPD) every year. However, is the industry a professional service like accounting or financial planning? Real estate agents came in equal last in the latest public poll of trusted professions. Why is the industry performing so poorly? I feel there are several reasons.

- 1. Buying ranges** – One of my pet hates. If the industry were professional, it would set a price. Then let the market decide whether it is right or wrong. I don't know how many open houses I have attended where my children have been scoffed at by the real estate agent for offering a price within the range. Only to be told, "We are expecting offers above that range".
- 2. List Price sales** – a novel concept but fair. The property is listed at a price for sale. That is until you involve a real estate agent. They say, "Thanks for your full-price offer, but it's only day one. We want to open the house on the weekend to see if we can get more". What crap is this!



## YOUR PARTNER IN COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

Four Walls Commercial is a boutique Commercial Property Agency specialising in the Sale, Lease and Management of Commercial, Retail and Industrial buildings.

Independently owned and operated, Four Walls Commercial has locations both in Newcastle and East Maitland. Our agency provides specialist advice in all aspects of Commercial property to a wide range of clients from individual property owners and investors to larger corporate and institutional owners.

As an independent agency Four Walls Commercial and its staff have worked tirelessly to establish and build key relationships with a large number of developers, investors and other business professionals active in the commercial property market. It is with these relationships, together with our professionalism and providing our clients with knowledge and advice, that our agency has continued to grow with new business through a constant referral base from our satisfied customers.



**Bobby Suminoski**  
Director/Principal

T: (02) 49 100 111  
M: 0403 623 560  
E: [bobby@fourwallscommercial.com](mailto:bobby@fourwallscommercial.com)

Over 27 Years experience in the Newcastle Commercial Property Market



**3. A friendly auction** – More rubbish! There is no such thing – they are intense, don't kid yourself. Whether you are buying or selling, the emotions are running high. Yes, there are costs involved for buyers and the owners should be forced to provide some of the basic reports to assist buyers. However, auctions are the only fair way to determine the market price. So, until the real estate industry tidies up these shenanigans, I'm afraid the industry will be languishing on the bottom rungs of perceived professionalism.

At Movable, transparency is central to the way we operate. We have access to Openn Negotiation, a transparent method of sale that allows all buyers and sellers to see in real-time all the bids. Buyers can then decide whether they wish to bid from wherever they have internet access. Also, at Movable, we are always happy to share with buyers the comparable properties we have used in making our estimates when putting the property on the market.

**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.

## National recognition for Leah Jay

Following on from their success last year, Leah Jay has won the major property management award at the industry's most prestigious National awards.

In what was a fiercely competitive category, with finalists from across Australia, Leah Jay has taken out the highly coveted title of Property Management Team of the Year.

Presented by the Real Estate Institute of Australia (REIA) the National Awards for Excellence are the most respected industry awards across Australia and recognise the best, bravest and brightest work across the industry.

"It's impossible to overstate how significant it is to be named as Australia's top Property Management Team. It recognises our commitment and team focus to redefining property management each and every day," Cassandra Lantry, General Manager said.

As well as a win, Leah Jay had a Finalist at the awards. Leasing & Inspection Unit Manager Rebecca Eveleigh was nominated for the Operational Support category. Rebecca has been with Leah Jay for 6 years and is the highly valued leader of the Leasing team.

Leah Jay has done the Hunter region proud at the state level, with 11 wins and 29 finalists over the past 24 years, making Leah Jay the most awarded property management agency in NSW.



## MOVABLE

**SALE**



**1/215 Pacific Highway, Charlestown 141sqm\***  
Office or retail use and comes with (4) secure car parks.  
Sale \$590,000 + GST **JASON 0425 302 778**

**SALE**



**201/215 Pacific Highway, Charlestown 591sqm\***  
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\$3,100,000 As Going Concern **ALAN 0474 744 422**

**LEASE**



**7/850 Hunter Street, Newcastle West 138sqm\***  
Adjacent to the Interchange. A very tidy first-floor office.  
Lease \$55,220pa + OGs + GST **STEVE 0425 302 771**

**LEASE**



**2/385 High Street, Maitland 250-1,694sqm\***  
Retail or office space, located at the start of 'The Levee' mall.  
Lease From \$31,500pa + OGs + GST **PAUL 0425 302 772**

**LEASE**



**Gr/805 Hunter Street, Newcastle West 118sqm\***  
High exposure, retail or office, close to transport interchange.  
Lease \$28,000pa Gross + GST **JOSH 0425 302 773**

**movable.com.au**

\*Approximate



Jaimie Abbott  
Credit: Lee Illfield Photography

*Did you know that speaking is one of the highest paying professions in the world?*

But it takes a lot for some of us to get into public speaking, especially the confidence to stand in front of people to share your thoughts and experience.

With over twenty years in the media, PR and professional speaking industry, Jaimie Abbott has worked with entrepreneurs, industry experts and coaches to help them get their name out there in the lucrative world of professional speaking.

