

20TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Hunter Business Review

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SALES & MARKETING

BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY

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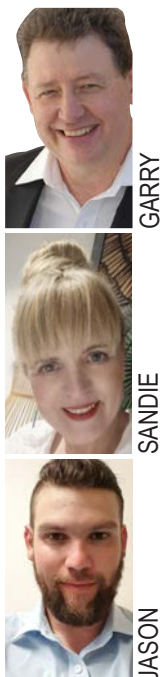
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The advertisement features a background image of a shipping yard with a large stack of colorful containers (red, blue, green) and a line of white trucks. The Scorpion International logo, which includes a globe icon and the text 'SCORPION INTERNATIONAL', is positioned in the upper right. A red curved banner at the bottom right contains the text 'SUPPORTING THE Hunter Business Supply Chain since 1984'.

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From the Editor



The announcement in April by the Federal Government of its Future Made in Australia Act is welcome news but is likely to receive a luke warm reception by many manufacturers.

Some of the words sound good but the proof will be in the finer details and long-term support for this vital sector of our economy.

The importance of manufacturing should not be underestimated.

A strong manufacturing sector is an important component for continued growth of the Australian economy.

It remains a significant wealth creator, a major employer, an excellent skills trainer and an important exporter and import replacer. Modern manufacturing is also opening up new opportunities, allowing local manufacturers to be more globally competitive, even with countries with much lower wage costs.

It also has one of the highest economic multiplier factor, meaning the true contribution to the economy is much higher than just the direct contribution.

Events in the last few years have also highlighted Australia's dependence on international supply chains and the risk that these are impacted by economic or political decisions made overseas and upheavals in other countries. From Covid to wars in Ukraine and the Middle East and many other potential flashpoints, the world feels more unsettled today than it has in decades. A strong and diverse manufacturing base in Australia helps the nation to be more self-reliant and less exposed to these impacts that we have little control over.

To truly support local manufacturing, the Government needs to listen carefully to industry and address a whole range of issues, including politically sensitive areas such as workplace relations, apprenticeships and training, and tax reform.

The Prime Minister did identify the need to build cooperative partnerships and it is hoped that this will be the case and that the Government will listen even if it involves something they may not want to hear.

It also must have the will to keep supporting manufacturing when the major results will take time, more than just the remainder of the electoral cycle.

As said earlier, the announcement is welcome but we will have to wait and see whether the actions truly match the rhetoric.

For the sake of Australia's economic prosperity, we all hope that it is.

Garry Hardie
Editor and Publisher

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\$500 million contract to advance integrated air and missile defence capability

Lockheed Martin Australia has signed a landmark \$500 million contract with the Department of Defence to build Australia's future Joint Air Battle Management System under project - AIR6500 Phase 1 (AIR6500-1). This system will provide Defence with an advanced integrated air and missile defence capability, using next-gen technologies, to combat high-speed threats.

Stewarded by Defence and Lockheed Martin Australia, AIR6500-1 will be built in Australia by Australians. A significant majority of the AIR6500-1 program workshare will be allocated across Australian industry to develop and deliver this strategic, national endeavour.

Under AIR6500-1, an eight-year strategic partnership will generate important economic benefits, including over 230 new jobs across Adelaide, Williamstown and Canberra. Career opportunities include high value STEM roles such as engineering, software development, cyber, and project management.

A further 300 in-direct jobs will be created in Australia's air and missile defence supply chain and provide opportunities for Australian industry to benefit from a global \$83 billion export market. Lockheed Martin Australia is also investing in the establishment of a National Integrated Air and Missile Defence Ecosystem to support Defence.

"We are honoured to be the Australian Defence Force's strategic partner and lead the delivery of AIR6500-1. At the core of this 21st Century Security, joint all-domain system is Australian industry," said Erika Marshall, vice president, C4ISR, Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems.

"Together with the Department of Defence, we are harnessing the ingenuity found in Australian small-to-medium enterprises,



Head of Air Defence and Space Systems Division, Air Vice-Marshal David Scheul and Chief Executive Lockheed Martin Australia and New Zealand Warren McDonald

industry primes and academia to build a transformational capability that will establish Australia's Defence Force as one of the most highly advanced in the world."

Ahead of the AIR6500-1 contract signing, Lockheed Martin Australia developed an Operator Evaluation System for the Joint Air Battle Management System. This was delivered ahead of schedule and on budget. Using this system, Defence's air battle managers can access a secure test environment to provide feedback on AIR6500-1's design and functionality. This feedback will inform future development activities.

Lockheed Martin Australia and New Zealand's Chief Executive, Warren McDonald commended Defence and Lockheed Martin Australia's AIR6500 Team on achieving this historic strategic partnership.

"AIR6500-1 will give Australia and our allies a greater level of connectivity and interoperability to counter current and future air and missile threats."

He added, "In a contested and fast-moving environment, AIR6500-1 will give decision makers more time to consider and respond to a situation – time in these circumstances is a precious commodity."



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Waratah Super Battery gets technical green light

The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has granted Generator Performance Standard (GPS) approval for the Waratah Super Battery.

This is another important milestone as the Critical State Significant Infrastructure declared project moves steadily towards completion. It marks the first such approval for such a large battery energy storage project, paving the way for other 'super batteries' in Australia's National Electricity Market.

GPS approval represents a pivotal and complex milestone for any generation project in Australia. It sets the performance standards that generators and storage projects must meet to ensure stability and reliability of the electrical grid.

Compliance with these standards helps prevent disruptions and ensures smooth integration into existing energy infrastructure.

The successful GPS approval for the Waratah Super Battery eliminates one of the most substantial technical barriers for the project, allowing it to participate in the growing energy storage market in Australia.

The project is on track to be fully operational by August 2025.



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Hunter Manufacturing Awards celebrates its 20th year

The Hunter Manufacturing Awards (HMA) proudly commemorates its 20th year in 2024, a landmark anniversary that underlines the Hunter region's integral contribution to the Australian manufacturing sector.

The recent winners from the 2023 Awards, Hi-Vis Group and Senquip, demonstrate the competitive edge and innovative spirit that are the hallmarks of manufacturing in the Hunter.

Carrington-headquartered Hi-Vis won the 2023 Manufacturer of the Year – 50 Employees or More Award, along with the Excellence in Sustainable Operations Award and the Excellence in Manufacturing Capability Award.

As a market leader in highly intelligent visual information systems (HIVIS), its products have been keeping Australians safe for more than 40 years. Hi-Vis has made significant investments in manufacturing technology and enjoys a close relationship with the University of Newcastle.

Hi-Vis Managing Director Brett Watson said the company was deeply honoured and felt very privileged to win three awards.

The other major award winner, for Manufacturer of the Year – Less than 50 Employees, was telemetry products maker Senquip. The Port Stephens-based business manufactures telemetry equipment that monitors and controls remote machinery in harsh industrial environments.

Senquip also picked up the Excellence in Product Design Award. Its patented telemetry products are highly adaptable and replace the need for bespoke solutions. Senquip sells globally with significant potential for growth in each of its international markets.

Highlighting the diversity and adaptability of the region, reusable menstrual disc maker Hey Zomi, took out the 2023 Excellence in Marketing Award. Co-founder Zoe Fehlberg said "she loved" that the awards celebrate manufacturers across all industries, including period care.

"It's so exciting at this stage of our business to be recognised as manufacturing leaders in our region," Ms Fehlberg said. "To us, this award validates our vision – to create strong innovation with the highest-quality Australian manufacturing that empowers menstruators everywhere."

Jacqui Daley, Chair of the HMA board, expressed her enthusiasm for the 20th anniversary, stating, "Twenty years is a significant milestone for the Hunter Manufacturing Awards, reflecting not just the longevity but also the progressive vision of the Hunter's manufacturing community. We have consistently witnessed our local manufacturers adapt, innovate, and excel, setting standards for the industry nationwide. As we celebrate this anniversary, we look forward to fostering even more success stories and paving the way for the next generation of manufacturing excellence."

For more information on the HMA, to submit a nomination, or to learn about sponsorship opportunities, please visit www.hma.org.au or email info@hma.org.au. Nominations close on 21 August.

The awards will take place at NEX Newcastle on Friday 18 October 2024.