Jaimie has now developed a new online course to teach industry experts how to become a highly paid speaker.

Doors to the Paid to Speak course will open next month, and the course is designed to help you build your speakers profile, put together engaging and valuable keynote speeches, and give you the templates and contacts to get your name out there.

In this course, you'll have access to Jaimie live, where she'll be taking you through the steps to ensure you're ready to land that first speaking gig ASAP.

Jaimie Abbott said if entrepreneurs want an extra bit of exposure added to their incredible work, they should consider speaking as a career.

"This exposure means that you get to sit at the table of other professionals and build your portfolio as an expert," Jaimie said.

"The more respect you gain through your professional network as a paid speaker, the higher you can charge for every keynote presentation."

The amount you get paid as a speaker in Australia depends on many factors, including the duration, location, how much value you bring to the table, and the type of event.

"If you're a professional speaker who knows how to pull a crowd and keep the audience mesmerized with your words, you would be charging a lot more," Jaimie said.

Creating speaking topics that sell is not as complicated as you may think. Jaimie said it helps if you always remembered that you're on that stage for your audience only, and that will guide you on the topic to choose.

"It's important to always provide value for your audience, promote yourself as a paid speaker by ensuring that everyone sees your relevance and experience through the information you share out there," she said.

Doors to the Paid to Speak course open on Tuesday 7th June.

**To download your FREE guide on how to become a highly paid speaker go to [www.jaimieabbott.com/speakinguide](http://www.jaimieabbott.com/speakinguide)**

## Are you an Entrepreneur, Industry Expert or Coach?

### Want to learn how to become a highly paid speaker?

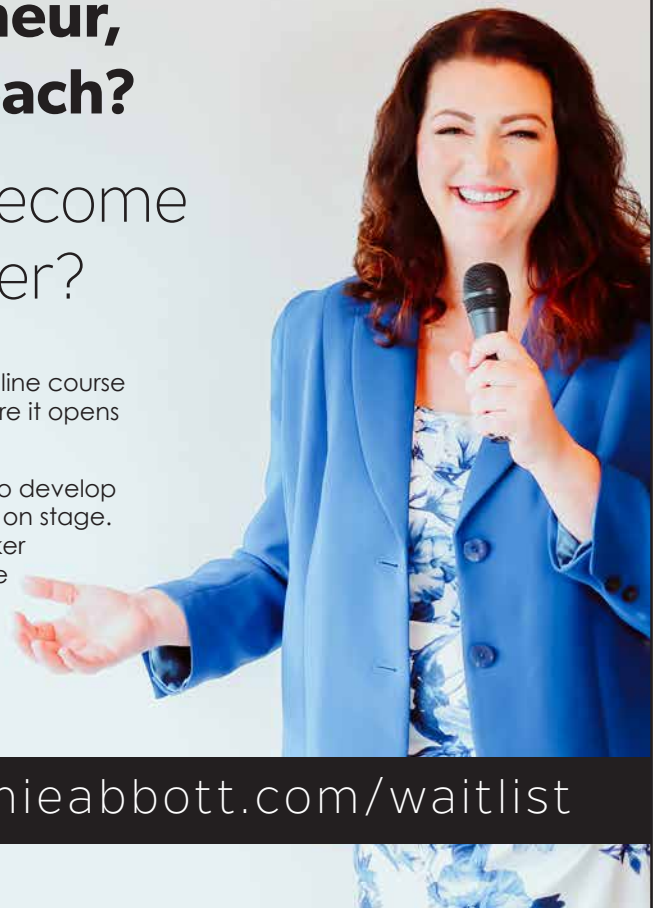
Join the waitlist now for the new **PAID TO SPEAK** online course presented by **Jaimie Abbott** and get access before it opens to the public on June 7.

You'll learn how to develop topics that sell, how to develop your speakers kit and improve your performance on stage.

Plus, you'll receive speaker bio and speaker agreement templates and access to live coaching with **Jaimie Abbott**.



[www.jaimieabbott.com/waitlist](http://www.jaimieabbott.com/waitlist)





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*collaborate*

AND LISTEN

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THAT *sh!t*



LAUGH, PLAY  
AND *inspire*

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OF THE  
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BRANDING » VIDEO CONTENT » DESIGN » WEBSITES

# THE DIGITAL FOOTPRINT OF YOUR BUSINESS

**Simon Gitsham**  
**Oddfish Media Newcastle**

*In years gone by, a good advertising campaign consist of putting an ad on TV, Radio or in the paper with everything leading to your Yellow Pages Ad.*

Today, while these traditional mediums still play a part, having a solid digital footprint is paramount. When your business listings, reviews, socials, website, e-commerce, SEM and SEO are all performing strongly we find you can spend less on the traditional formats.

## **Business listings**

Did you know that 85% of consumers search online even before setting foot in a store? This means consumers are going online, visiting websites, directories and search engines before they even come close to visiting the physical store.

So it's important to have up-to-date business listings on digital platforms such as Google, Bing, Facebook and Instagram just to name a few.

Having good digital listings will ensure customers will find you online as well as in the street.

## **Reputation and reviews**

88% of online shoppers consider reviews before making a

buying decision, so reviews can be the deciding factor with customers choosing between you and a competitor.

It's important to respond to both negative and positive reviews to build trust and keep customers coming back.

Search engines such as Google take your reputation into account when ranking your business in search results, so the better your online reputation, the better the chances are of getting found ahead of the competition

## **Social media**

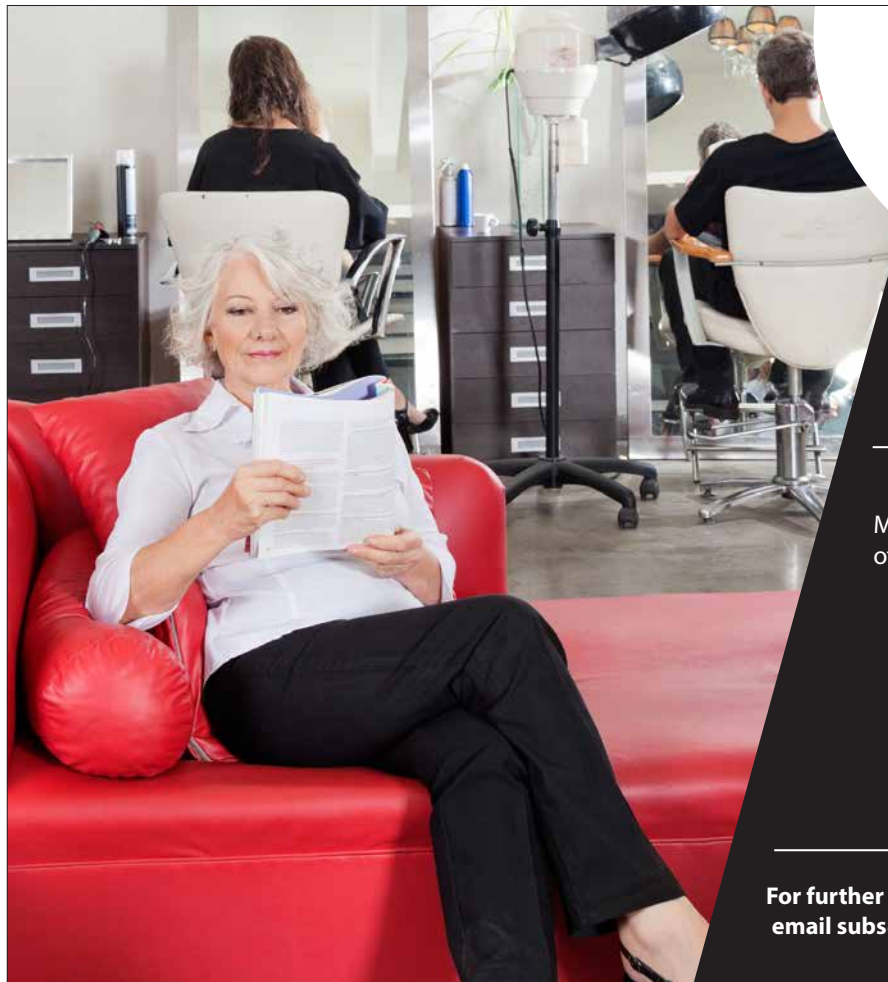
There are over 20.5 million social media users in Australia. It's where people are so you need to make sure you're there too.

People look to social media to communicate with friends, discover entertaining content and to keep up with trending topics and products

To grow your social audience, your business needs to post interesting and valuable content regularly on mutable platforms but Social moves fast, so your content needs to be timely and relevant.

## **Website**

Your website is the digital front door to your business. Google tells us you have 8 seconds to make an impact to a customer with your website, so it's important to make a good impression.



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Customers expect your site to load fast with important info and for it to look good on their phone.

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Improve customer user experience on your website such as providing the latest in product content, live support, contact forms, booking appointments and where possible the ability to buy your products online.

### Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Customers spend more time online than they do at work every single week. Customers are online so your business needs to be too.

Potential customers are within your reach, whether they're searching Google, scrolling through Facebook, or browsing other sites around the web. With digital advertising, you can put your business in the spotlight so that those people consider you before your competitors.

Digital advertising enables you to target your customers more precisely than ever before. Advertise to customers that are searching for your products and services in only a precise area that can be broken down as small as a postcode.

### Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

As of December 2021, Google Trends revealed that Australians perform about 250,000 - 300,000 Google searches daily. It's safe to say that Google's 93% search engine market share in the country makes it a near-essential tool for Australian businesses.

Potential customers are searching online for the products or services that your business offers. With good SEO you can boost your visibility in those search results so that people find you before your competitors.