Hi-Vis Group Managing Director Brett Watson receiving the 2023 Manufacturer of the Year – 50 Employees or More Award.



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Local winners of the 2024 Australian Small Business Champion Awards

Winners of the 2024 Australian Small Business Champion Awards have been crowned, with seven small business from the Hunter taking top gongs. The only recognition awards programme that celebrates the achievements and considerable economic, social and cultural contribution of today's 2.5 million small business operators from right across the country, the Awards specifically highlight the finest small businesses in the retail, services, and manufacturing industries.

This year marks the 26th consecutive year of the Australian Small Business Champion Awards and its most successful year to date, with more entries received this year than any year prior.

Announced winners at the Awards' National Presentation Evening Gala Events over two nights – 12-13 April 2024 – at Sydney's The Star, each of this year's Champions received a customised statuette trophy and certificate and gained invaluable kudos as a nationally recognised industry leader.

As revealed in a recent independent national survey commissioned by Precedent Productions, 68% of small business owners today believe that current government regulations hinder opportunities for small business more than they support it.

The survey also revealed that almost half (46%) of all Australian small business owners consider their most significant competition to come from large or medium-sized businesses, with those based in NSW and Victoria the most pressed by large or medium competitors (51%).

"This year's Awards saw more than 5,500 small business submissions from cities as well as rural, regional and suburban towns in every Australian state and territory," said Steve Loe, Awards Founder and Managing Director of Precedent Productions.

"We've been running the Champion Awards programme since 1999 and I must say, this year's submissions from the Newcastle and Hunter regions spoke volumes of the resilience of these small business operators during tough times.

"Operating a small business today requires steadfast commitment, leadership, savviness, creativity, people skills, vision, social consciousness and a spirited drive – all elements of success that our independent judging panel pinpointed as among the key reasons for their selections of this year's Champions.

"I am blown away by the growth of this programme and its intensifying spotlight on the most deserving small business operators, who valiantly serve their communities and encourage us all to strive for success with ample drive, determination and fortitude," added Mr Loe.

Hosted by popular Nine presenter and journalist Jayne Azzopardi and attended by more than 2000 small businesspeople, this year's National Presentation Gala featured star-studded entertainment fitting to the Champion Awards' biggest year in more than a quarter of a century. Dami Im, Harrison Craig, Johnny Manuel and Stefanie Jones were among the red-carpet event's headline stage acts.

The Awards were supported by Presenting Partner the Commonwealth Bank, and Major Partners Nine Ad Manager, NOVA Employment, Castaway Forecasting, Big Clean, Xclusive Business Sales and Boa.

The seven Hunter small businesses named 2024 Australian Small Business Champion Award winners (and their categories) are: Beam Bookkeeping – Newcastle (Accounting Bookkeeping Services), Creative Sensory Spaces – Hamilton (Specialised Small Business), Farrar & Sons Bakehouse – Newcastle (Bakery), Nova Team Australia – Beresfield (Business Growth Award), Hunter Plastic Surgery – Charlestown (Cosmetic Specialist), Tailored HQ – Newcastle (Interior Designer) and Lifestyle Pilates & Rehabilitation Studio – Adamstown (Yoga and Pilates Services).

Sally Farrar - Farrar and Sons Bakehouse



Steve Loe - ASBCA Founder




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Ampcontrol has been announced as one of the top 10 Most Innovative Manufacturing organisations by @AuManufacturing for its approach to innovation and the development of world first solutions to help decarbonise the mining industry.

Dedicated to leading the global movement towards net zero, Ampcontrol supports industry in its decarbonisation efforts while advancing Australian manufacturing capacity.

"Innovation is in our DNA, and to be recognised for delivering on our vision by @AuManufacturing, reinforces our drive to deliver for industry. At Ampcontrol, we have a proud history of innovation and collaboration by partnering with universities and the brightest minds in energy, to develop cutting-edge technology for customers" says Rod Henderson, Ampcontrol Managing Director & CEO.

DRIFTEX, a solution developed for the mining industry and its decarbonisation, is the world's first IECEx Group I certified Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) for underground coal mining applications. Combined with new technologies, intrinsically safe batteries, and enhanced vehicle performance, this innovative design provides a safer, healthier, and more efficient alternative to diesel-powered vehicles in underground coal mining environments.

Ampcontrol is transforming the world through collaboration and innovation to engineer complex electrical solutions. By providing complete end-to-end electrical solutions for energy, infrastructure, and resources industries, from ideation through

to design, manufacturing, service, and repair, Ampcontrol is delivering on its vision to lead the global energy revolution.

Enabled to deliver by dedicated, state-of-the-art facilities and workshops, Ampcontrol is committed to advanced equipment manufacturing and services engineered and manufactured on Australian soil.

Speaking to practices at Ampcontrol, Rod Henderson, Ampcontrol Managing Director & CEO noted "innovative culture is the foundation for our developments; it shapes the attitudes, behaviors, and practices of our people developing our groundbreaking solutions that are advancing industry".

"With continued business and workforce growth in Australia and internationally, Ampcontrol and our approach to radical thinking and challenging the status quo will continue to be at the forefront of innovative energy solutions" continued Rod Henderson, Ampcontrol Managing Director & CEO.

@AuManufacturing, with more than 50 years of shared experience in industry reporting and as a recognised and respected voice, brings to the forefront and shines a light on the leading activity in Australia's \$100 billion-a-year manufacturing sector. @AuManufacturing announced Australia's 50 Most Innovative Manufacturers for 2024 on Thursday, 18 April 2024, at Cockle Bay Wharf in Darling Harbour, Sydney NSW.

Ampcontrol received numerous awards in 2023 for its advanced Australian manufacturing of energy solutions, including being named one of Australia's Most Innovative Companies for 2023 by the Australian Financial Review (AFR). Additional Ampcontrol was a winner in the Health Excellence category at the NSW Mining HSEC Awards, and received the Health, Safety, Environment and Community (HSEC) People's Choice Award at NSW Mining Annual Parliamentary Dinner. In addition, ResTech, a collaboration between Ampcontrol and the University of Newcastle, was inducted into the Work Integrated Learning Hall of Fame at the 2023 University of Newcastle Employability Awards.



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Learning and employment experts announce rebrand

HVTC and Central Coast Community College have rebranded to Zeal Futures; one unified name and brand identity to propel the organisation into the future.

Sharon Smith, CEO of Zeal Futures, said the rebrand marks an exciting new chapter in the organisation's 43-year history; once four brands sharing a common passion to help everyone thrive, now united as Zeal Futures.

"The launch of Zeal Futures is an exciting time for our organisation, to ensure we stand out from the crowd and make our mark as industry leaders," she said.

"Our story began in 1981 in the Hunter, with two employees and one project, paving the way for us to change thousands of lives through vocational education and training (VET). Over the years our dedication has allowed us to evolve, while creating strong connections to people, industry, business, and community."

Zeal Futures now employs more than 800 staff, apprentices and trainees; and operates from 10 offices servicing clients in NSW, Queensland and the ACT, with three campus locations to deliver skills training and community education programs.

"We're proud to have created career and learning opportunities for more than 38,000 people across hundreds of vocations and industries, and that number continues to grow as we do," Ms Smith added.

"At Zeal Futures, our vision is to be the first choice for learning and employment in Australia. Our award-winning team takes a tailored approach, because no two people or businesses are the same.

"Our purpose and passion are to help everyone thrive. We help business' grow by sourcing, employing, and managing quality apprentices and trainees. We also support people through all phases of their learning journeys, whether they're just starting out, wanting to reskill, upskill or learn something new.

"Through our innovative training programs, personalised support, and strong industry partnerships, we empower individuals, including apprentices, trainees, and students, and our partners, to achieve their goals and realize their full potential. At Zeal Futures, we create success stories."

Robert Cameron AO, Chairman of Zeal Futures, added that Zeal Futures represents the future of our skilled workforce, and the future of business and industry in Australia.

"While our name and brand identity has evolved, our commitment and dedication to the important work we do in the community and the VET sector remains unchanged," Mr Cameron said.

"Strategically, our rebrand to Zeal Futures will enhance our capabilities and deliver even greater value to the people, businesses, and community partners that we work with. It will allow us to continue to grow and expand into new locations and stand out in a competitive market.