Good search rankings are important because consumers see the top results as the most trustworthy.



Google tell us that the first five listings get 70% of all clicks.

The important factors to improving SEO including, making your website mobile friendly, loads fast, provide information on your website that is relevant to your customers, ensure your Google My Business page is claimed and verified and create a blog on your page that is helpful for customers.

**For further information contact Simon Gitsham on 0434 166 773, email [sgitsham@oddfishmedia.com.au](mailto:sgitsham@oddfishmedia.com.au) or visit [www.oddfishmedia.com.au](http://www.oddfishmedia.com.au)**



**Simon Gitsham** is the Newcastle Manager of Oddfish Media. He started his media career as a Sales Executive for Telecasters 10 at Hervey Bay, QLD in 2000. He moved to Melbourne as a Sales Executive for Radio Sport 927, Mornington Racing Club and SEN 1116, which gave him great understanding of making advertising and sponsorship work for clients. In 2016 he then took up the role of Northern NSW Regional Sales Manager for the WIN Network based in Newcastle, overseeing some key advertising solutions for local, state and national clients & agencies.

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m. 0434 166 773

# FOUR TIPS FOR MARKETING YOUR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

**Maria Charlton**  
**Map Marketing**

*When I started business in 1989, I planned to focus on marketing professional practices, but the business readiness was not there, so I had to diversify. But in the last two decades I was privileged to provide marketing services to professional associations, surveyors, accountants, engineers, law firms and more.*

If you Google “Marketing Your Land Surveying Firm”, you may notice that the information provided is at least a decade old. I don’t think the methods suggested are wrong, but most are outdated.

Professional services are a performance based. So, the performance of the top management team and how it leads its staff is at least 60% important and the key to referral generation.

Nowadays professional practices can market services cost effectively by planning in four areas, websites, social media, personal communications, and brand building.

## Websites

Even a decade ago, face-to-face meetings and exchange of business cards were the first interactions new clients had with your firm. Nowadays, websites have taken over as the major way potential clients research your firm. And this makes sense as Internet penetration in Australia stands at about 88% (January 2022).

A user-friendly website needs to show in-depth knowledge of your target audiences and provide reasons why they should use your firm and not your close competitors. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) can help to target the right visitors to your site. Invest in high quality web design and writing that align with your brand. Include a simple, clear web navigation that encourages exploration and enquiry generation. You can turn your website into a lead-generating machine through social media promotion.

## Social media

In January 2021, 20.5 million Australians, were active users of social media. About 79.9% of the Australian population have social media accounts. YouTube and Facebook are the most popular Australian social media platforms. The premier Business to Business (B2B) social media site, LinkedIn captures 31% of the population over the age 13 years. Through LinkedIn, you can connect with other business professionals, promote your business, and develop your firm as an opinion leader.

These social media avenues present an opportunity for you to provide accurate and interesting information about your services. Inform your followers on your recent projects, the technology you use to complete projects, your adoption of new client beneficial technology, laws and regulations that affect specialty, and links to expert articles and blogs. The general rules of social media posting are post interesting content, deal with one topic per post, use simple communication and always attach an image.

## Personal communications

Professional services are performance-based service and the way each service provider communicates with clients, influencers



and suppliers is integral to marketing success. This includes meetings and creating mutual partnerships with related and referring professionals. Be prepared to explain how your services differ from your competitors, that may include your specialist expertise and advice, use of technology, the simplicity of your reports or the timeliness of your services. You may also like to consider effective participation in networks and trade shows.

## Branding

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other sellers. Branding is the practical and emotional ways that clients, potential clients, and influencers distinguish your firm from its competitors. It incorporates physical features and the feelings that clients have or develop towards your practice. These cues are triggered by your name, logo, visual identity, personal presentation, and the messages communicated.

Your brand objective is to attract and retain loyal customers and other stakeholders by delivering services that are aligned with what your firm promises. Powerful branding provides clients with a decision-making-shortcuts when they feel indecisive about how your services differ from competitors. Furthermore, a brand is an asset that impacts on a range of people including staff, clients, investors, shareholders, providers, and distributors.

**For more information contact [maria@mapmarketing.com.au](mailto:maria@mapmarketing.com.au)**



**Maria Charlton** holds a Bachelor of Commerce, Master of Business Administration and is a Fellow and Certified Practising Marketer with the Australian Marketing Institute (AMI). Maria was the first Hunter marketer to be designated as a Certified Practising Marketer with the Australian Marketing Institute.



## Cyber security expert serves up online ‘golden rules’

A TAFE NSW cyber security expert has unveiled his top five tips to protect against hackers amid fears the pandemic has left those working from home even more vulnerable to attacks.

TAFE NSW Information Technology teacher George Holt said a seismic shift towards remote work during the pandemic meant more networks were being accessed by employees on their own devices, increasing their exposure to cyber threats.