"We are thrilled to introduce Zeal Futures as the embodiment of our heritage, vision, purpose, and proposition. With this rebrand, we reaffirm our commitment to empowering individuals, creating success stories and making a positive impact in our community."

Zeal Futures Chairman Mr Robert Cameron AO and CEO Sharon Smith



\$7 million facility for national parks and Worimi Conservation Lands Board

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Worimi Conservation Lands (WCL) Board have unveiled a state-of-the-art facility catering to 40 staff members in Anna Bay.

The \$7 million investment marks a significant partnership and is the first time a facility has been jointly funded by both the NSW Government and an Aboriginal joint management board.

Seventeen years ago, the NSW Government returned 4,200 hectares of land at Stockton Bight to the Worimi traditional owners. This included what became the Worimi Conservation Lands (WCL) which are now managed jointly with the NPWS.

This purpose-built NPWS office and depot stands on Worimi Conservation Lands, it combines office and field operations, improving efficiency and flexibility in managing parks and enhancing emergency response, particularly during bushfires.

NPWS manages more than 20 national parks and conservation areas in the NPWS Hunter Coast region, and this new facility will transform how teams work together, improving communication, coordination, and safety measures.



State-of-the-art facility image caption: Aunty Val Merrick cutting the ribbon with WCL Board members and Kate Washington MP NPWS office-depot at Anna Bay, Hunter Coast, a joint \$7M facility owned by Worimi Cons. Lands Board and NPWS.
CREDIT NPWS

New era for Experienced Office Furniture

Newcastle based office furniture manufacturer Experienced Office Furniture has recently had a change of ownership with founder and industry stalwart Rudy Wildschut stepping away from the business after 40 years of ownership. Rudy has been the driving force behind EOF for decades. EOF was founded in 1984 specialising in reconditioned furniture, thus the name Experienced Office Furniture. In recent years EOF has grown extensively to emerge as an industry leader with a large showroom and manufacturing site side-by-side in Lambton.

In 2024 EOF welcomed Rochelle Le Pine to the company. Rochelle in partnership with General Manager Paul Wildschut will lead EOF with all sales, manufacturing and logistics staff remaining on board. Rochelle is a proud Kiwi with extensive industry knowledge who brings to EOF over 20 years of experience specialising in furniture distribution for co-working spaces and owning and operating retail stores Hong Kong.

Rochelle and Paul have a clear business plan to take EOF into its next chapter. Innovation in design, increased manufacturing capacity and a commitment to a greener EOF will be paramount over the next few years and beyond.

General Manager Paul said EOF will celebrate 40 years of business this year with gratitude of its origins and anticipates the new partnership with Rochelle will allow the business to expand with a fresh vision.

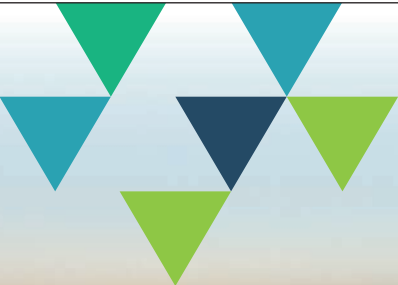
"My respect for Rudy and his dedication to the industry and our team over the past four decades will remain unmatched. A mentor for many, including myself, Rudy is an exceptional businessman with a relentless appetite growth that will inspire the next chapter of EOF."



Paul Wildschut



Rochelle Le Pine



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Port of Newcastle plans to support Floating Offshore Wind technology

Port of Newcastle says it is ideally located adjacent to the 1,854 sqkm Hunter offshore wind zone, which was declared by the Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen on 12 July 2023. The area has been identified to accommodate 5 GW of offshore wind development, which would utilise Floating Offshore Wind technology (FOW).

Given the Port of Newcastle's (PON) deep draft navigation channel, available development area, and absence of bridge infrastructure, it stands as a prime candidate for supporting FOW deployment.

To ensure Port of Newcastle's (PON) suitability for supporting FOW technology, PON commissioned a study to assess the port and identify the quantity and size of required port facilities to meet the needs of the Hunter offshore wind declared area buildout goal of 5 GW.

The study indicated that with investment and appropriate stakeholder consultation, the PON has the physical characteristics to support the FOW industry in NSW and the wider Australasia region, in a variety of functions including, marshalling, assembly, staging and operations and maintenance. To service all stages of the FOW development, PON would service the industry via multiple sites locations across the Port.

This strategic development has the potential to not only establish the port as a central hub for floating wind projects in the Australasia region, but also to OEMs for both floating and fixed-bottom wind developments due to the port's strategic proximity to the designated and prospective wind development zones in NSW, New Zealand and Victoria, with Bass Strait only a two-day ocean transit.

Port of Newcastle will be able to further engage directly with project proponents once licences for the Hunter Offshore Wind Zone have been issued by the Commonwealth Government.



MCI Carbon breaks ground at Orica site

Australian clean technology developer MCI Carbon had a foundation ceremony on April 10 for its carbon capture and utilisation (CCU) plant 'Myrtle', currently under construction at Orica's Kooragang Island site.

Funded by a \$14.6 million federal government grant, the plant is aimed at scaling up the development and demonstration of an engineering process called mineral carbonation, which transforms captured CO₂ emissions into building products and other valuable materials.

The technology has the potential to provide a cost-competitive solution for decarbonising hard-to-abate industries globally and contributing to the circular economy.

Orica Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Sanjeev Gandhi said the innovative project, which is expected to be operational by 2025, aligns with Orica's sustainability and commercial goals.

"The energy transition requires careful planning and policy coordination between governments, regulators, energy suppliers, consumers, and the broader private sector. This ceremony today is a great example of business and government working together to drive innovation for a better tomorrow, as we transition towards a lower carbon future, together. We are proud to partner with MCI Carbon, industry, academia and the government as they scale this important technology."

The CCU plant will source its CO₂ directly from Orica's ammonia manufacturing facility, capturing around 1,000 tonnes of the greenhouse gas annually. In addition to supplying the feedstock, Orica has supported the project by providing land, access to utilities, and significant technical expertise.

Partnering with MCI Carbon is the latest example of Orica's commitment to decarbonising its operations. Recently, the company completed a \$37 million project to install tertiary abatement technology on the Kooragang Island site's three nitric acid plants, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 50%. That equates to 11% of all chemical process emissions across Australia.

The tertiary abatement project will continue to eliminate 567,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent from the site each year, which is equal to the emissions from 50,000 homes.

Local financial advisor wins national new talent award

Jessica Deamer, a distinguished advisor at Crest Financial Services, has taken out the New Talent Award at the 2023 National ASTRUM Awards, underscoring her achievements and contributions to the financial advisory landscape.

The National ASTRUM Awards serve as a prestigious platform to honour individuals and practices that embody customer excellence, business innovation, and continuous improvement. These awards represent the pinnacle of recognition within the financial advisory sphere, celebrating those who go above and beyond to deliver outstanding service and drive positive change.

Jessica has had an impressive journey from paraplanner to director at Crest Financial Services. Her ascent through the ranks reflects her dedication, work ethic and pursuit of excellence. Jessica's ability to combine theoretical knowledge with practical experience has enabled her to make a meaningful impact on the lives of her clients, earning her widespread acclaim and admiration within the industry.

At the 2023 National ASTRUM Awards, Jessica's exceptional talents and contributions were acknowledged as she received the prestigious New Talent Award. This accolade is a testament to her remarkable achievements and underscores her status as one of the brightest talents in the financial field. It not only recognises her individual prowess but also highlights the importance of nurturing young professionals and fostering a culture of innovation and excellence.

Jessica's win at the ASTRUM Awards serves as an inspiration to aspiring advisors and professionals across the Hunter region and beyond.



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Community Radio Listener's Survey, conducted by McNair Yellow Squares - Newcastle - Survey 2023 Wave #1

City of Newcastle moves forward with recycling options

City of Newcastle (CN) is investigating the development of a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) at its Summerhill Waste Management Centre to cater for waste collected from both its kerbside pickup service as well as from construction and demolition sites.

The Inert MRF will significantly increase the amount of waste the region can divert from landfill, with the majority of bulk waste dropped off by the public or picked up in scheduled kerbside collections, as well as the inert Commercial & Industrial and Construction & Demolition waste streams, able to be considered for recycling.

CN Managing Director Waste Services Michael Allaway said CN was continuing to explore a range of sustainable solutions for managing waste in the region.

"We're exploring all options to deliver responsible, environmentally sustainable, and commercially feasible waste and recycling operations to manage our current and future waste streams," Mr Allaway said.

"The establishment of an Inert MRF will divert a significant amount of waste from being disposed of in landfill at Summerhill.

"We're also continuing to progress approvals for a recyclables MRF as an option to process the recyclables from residents' yellow-lid bins at Summerhill.

"A development application is currently being assessed by the NSW Government's Hunter and Central Coast Regional Planning Panel, who are expected to hand down their determination mid-year."

Recycling from Newcastle residents' yellow-lid bins is currently taken to the Summerhill Waste Management Centre before being transferred to iQ Renew's processing facility on the Central Coast.

Mr Allaway said it was an appropriate point in time to test the market in this space, with CN now calling for tenders for a long-term recyclables processing contract.

"With the current recyclables processing contract due to expire towards the end of this year, we're moving forward with a tender process," he said.

"This will allow us to assess the potential to secure an arrangement that provides certainty around cost, resource recovery and commodity market exposures.

"We also have the option to extend our current contract with iQ Renew for another 12 months should that prove more favourable."

New conference space for Hunter Wetlands Centre

Hunter Wetlands Centre has unveiled a new-look conference space, thanks to a \$20,000 joint funding donation from Glencore Coal and Port Waratah Coal Services. This unveiling is particularly special as it coincides with the Centre's 40th anniversary, marking four decades of dedication to conservation, education, and community engagement.

With the now completed renovations, the conference space boasts a contemporary refreshed interior, new wiring, upgraded conferencing equipment and an 85-inch presentation system.

Hunter Wetlands Centre General Manager, James Wilson, said he was excited to reveal the renovations and invite the corporate and community groups of Newcastle to make use of the space.

"The new-look space will have a truly positive impact across all aspects of the Centre," James said.

"Not only will the renovated space provide our volunteers with a professional training space, but also greatly improve the meeting facilities for our community partners."

"By providing a modern, well-equipped space we can expand our offerings to corporate and government organisations. The financial sustainability this provides our Centre will help us keep entry costs low and support the conservation and restoration of the Wetlands."



"Funding donations for projects such as this, help us strengthen our connection with our community, and increase the number of people that can engage with, learn about, and enjoy our beautiful Wetlands."

Next step in revitalisation of Harbour Foreshore precinct

Work is beginning on the delivery of a new kiosk and accessible public toilets in Newcastle's popular Harbour Foreshore precinct.

Councillors voted unanimously to accept a tender for the project, which is valued at more than \$3 million and will include unisex ambulant toilets, a parent's change room, and a changing places facility that provides suitable facilities for people who cannot use standard accessible toilets.

The project also includes space for a future kiosk and will commence in May with the removal of the existing playground to pave the way for the construction of the amenities.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said the new amenities building is an essential step in delivering the adopted Harbour Foreshore Masterplan.

"The accessible amenities and future kiosk will complement other elements of the Harbour Foreshore Masterplan and enrich the park that Novocastrians and visitors know and love," Cr Nelmes said.

"These early works will help realise the full potential of our adopted Masterplan for our premier city park and major event space, creating a drawcard destination for locals and visitors from across the region to enjoy whilst connecting our city with our harbour's edge."

The centrepiece of the Masterplan will be Livvi's Place, an inclusive regional playground and waterplay area, designed in consultation with the community and Touched by Olivia, a charity dedicated to the delivery of inclusive playspaces across Australia.

Once completed, the playground area will have a distinctly Newcastle character and pay tribute to the city's Aboriginal heritage. The precinct will also have a waterplay area unique to Newcastle. Extensive tree planting and landscaping will be carried out throughout the precinct as part of the broader masterplan to significantly increase shade canopy and create greener public spaces.

The amenities project is supported by the Newcastle Port Community Contribution Fund.

Artist's impression of Harbour Foreshore amenities building



**NEWCASTLE CHIROPRACTIC**

Newcastle Chiropractic has welcomed **Seraina Danuser** to their team. A graduate from Macquarie University with a readiness to provide patient centred and individually tailored care, Seraina will help with the organisations focus on correcting biomechanical and neurological related problems, optimising how these systems work to improve your quality of life.

**PKF SYDNEY & NEWCASTLE**

PKF Sydney and Newcastle has promoted **Kevin Helmers** to Partner. Kevin Helmers has been with PKF for over a decade and has consistently demonstrated exemplary leadership and expertise in the Audit and Assurance landscape. His dedication to client success and innovative approach to problem-solving have been invaluable assets to the firm.

**BALLINGER'S FINANCIAL PLANNING**

Andrew Lindner is the new Senior Portfolio Manager at Ballinger's Financial Planning, bringing more than 8 years of expertise in financial markets as a stockbroker and investment adviser. His recent tenure as a Portfolio Manager saw him managing multi-asset model portfolios, where he generated above average returns. Andrew oversees the internal investment strategy and framework, helping advisers at Ballinger's provide bespoke investment solutions for clients.

**NGM GROUP**

Non-executive director **Samantha Martin-Williams** has been appointed Chair of NGM Group. Samantha is the current Deputy Chair of Newcastle Airport, Vice Chair of the Supply Chain and Logistics Association of Australia (SCLAA) and serves on the boards of Fishburners and the University of Newcastle Business School. A former Telstra Business Woman of the Year, she is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), serving on its NSW Council, and of the Governance Institute of Australia.

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**PKF SYDNEY & NEWCASTLE**

PKF Sydney and Newcastle has promoted **David Hutchison** to Partner. David Hutchison has extensive experience and a remarkable track record in Audit and has grown to be a critical member of the PKF team. His commitment to excellence and ability to navigate complex audit challenges have earned him respect, both internally and among clients.

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**

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



Benefits of a company secretary

Zoe Butler
Osborn Law

Managing your company's administrative tasks can often be overwhelming and divert your attention away from day-to-day running of the business. From compliance with legal requirements to maintaining accurate records, a skilled company secretary is essential to keep your company compliant with all laws and regulations.

What are company secretarial services?

A company secretary has the obligation and responsibility of ensuring a company complies with regulatory and statutory obligations which carry penalties for non-compliance. A company secretary's key responsibilities revolve around maintaining and organising statutory records and facilitating communication with regulatory authorities. Therefore, engaging a professional who specialises in corporate governance and regulatory compliance to provide these services, ensures these obligations are properly discharged.

Key tasks performed by a company secretary include:

- **Company Formation and Registration:** assisting in the incorporation of companies and managing the registration process with the relevant government authorities.
- **Compliance Management:** ensuring the company adheres to all legal and regulatory requirements, including updating shareholder and director information, and notifying authorities of other changes within the company such as changes to shareholding or share capital.
- **Board Meetings and Minutes:** coordinating and documenting board meetings, resolutions, and minutes to ensure the company's decisions are recorded accurately.
- **Shareholder Services:** managing communication with shareholders and facilitating shareholder meetings.
- **Statutory Reporting:** preparing and submitting necessary reports and documentation to regulatory bodies such as ASIC and the ASX.
- **Corporate Governance Advice:** providing expert guidance on corporate governance matters, including compliance with relevant laws and best practices.



Benefits of outsourcing company secretarial services

There are various benefits to outsourcing company secretarial services, including:

- **Cost-Effectiveness:** more cost-effective than hiring an in-house legal team, especially for small and medium-sized companies.
- **Expertise and Knowledge:** experienced company secretaries are well-versed in the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern companies. They stay up-to-date with any changes in the law, ensuring your company remains compliant at all times.
- **Focus on Core Business Activities:** delegating administrative tasks allows you and your team to concentrate on strategic planning, business growth, and enhancing your products or services.
- **Mitigation of Risks:** non-compliance with statutory requirements can result in severe penalties and reputational damage. Outsourcing these services reduces the risk of non-compliance.

For further information contact Osborn Law on (02) 4927 2900, email info@osbornlaw.com.au or visit <https://osbornlaw.com.au>



Zoe Butler is a solicitor specialising in corporate and commercial law. Her extensive background spans diverse areas, encompassing mergers and acquisitions, capital raising, corporate governance, ownership document drafting, commercial contracts, and commercial property matters. She extends her services to a diverse clientele, catering to not-for-profit organizations, as well as private and public companies.