Despite many employees now returning to the workplace, the Australian Cyber Security Centre recently revealed it was still receiving reports of cyber attacks on average every eight minutes as scammers become more sophisticated in their approach.

World Password Day was held on 5 May and was dedicated to promoting safer password practices.

George Holt said the vast majority of cyber security issues could be largely prevented if workers followed these five “golden rules”.

- 1. Use complex passwords and passphrases:** “A combination of upper and lower case letters, special characters and numbers is ideal,” Mr Holt said.
- 2. Keep operating systems updated:** “Turn on auto updates on your phone, tablet or desktop. These update the latest malware threats for your device or computer to scan against.”
- 3. Tread warily with unsolicited emails:** “Abide by the premise that you can’t trust who you’re talking to online – full stop. Never click on an email if you’re unsure of the sender and don’t follow links in emails unless you’re sure of their bonafide.”
- 4. Stay informed:** “There is a huge volume of information online to keep you up to speed with cyber security threats. Follow websites or the social media of organisations like Scamwatch and the Australian Cyber Security Centre.”



### 5. Ensure malware and anti-virus is regularly updated:

“These are being constantly updated as new threats emerge so it’s critical you update them regularly.”

Mr Holt said while cyber security should be front of mind when online, it also offered a gilt-edged career opportunity.

A recent study by RMIT University found Australia was in the grip of a cyber security skills shortage, with a predicted 18,000 more cyber security professionals needed by 2026 to meet demand.

“Cyber security equals job security and the prospects for employment are excellent,” Mr Holt said.

“Our department is getting phone calls weekly from local employers looking to fill positions.”

## Viatek Technology achieves critical information security and quality management certifications

Viatek Technology, a provider of information technology and communications business solutions, has announced that it has achieved ISO/IEC 27001:2013 (Information Security) and ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management) certifications demonstrating the company’s compliance with these internationally recognised standards.

The certifications confirm the company adheres to the latest Information Security Management System for the data, information systems and computer networks used by Viatek and/or managed by Viatek on behalf of its customers.

In addition, Viatek has demonstrated through ISO 9001:2015 its capacity to improve quality across its services in a consistent and reliable manner across all aspects of its business and in turn support its drive for optimising customer satisfaction and loyalty, employee attraction and retention, quality product and service, and risk compliance.

William Gibb, Director of Viatek Technology, said, “These achievements highlight the importance that we at Viatek place on information security resilience and quality of service at a time when customers are faced with an ever-increasing plethora of cybersecurity risks and our customers in industries such as healthcare, finance and financial services face more robust compliance regulations.

“We believe that it is critically important for our customers and when attracting new customers to see the focus and value that Viatek is investing in Information Security and Quality management, as demonstrated by becoming certified in these international best practices standards.”

ISO/IEC 27001:2013 is the latest in the internationally recognised ISO/IEC 27000 series of protocols that comprise information security standards published jointly by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) to provide best practice recommendations on information security management, risk mitigation and improved control environments within the context of an overall Information Security Management System (ISMS).

With its ISO/IEC 27001 certification, Viatek is only one of a few metro and regional I.T. Managed Service providers which has gone beyond the requirements of ISO/IEC 27001 to ensure its information security practices are best-of-breed.

ISO/IEC 27001 expands on the ISO/IEC 27000 series of standards, providing guidelines for information management security controls applicable to and specific to managing risks to information security effectively.

“We recognise that as an organisation in order to retain our team and recruit new employees we need to provide an environment that has the quality management rigour to drives efficiencies and support a continual improvement framework to propel internal and external customer satisfaction,” said Gibb.

“Ultimately, we are a service industry built around our people, and happy team members that work in an environment with increased efficiency, fewer errors and less wasted time will provide professional, consistent, and continually improving service each day to our customers.”

## Upskilling workers in digital technologies

Workers at a Central Coast manufacturing business are being equipped with the most up-to-date digital skills to ensure they remain competitive in their industry.

Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology and Minister for Skills and Training Alister Henskens said Chamberlain Group was one of the first businesses to sign up to the NSW Government's Driving Digital Skills Pilot Program.

"There is growing need for workers to develop greater digital skills so they can effectively work alongside new and emerging technology and this program is one of the ways we are responding to this need," Mr Henskens said.

"Chamberlain Group is a great example of how advanced manufacturing businesses can benefit from workforce development initiatives that make our state an attractive place for industries to grow, invest and create jobs."

Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast Adam Crouch said the program consists of a series of pilots that deliver a holistic approach to businesses' adoption of advanced technologies.

"The program is skilling people in areas such as project life-cycle management processes, computer-aided design and manufacturing, coaching and mentoring, which will boost our local economy and drive jobs for people on the Central Coast," Mr Crouch said.

Head of Operations Oceania at Chamberlain Group Graeme Sheekey said the program had enabled the company, which manufactures commercial garage door openers and access devices, to gain valuable insights into varying digital technologies.

"Since starting the journey, we can see how digital tools such as interconnectivity and data-led process improvement are changing the way we work," Mr Sheekey said.

"Having a greater emphasis on data in our operations has enabled better upskilling, greater digital literacy and knowledge-sharing outcomes for our staff and business partners. The program is enabling us to embed future-oriented practices."

## Sharp Office brings innovative Australian-made technology to the Hunter

Sharp Office has expanded its technology line with a new Australian-designed product, the HDi Interactive Smartboard.

The interactive display, manufactured by Australian-owned company Technology Core, is empowering local businesses and organisations to communicate and collaborate in new ways.

Sharp Office has recognised the quiet revolution happening in the Hunter Region, where businesses and organisations across professional services, mining, manufacturing, technology, transport, and education, are looking at ways to innovate and create an environment with a competitive edge.

Director of Office Technology David Potter said "The reason that we chose this product is we saw that Technology Core was clearly focussed on delivering best of breed technology in this space to the market and offered expert advice and support on the technology they provided.

"Another key to our decision was around the commitment of providing operator training at the time of installation as well as ongoing user training," added Mr Potter.

Local businesses looking to diversify and innovate know that a key driving factor to success is collaboration. Growth is not likely to occur without innovation. And innovation cannot be achieved without collaboration.

The HDi Meeting Hub, or interactive display, is a high-quality purpose-built display used for meetings, presentations, strategy and planning sessions, workshops, training, as well as commercial showrooms and retail spaces.

It can be used to present documents, information, and videos to diverse groups. It empowers face-to-face, hybrid and remote connection, in both business environments and classrooms, providing an immersive and personalised experience.

Interactive displays enable the communication of content in a completely unique way, something which could be extremely beneficial to those who have found traditional forms of presentation or collaboration particularly disengaging.

A key feature of the HDi Interactive Display is the capability to connect multiple devices with different operating systems. Apple laptops, iPhones, iPads, and Android devices can all connect wirelessly. No cables are required.

While an interactive screen might look like a large television, the display is driven by a computer. It allows users to wirelessly connect their device, access their computer files, and operate applications such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom as well as



specialised applications used across a variety of industries. It enables interaction in an engaging, flexible, and harmonious way – an empowering way to create content in high definition, run strategy sessions, and energise teamwork.

Advances in technology and changes in business infrastructure have put greater emphasis on teamwork in workplaces. Employees need to be able to think critically and creatively, and they need to be able to do this as a team using modern tools.

Technology holds a significant place in enabling businesses to create an environment that supports stronger connections. An environment that encourages richer communications, document sharing, and co-creation.

Employee engagement can be worth a lot to an organisation's income and the use of digital tools could be a straightforward way to boost business performance. Employees who operate in an environment with good access to digital technology may feel more supported, valued, and empowered to succeed.

Digital collaboration tools are an essential aspect of creating this environment, a culture that promotes connection and strives for innovation. Tools like the HDi Meeting Hub can empower employees to communicate effectively and efficiently, which may contribute to economic growth and benefit employees' happiness and engagement at work.

The key is not in just communication but in the effective and efficient connection across teams. Leveraging tools that promote such a culture could lead employees (and business leaders) to feel empowered, resulting in individuals who follow-up, drive accountability, and measure impact.



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## Software-related activities and the Research and Development Tax Incentive

The Research and Development (R&D) Tax Incentive has released its latest guidance product Software-related activities and the Research and Development Tax Incentive. The release of this product is intended to assist businesses conducting eligible software-related research and development (R&D) activities in accessing program benefits.

As Australia's software sector has continued to evolve over time, so has the need to provide them with updated guidance that reflects modern and commonplace software activities. Software-related R&D has always been a major part of the R&D Tax Incentive program. In recent years, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) projects have comprised more than 40 per cent of program registrations (2018-19 financial year).

The refreshed guidance was developed in consultation with stakeholders that have a deep understanding of the software development sector. A draft of the guide was released for public comment in May 2021, followed by workshops involving the

Tech Council of Australia and the Australian Taxation Office, the program's joint administrator.

Key updates to the guidance include:

- Adding additional software-specific R&D examples
- A case study illustrating the self-assessment process and the registration form in the customer portal
- Updating guidance regarding the software exclusion, aligning it with all other exclusions listed in subsection 355-25(2) of the ITAA 1997
- Providing links to supporting resources.
- The release of this guidance product marks the first of several modules planned to help businesses understand the eligibility of their software-related R&D activities. Future modules will cover record-keeping guidance in software-development, sector-specific case studies, exploration of prominent classes of software-related R&D activities and video content designed to support applicant registrations.

## The need for (website) speed

The importance of website speed is often overlooked or taken for granted by many business owners. Often, people assume that if their site 'seems' fast enough, it's good enough. However, this is not always the case as a slower website can frustrate website visitors, decrease conversion rates and even result in your website ranking lower in search engine results.