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What do workers want?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that job mobility in the year ending Feb 2023 remained at 9.5% for the second year in a row, the highest rate in a decade.¹ With so many people changing jobs, there is fierce competition to attract and retain the best people. If you understand what workers want and take action to provide that experience, your job will be done, quite literally! Workplace design and fit-out company Evoke Projects explains how to find out what workers want.

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

An EVP is very worthwhile. It is a statement of what your company is doing to improve the workplace experience. International recruitment company Hays defines an EVP as “a clear and consistent message about the experience of working at your organisation and highlights the unique experience you offer that attracts, engages and retains top talent”.² Notably, they make the point: “Remember, your organisation is unique. It may make the same products or provide the same service as your competitors, but it is unique in its own way”. Your company is unique and so are the needs of the people who work there.

You can start a draft EVP based on the tangible and intangible benefits that your company currently offers. Some benefits are clearly defined. Others, particularly the intangible benefits, may be more subjective. Your perception of the intangible benefits may be challenged and revised during the employee research phase.

What do workers want?

Every company and workforce is unique. Conduct employee research. Listen to your employees. Really listen. Surveys, focus groups, annual reviews, exit interviews and suggestion boxes are all valid ways of exploring what your workers want.

The workplace design team at Evoke Projects have been researching what is high on the general priority list! We do this type of research to bring fresh ideas to our clients, but we always recommend a personalised approach and listening to your team.

What is high on the priority list?

High on people's priority list are the following desires:

Higher pay. It would be a rare person who felt they were paid enough! Of course, it serves all companies well to pay attractive salaries to attract and retain the best people. Beyond that, human resources experts often advise companies against increasing a salary to match a counter-offer from another company. People

who were tempted by another job are rarely just seeking a pay rise. They are unmotivated, unfulfilled, un-something, that's for sure. Your pay rise may tempt them to stay, but only for now.

Work-life balance. This has always been important to people but the pandemic and working from home brought home just how important. People now demand flexibility as a right. Hybrid working (time shared between the office and home), and the 4-day week (condensing 5 days' work into 4) are the most popular requests. Modern workplace design comes to the rescue with flexible working. Activity based zones (e.g., quiet work areas, meeting rooms, creative hubs, video conferencing booths, breakout areas) give people flexibility and autonomy over their work.

Well-being at work. This is closely connected to work-life balance but is mentioned so often that it deserves a bullet point of its own. After all, well-being shouldn't be a subtext. Make your workplace a well-place™, an environment designed to enable people to 'do well'. A well-place supports overall physical and mental health, engaging and motivating staff to be their best and most productive selves. Encourage physical movement with an office design that includes sit-stand desks/treadmill desks and printers that are not too close to workstations. Evaluate air quality, lighting and noise. Add biophilic elements and homely touches to your workplace fit-out.

Recognition. Both formal and informal recognition are important. Think about the recognition for achievements that exists now. Is it enough? Are people being quietly grateful because they are so busy? An email or shout across the office to say thank you for a job well done is such a simple gesture but a very valuable one.

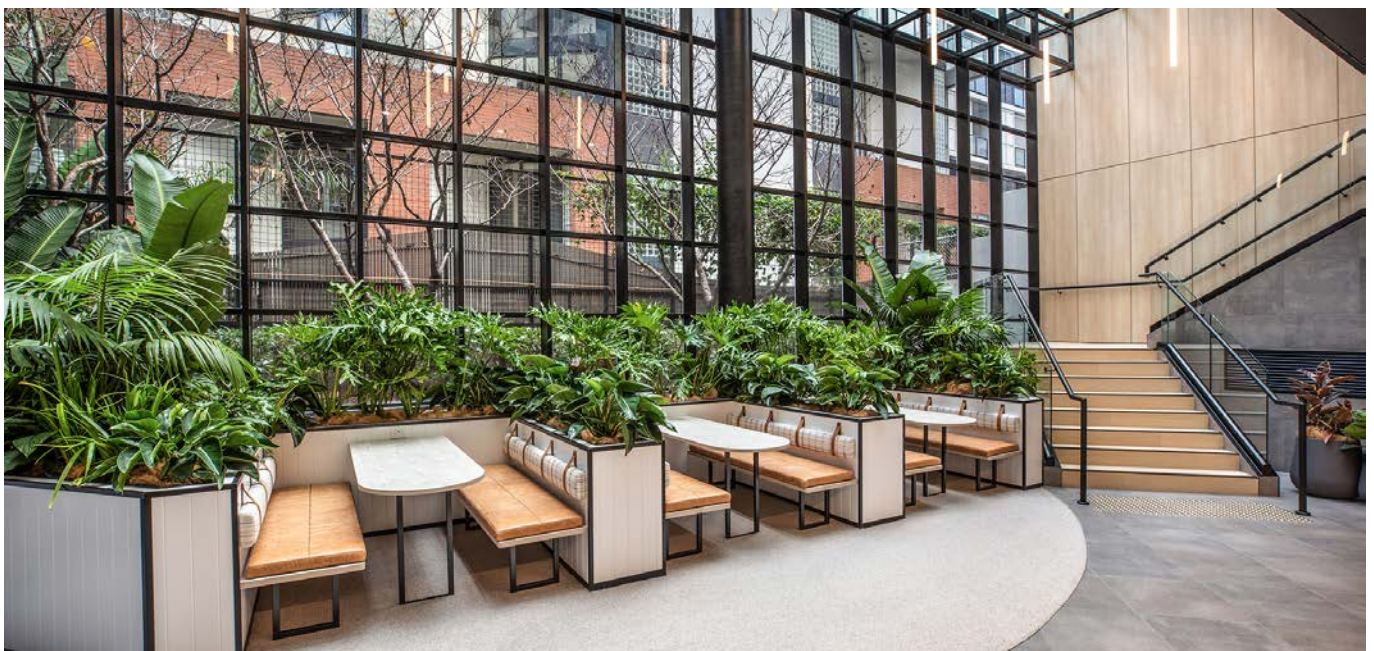
Positive workplace culture. Research for SEEK shows 73% of Australians find workplace culture important; 61% of people say they'd turn down a job if they learned a company had a poor culture and 83% say they've left a job or would leave a job due to poor culture. Most of the points above feed into workplace culture but SEEK identifies the most important factors as “Supportive colleagues and leadership” and “Flexibility and autonomy”. Listening to employee feedback about what they want is a great place to start in improving the culture as it shows supportive leadership.³

For further information call Evoke Projects on 1300 720 692.

1. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/jobs/job-mobility/feb-2023>

2. <https://www.hays.com.au/employer-insights/recruitment-information/define-your-evp>

3. <https://www.seek.com.au/employer/hiring-advice/workplace-culture-what-employees-are-looking-for>



COMING EVENTS.....

22 May 2024, 9.00 am – 10:30 am

HunterNet

IP Seminar Series – Event 2: Trade Marks and Brand Protection

Venue: HunterNet Cooperative

Cost: Free (Members Only Event)

<https://events.humanitix.com/ip-seminar-series-seminar-2-trade-marks-and-brand-protection>

23 May 2024, 4.30 pm – 6:00 pm

HunterNet

Business Succession Planning Forum – Event 3: Business Sale & Restructuring

Venue: HunterNet Cooperative

Cost: Free (Members Only Event)

<https://events.humanitix.com/business-succession-planning-forum-event-3-business-sale-and-restructuring>

24 May 2024, 12:00 pm – 2.00 pm

Business Hunter

Business Infrastructure Forum – Blackrock Motor Project

Venue: Peibri Place

Cost: \$125 - \$1250

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

28 May 2024, 5.00 pm – 7:00 pm

HIA

Trade Night

Venue: Maitland Toyota

Cost: Members: \$25 – Non Members: \$50

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/trade-night/hunter-nsw/2024/hia-information-session-mayfield-west-may28>

30 May 2024, 5.00 pm – 7:00 pm

HIA

Trade Night

Venue: Scone Mitre 10

Cost: Members: \$25 – Non Members: \$50

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/trade-night/hunter-nsw/2024/hia-information-session-scone-may30>

6 June 2024

Business Hunter

Business Hunter Innovation Series

Venue: To be announced

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

12 June 2024

Business Hunter

Business Development Forum

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-development-forum>

14 June 2024

Business Hunter

Energy & Resource Lunches

Venue: To be announced

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

20 June 2024, 8.00 am – 9:30 am

HunterNet

IP Seminar Series – Event 3: Patents, Design and Confidential Information

Venue: HunterNet Cooperative

Cost: Free (Members Only Event)

<https://events.humanitix.com/ip-seminar-series-seminar-3-patents-designs-and-confidential-information>

27 June 2024

Business Hunter

Business Hunter Summit 2024 – ‘A Future Made In The Hunter’

Venue: To be announced

<https://form.jotform.com/240981048231857>

24 July 2024

Business Hunter

Business Development Forum

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-development-forum>

2 August 2024

Business Hunter

Business Infrastructure Forum

Venue: To be announced

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

7 August 2024

Business Hunter

Business Development Forum

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-development-forum>

23 August 2024

Business Hunter

Energy & Resource Lunches

Venue: To be announced

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

27 August 2024, 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

HIA

Finance and Admin Workshop

Venue: HIA Office, Mayfield West

Cost: \$110 – \$220

<https://hia.com.au/awards-and-events/events/workshop/hunter-nsw/2024/workshop-mayfield-west-aug27>

23 September 2024, 8.30am – 2.30pm

Regional Angel Investor Network

RAIN PitchFest Newcastle – Session 1

Cost: Free

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rain-pitchfest-newcastle-session-1-tickets-826219443597>

4 September 2024

Business Hunter

Business Development Forum

Venue: To be announced

<https://www.businesshunter.com/hunter-business-events/our-events/business-development-forum>

23 September 2024, 8.30 am – 2.30 pm

Regional Angel Investor Network

RAIN PitchFest Newcastle – Session 1

Cost: Free

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rain-pitchfest-newcastle-session-1-tickets-826219443597>

Growth sees Four Walls Commercial relocate to larger, central suburban location

Local independent agency and commercial property specialists Four Walls Commercial, have recently relocated their Newcastle office to OTP House, Ground Floor Suite 3, 10 Bradford Close, Kotara.

The 230 sqm new premises are more than twice the size of the former premises, better accommodating recent growth in staff numbers and projected continued growth.

Director and Principal Bobby Suminoski knows the property well, having been involved in the management and leasing of OTP House for over 20 years.

As well as more space, the new premises offers a number of additional strategic benefits.

Bobby stated that as the agency services a large regional area not just the Newcastle CBD and the surrounding suburbs. Their properties span as far south as the Central Coast and northwest to Muswellbrook. They carefully considered their next relocation to a more convenient location for clients and staff travel times.

The new office is conveniently located in Bradford close Kotara, adjacent to the Homemakers Centre and only moments from Westfield. The new office provides for easy customer and staff parking along with good transport connectivity and other business amenities.

Four Walls Commercial has been established for 18 years and this is the third location for their head office to accommodate growth. The business has grown to become one of the leading independent commercial agencies in the Hunter. With over 30 years' experience in the local property market, Bobby Suminoski says he has developed a team of professional, hardworking staff



to ensure the highest levels of service and commitment to clients.

He says that Four Walls Commercial is continuing to provide impressive results for clients. In the last 12 months alone they have increased client rental revenues by some \$2.5 million, nearly doubling their clients' income through reducing vacancies and attracting increased rental income.

"We are proud of the results we are achieving for our clients. We see the new premises as a long term move which fits well with our strategic plans for servicing our client base and continuing growth as a major independent commercial agency for the Region," said Bobby Suminoski.

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RECENT COMMERCIAL SALES**Honeysuckle hospitality venue changes hands for \$3.4 million**

Lot 1, 9-11 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle has been purchased by Dockyard owner Trent Smith for \$3.4 million.

The strata freehold property of 446 sqm was formerly home to one of Newcastle's most popular waterfront hospitality venues, Honeysuckle Social.

Trent Smith has relaunched the venue as Hideout on the Harbour.

The property is a mix of internal kitchen, bar and dining with additional all weather outdoor dining areas. Other fit out includes storage and male & female amenities and two basement car spaces.

The property boasts both exposure to Honeysuckle Drive as well as incredible views over the promenade and Newcastle Harbour.

The sale was facilitated by the team at Commercial Collective.

**Newcastle's former Tower Cinemas sold**

The former Tower Cinemas at 183-185 King Street, Newcastle has been sold to Five Star Cinemas for an undisclosed price. The purchaser has a strong track record of revitalising cinemas.

The sale was made through Commercial Collective.

The property has a total building area of 3,688 sqm and incorporates three auditoriums over two levels and a foyer located on the ground floor. The large auditoriums lend themselves to a range of recreation, hospitality, entertainment, religious and educational uses.

**Broadmeadow property fetches \$4.35 million**

A single level brick building located at 55 Broadmeadow Road, Broadmeadow has been sold to private investors for \$4.35 million.

The property currently comprises two separate tenancies and occupies a site area of approximately 1,517 sqm. Rear lane access and on-grade parking is accessed from Parkside Avenue.

The property has a current net income of \$268,000 + GST pa, representing a yield of 6.16%.

The sale was made through Collier's Newcastle team.

**Professional service business purchases at The Junction**

A professional service owner occupier has purchased a ground floor strata premises at Lot 6, 58-60 Glebe Road, The Junction for \$1 million.

The property has an area of approximately 100 sqm and was sold through Colliers Newcastle.

**Hamilton East boarding house sold for \$2.25 million**

An approved and occupied boarding house which has been operating for many years has been purchased for \$2.25 million.

Located at 321 Parkway Avenue, Hamilton East, the property consists of 15 rooms and offers a return of \$157,300 pa (gross) with the potential of returning up to \$196,560 (gross).

The property was of interest to owner occupiers, investors and developers due to its parcel of land being 657sqm.

On auction night there were 12 bidders and the bidding quickly surpassed the owners price expectations. Although there were many bidders from Newcastle, and a few from Sydney, the eventual buyer was from Merriwa.

The sale was facilitated by Steve Dick from MOVABLE.



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The Hunter Investment Prospectus is only made possible by the following organisations that have supported this project and are active supporters of the growth of the Hunter Region.

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For queries or feedback regarding the **2024 Hunter Investment Prospectus**, please contact:

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The role of brand in a post AI world

Jennifer Young
Out of the Square

There's no denying artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly and universally transformed industries from healthcare to finance, and tourism to mining. It's reshaping the very fundamentals of how we work. Marketing and branding are no exception. And while your marketing may benefit from unprecedented insights, efficiencies and automation, there's a somewhat essential question that must be asked: Can AI deliver the uniquely human insights that have long been the bedrock of successful branding? And is it still important to develop a brand?

When the buzz around Open AI first began, we watched on as the tech giants battled it out in the race to market. As uptake increased, we all rolled up our sleeves and onboarded ourselves to this new way of working, and as it dawned on us how powerful it was, there was (and still is) a lot of talk about job loss including within the creative and marketing space.

However, this all-powerful, all-knowing (almost magical) 'entity', while mind-blowingly impressive, still lacks one thing - humanness. The truth is, it's our universally shared human experiences that provides the basis for meaningful insights that lead to branding that resonates.

It's a double-edged sword of immense opportunities and considerable challenges. On one hand, AI's ability to process vast amount of data offers unprecedented customer insights. The use of AI-generated content can scale marketing across various platforms and touchpoints, ensuring a consistent brand message that is both responsive and personalised.

However, the human touch - that core element that breathes life into a brand and fosters genuine connections with its audience - is ultimately missing. And while AI can optimise the delivery of branding materials and predict customer behaviours with impressive accuracy, it lacks the inherent human capacity to perceive and respond to the subtler emotional cues that often dictate customer loyalty and engagement. This gap highlights the need for a delicate balance where technology enhances rather than replaces the human elements that underpin brand identity.

We humans like to think we're highly logical beings (especially in business), 'sound minds prevail' and all that jazz. Science however, says otherwise. We know while logic plays a significant role in decision-making, ultimately, our emotions have a profound influence on the outcome. This is especially true where risk and trust are involved. Take the B2B sector, where successful partnerships are often inherent with significant risk and require trust and mutual respect to succeed. Now imagine that entire relationship being instigated, cultivated, and managed by a chat bot. It's likely going to fall apart pretty quickly. Why? Because there's no humanity holding it together.