As part of the Federal Government's Digital Solutions program, which provides free digital support for small businesses, the Hunter Region Business Hub (HUB) helps hundreds of businesses every year to perform a Digital Health Check on their website. Digital Business Advisor Troy White says, one of the website checks we complete is a speed analysis and most don't meet Google's minimum thresholds for Core Web Vitals. Troy says, "rather than being a cause for concern, this is a great opportunity for local businesses to jump ahead of their competition, as many websites only need relatively simple tweaks or improvements".

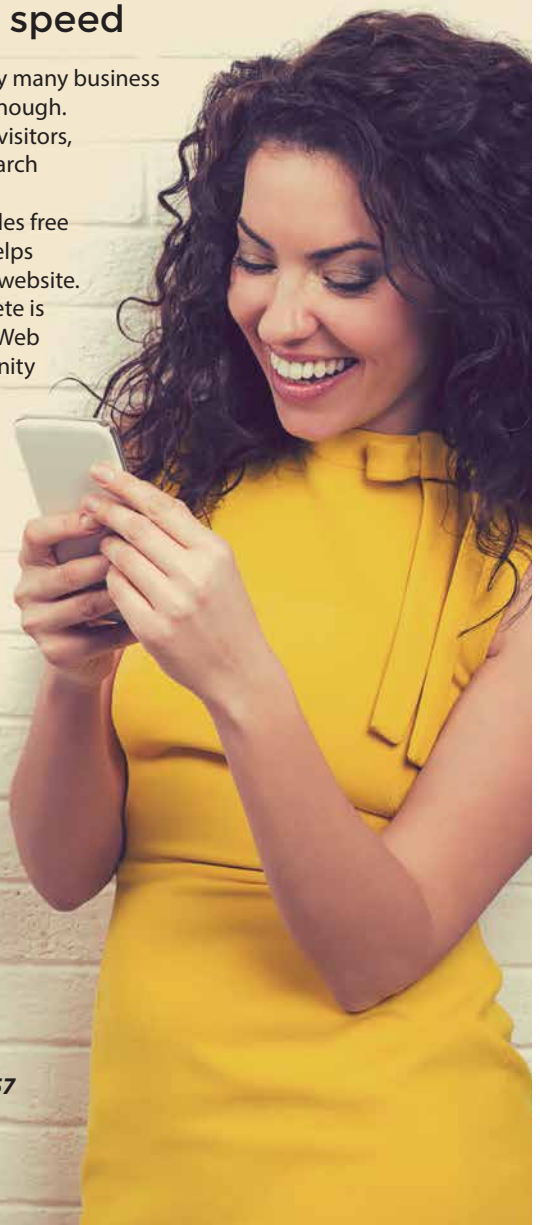
Search engines are looking for websites with quality, unique content that provide an excellent user experience and, with the majority of people using a search engine to find products and services online, it's important your website is optimised for search engines if you want customers to find you.

When a web site takes too long to load, visitors can grow impatient and leave, which makes loading speed an important factor in the success of any website. Causes of slow websites can be many different factors, including server performance, page size, images, animations, web browser plugins, and more. If you have a product or service which has increased complexity or large file sizes (such as photographs or videos), it is more important than ever to make sure the website loads quickly.

As we continue to become more mobile and more reliant on digital technologies, website loading times become one of the more important aspects of web design and development. Nowadays, it's critical that business owners consider website speed, particularly with respect to mobile usability, when speaking with their website designer. In competitive markets, every millisecond counts, and ensuring your website is 'speedy' in the planning stages is often easier than having to make major changes later on.

With the support of the Federal Government's Digital Solutions program, eligible small businesses can access support from the HUB's Digital Business Advisors free of charge.

**To book your free consultation, speak with the HUB team on (02) 4936 2557 or visit [www.digitalsolutions.org.au](http://www.digitalsolutions.org.au).**





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■ An ant, a spider and a centipede are throwing a party.  
The ant realises that they are running low on beer. He offers to head out to buy some more beers.

The centipede says, "No, let me do it. You'd take too long. I have a lot more legs than you - I can do it faster!"

The bugs agree. 10 minutes pass... then 20 minutes, then 30, then more.

The spider asks, "What's taking him so long?"

The ant decides to head out to investigate. He opens the front door and sees the centipede outside. The ant asks, "Hey man, what's taking you so long?"

The centipede replies, "I'm still putting on my shoes."

■ I was at the airport today and saw a man collapse on the luggage carousel.

He slowly came around.

■ When I was little, a strange man stepped out of a time machine and punched me for no reason!

So I've worked all my life to invent a time machine of my own, and I'm going back to when he was little and we'll see how he likes the taste of his own medicine.

■ What's it called when you keep doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results?

Voting.

■ I'm driving with this guy, and he runs right through a stop sign. So I say, "Hey, that was a stop sign."

And he says, "I drive like my brother!"

A few blocks later, he plows right through a red light.

I say, "You just ran a red light."

And he says, "I drive like my brother!"

So now we're coming up on a green light, and he slows down.

I'm confused, so I say, "It's green; why are you slowing down?"

He says, "My brother might be coming."

■ I used to be against organ transplants.

But then I had a change of heart.

■ During a lesson about adjectives, my friend, an elementary school teacher, asked her class to describe their mothers. One boy described his mother's hair as auburn.

Impressed by his sophisticated word choice, my friend asked, "How do you know her hair colour is auburn?"

Her student replied, "Because that's what it says on the box."

■ "Has your son decided what he wants to be when he grows up?" I asked my friend.

"He wants to be a garbageman," he replied.

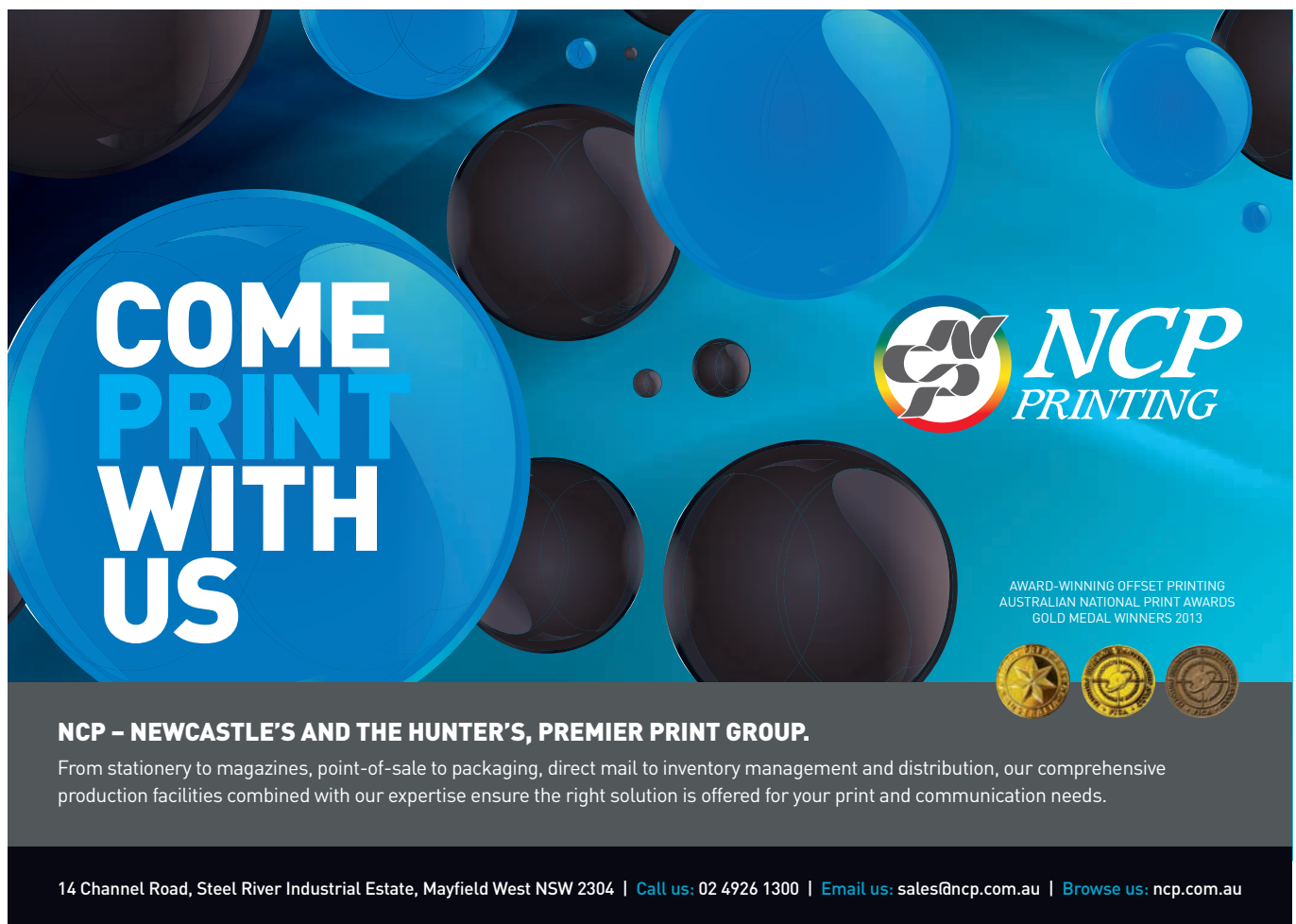
"That's an unusual ambition to have at such a young age."

"Not really. He thinks that garbagemen work only on Tuesdays."

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Once a new technology rolls over you, if you're not part of the steamroller, you're part of the road."

- Stewart Brand



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