This is where your brand comes in. Ultimately, your brand is what gives your business its humanness. It's the human traits everyone from employees to customers relate to and if done right, can create so much value, ChatGPT's head would spin! It's what you stand for, why you're doing it all, where you're going and how you're going to get there.

In a world that's increasingly inhuman in the name of efficiency and cost savings, there's an undeniable need to maintain a level of authenticity and personal engagement that simply cannot be achieved in any other way, than through our 'humanness'.

The fact is, it's our universally shared human experience that lends itself to the seemingly insignificant, yet powerful human truths which are the fertile breeding ground for branding and creative that resonates. We're emotional beings, and no matter how you package it, AI is incapable of experiencing and therefore truly understanding human emotion.

For help creating a meaningful and authentic brand, speak to a human at Out of The Square: ideas@outofthesquare.com.au or www.outofthesquare.com.au.



Jennifer Young is a Strategist at Out of The Square, a creative agency determined to be a driving force in making Newcastle a global success story. Jen has 20 years' experience in UX, integrated marketing, and brand strategy. She's passionate about human-centred design principles and loves building authentic and effective brands.

Planning a business FUNCTION? WORK PARTY, CONFERENCE, MEETING, WORKSHOP, EXPO OR OTHER BUSINESS EVENT



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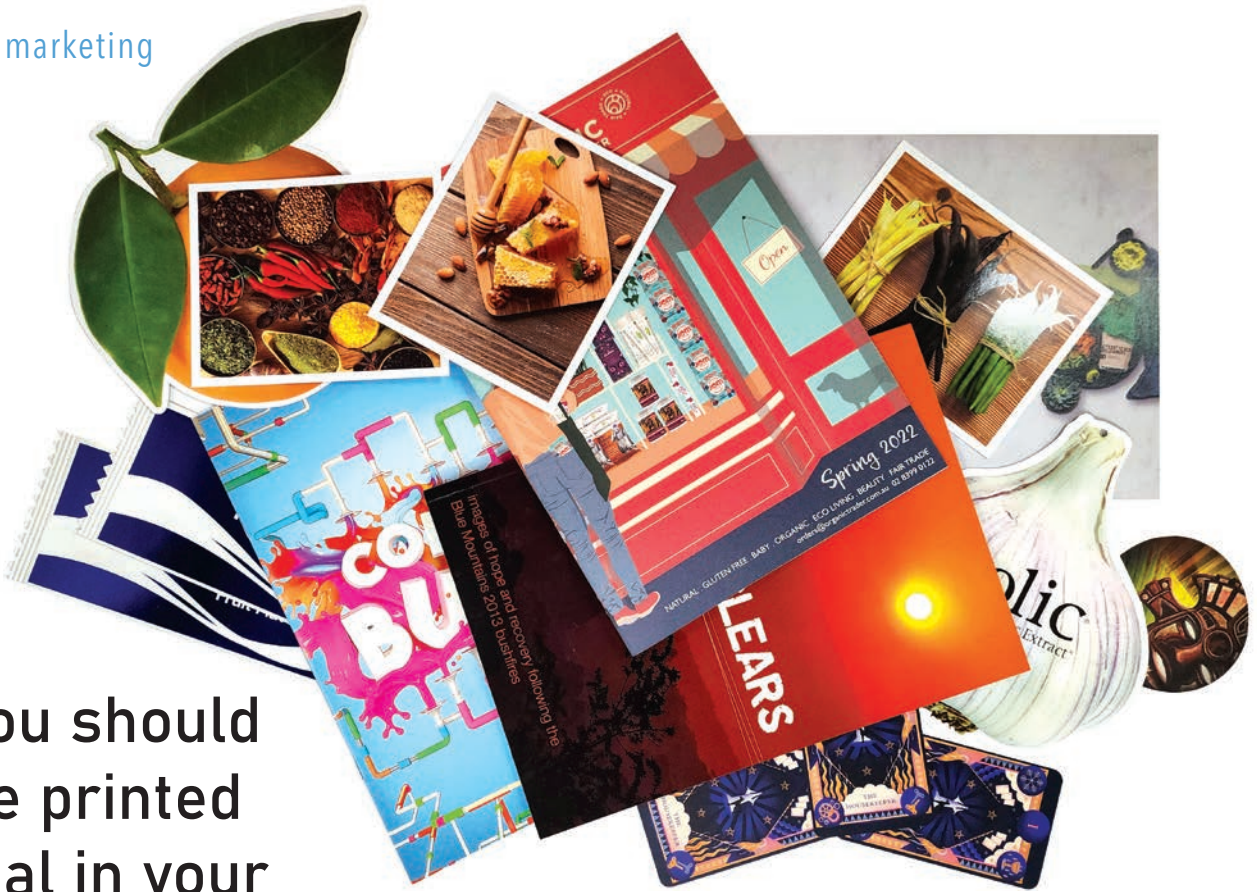


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OUT OF THE SQUARE



Why you should include printed material in your marketing mix

Debbie Burgess
NCP Printing

We all know it is much nicer to hold something in your hands than to simply view an item from afar. When that something is tactile, well-crafted and visually appealing, the emotions it can trigger in the brain are positive. Much research has been undertaken over the years, particularly by neuroscientists, and marketing organisations, over the benefits of printed material compared to digital communication.

We all know digital material is cheaper to prepare and can be disseminated on mass. It is quick, and convenient. But is quick and convenient how you want to represent your brand? Does quick and convenient support authenticity of your messaging?

Let's unpack some of the obvious benefits of printed material:

- **Tangibility** – a physical presence; smell, touch, invites exploration
- **Credibility** – crucial for legal and financial correspondence
- **Targeted** – add personalisation to your printed piece and the connection builds 10-fold
- **Longevity** – a well printed piece is not easily discarded unlike an email
- **Cut-through** – stands out in a digital world
- **Sustainability** – the world's most recycled and environmentally friendly resource

How many emails will you delete today? How many emails will go to your junk without you even realising they were sent? How long do you spend reading through your emails that are uninvited?

On the other hand, how many printed items will you receive today? Research has shown you will spend considerably more time reading, or flicking through a printed piece that you receive, as opposed to quickly hitting the delete button!

So, if digital marketing is quick and convenient – is it providing you with value? A mix of digital and print is the superior marketing mix. Here's a few more reasons why?

Neuroscience research has provided insights into how the human brain processes information from printed material versus digital communication;

- 1. Retention and Comprehensive** – Studies have shown that people tend to retain information better when they read from printed material compared to digital screens. If it's important, most of us will print it out, to read later. A lack of distraction and the way the brain processes information is the key. Do you want your clients to retain the information you are wanting them to know?
- 2. Emotional Engagement** – Printed materials often elicit stronger emotional responses than digital content. Touching and interacting with printed materials can activate areas of the brain associated with emotion and memory. There is also less distraction when viewing a printed piece, which sustains attention and therefore the emotional connection. Do you want your clients to feel good about interacting with your brand?
- 3. Brand Perception** – Neuroscience studies suggest that printed materials can contribute to a more positive perception of brands. Physical brochures, catalogues and other well-crafted and produced printed material convey a sense of quality, credibility and trustworthiness. These values are hard to achieve in a digital environment where spammers are constantly looking to impersonate corporations and individuals.

There are plenty of metrics available to suggest the ideal marketing strategy should include both digital and printed material.

If you want to know more, then here are some interesting links:
https://valueofpaperandprint.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ihm_seetouchfeel.pdf
https://valueofpaperandprint.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ihm_revengoofanalogue.pdf

If you would like to find out more about NCP and their services please contact David Small at david@ncp.com.au

What are your marketing goals?

Michelle Trimble
Poppy Seed Media

We often get caught up in the excitement of seeing sales go up and leads pour in. Fair enough! But it's important to look beyond just these numbers when setting your marketing goals.

While conversions and leads are like the MVPs of marketing, there's a whole game to play. Effective marketing isn't just about making quick sales, it's about creating relationships, making people stick around, and building a fan base for your brand.

When considering your marketing goals, it's important to expand your view from a narrow focus on numbers to a wider picture of long-term success. It's about making lasting connections, gaining trust, and offering value that keeps customers coming back.

Brand awareness

Whether you've been around for a decade, or just starting out, brand awareness is a great, broad focus to angle your marketing around. Your brand is your name, design, logo, everything that makes your business you, and making sure it is a recognisable name or logo will put you ahead of competitors. You can take a few avenues to generate your brand awareness, whether it's running campaigns to get followers, likes, or leads, having your target audience take those started steps to engage and interact with your brand will help you boost any continued marketing goals.

Once you have a foundation for your brand awareness, utilising this awareness will improve the way your customers or clients interact with your brand, and will only continue to improve the impact of your brand awareness.

Lead generation (service-based businesses)

We cannot ignore the importance of Lead Generation as a marketing goal! It is a focus for service-based businesses engaging with their clients to convert curiosity into a lead. This is typically done by collecting clients' information to utilise for sales, marketing, or consults. This is often seen by businesses offering clients sign-ups for mailing lists, or web forms when enquiring more about services. This creates the opportunity for businesses to follow up with potential clients to offer more insightful information about their inquiries specific to their situation or can be utilised as a subscription-based mailing list for future marketing campaigns to retain or convert new leads.

Sales (E-Commerce)

The old faithful focus for marketing, sales! More commonly e-commerce today than brick-and-mortar stores and with a competitive online market in place, having clear and concise goals around marketing your e-commerce will impact your sales results. Whether you're launching a new product or promoting seasonal sales, e-commerce marketing is fundamental in driving customers firstly to your site, and ideally converting their visit into sales.

Engagement

Engagement is a key focus, from the influencers on TikTok to the big-league businesses we utilise every day without a second thought. This can be seen as anything from likes, comments, and shares on posts, to competitions and raffles.

Engagement inadvertently boosts your businesses or brand through your followers' platforms, whether they're resharing a well-written article, tagging friends in a post to win a prize, or leaving feedback on Google, positive engagement can make a massive impact on how your brand is perceived. This goal can be used as a general boost to your brand, or to use to your benefit to promote specific products or promotions you're trying to grow.

Company Culture (HR + Recruitment)

Company Culture is a key pillar for any business wanting to showcase the "behind-the-scenes" of their brand. Whether its sharing jokes made in-house through a quippy reel or showing off the success of one of your employees, creating the right narrative to fit your company culture will set the tone for your business. Company Culture is a great fundamental goal to consider from the perspective of your Human Resources and Recruitment sectors. Whether you're recruiting or redefining a contract with an employee, if you have a strong company culture, you have set clear expectations for what is, and isn't acceptable in your workplace, and provided transparency of what to expect in day-to-day at your business, helping your recruit and retain the staff that is the best match for you.

Establish Industry Authority

Every business wants to be taken seriously amongst their competitors to ensure they stand out amongst the pack. Brands or businesses with low industry authority run the risk of not being taken seriously or being seen as scams amongst the masses. Building well-rounded websites, social media profiles, and a customer base will help to establish industry authority and give your brand the recognition you require.

From fostering brand awareness to engaging with your audience, the true essence of marketing lies in cultivating lasting connections. Whether you're a service-based business focusing on lead generation, an e-commerce venture striving for increased sales, or a company emphasising engagement and company culture, the overarching goal is to establish a foundation for sustained success. Moreover, positioning your brand as an industry authority is a strategic move in the competitive market.

For more information please contact Michelle via info@poppyseedmedia.com.au



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EMBRACING THE DATA ANALYTICS REVOLUTION

Sangeetha Ravisankar
PKF Sydney & Newcastle

Data analytics, at its core, is the art and science of extracting actionable insights from the labyrinth of data. It encompasses the use of cutting-edge tools and methodologies to dissect, analyse, visualise, and interpret data, leading to informed and strategic decision-making. This pivotal concept has gained immense significance in today's data-driven world, where organisations seek a competitive edge through data-driven strategies.

In this article, we explore what data analytics entails, and seek to demystify complex jargon to, instead, showcase its practical applications.

Data analytics, when embraced through process, discipline, and culture, can provide a compass for your organisation, guiding you toward informed decisions, cost reduction, and revenue optimisation. The ability to harness its almost-full potential is a game-changer.

Where are you on the analytics maturity model?

Data analytics is not merely about numbers; it's about unlocking the stories hidden within an organisation's data in real-time or on-demand. See Figure 1.

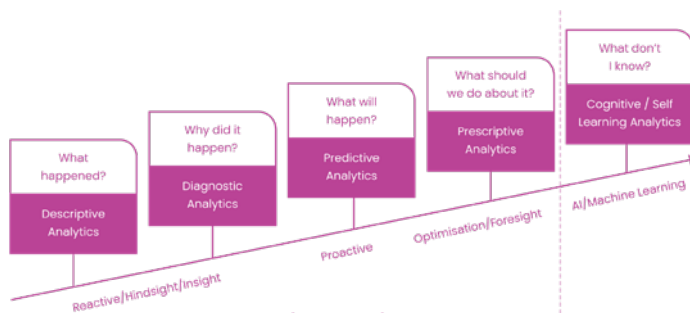


Figure 1: Analytics maturity model

These narratives, when skilfully communicated through tools such as Power BI and Tableau, have demonstrated the ability to yield tangible business results.

This aligns with the growing trend of clients seeking expert guidance on the following matters in recent years:

- Managing reputational risk
- Fraud risk mitigation
- Leveraging data for market insights
- Detecting wage underpayment or theft
- Analysing supplier and customer behaviour
- Building internal data competency.

The right questions must be posed in order to “uncover unknown unknowns” and to glean the insights required to support a business's development. The Analytics Maturity Model outlines what an effective line of questioning looks like.

In the audit sphere, the advantages of adopting data analytics over traditional auditing methodologies are substantial and include improved audit quality, effective risk assessment enabled, and therefore increased client satisfaction and retention.

A bright data-driven future

Has your organisation commenced its data analytics journey? The Technology Maturity Model (TMM) can provide a useful process to apply to support your organisation's transformation. See Figure 2.



Figure 2: Technology maturity model

In an era of data abundance, harnessing the power of data analytics is not just an option but a competitive necessity.

For further information contact PKF Sydney & Newcastle on (02) 4962 2688, email newcastle@pkf.com.au or visit www.pkf.com.au

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BUSINESSES STRUGGLING WITH TECHNOLOGY CHANGE AND COST PRESSURES

New research by Telstra reveals that many Australian small businesses are at risk of missing out on the benefits technology offers to drive efficiencies and help them compete.

Telstra's Business Tech State of Play report shows more than half (58%) of business owners say that using digital technologies is a priority to become more efficient and 69% agree that technology is now about much more than efficient working and has become part of how a business competes.

Time and money have become scarcer commodities in the past five years. Growing revenue and managing increasing costs ranked as the top two concerns, and business owners are almost twice as concerned than they were five years ago about having the time and capacity to get everything done.

Finding new customers and meeting the changing customer expectations ranked amongst the top concerns with technology. Having a current website is a simple way to meet changing expectations with more than two-thirds of customers (72%) saying they were less likely to buy from a business if their website wasn't up to date. Despite this strong demand, more than half of businesses don't prioritise updating their website.

"The pressure being felt by small business owners today is reaching boiling point," said Amanda Hutton, Group Executive, Telstra Business.

"There is a real untapped opportunity for businesses to use technology in the right ways to help improve efficiency, attract and retain customers, and reduce cost pressures."

Cyber Security and AI low on the priority list

Cyber Security is a growing concern but focus is overshadowed by other more pressing concerns. Despite the growing cost of cyber crime on Australian business almost half don't have basic cyber security measures in place.

AI adoption is still relatively nascent with just 7% actively using it across a broad range of use cases. Data analytics and content creation are the most popular use cases, but others include using chatbots, virtual shop assistants and augmented reality in customer service, through to financial management and recruitment.

Of the businesses already using AI, 64% believe it is a competitive imperative and that businesses that fail to adopt AI in the next five years will lose their ability to compete.

Reliable connectivity top priority

The technologies businesses said will have the most positive impact in the next 1-2 years include:

- Access to fast, reliable and secure internet connectivity (57%)
- Cyber security solutions (34%)
- Digital payment technologies (28%)
- Cloud-based communications services (e.g. cloud-based phone systems, videoconferencing and collaboration tools (27%)
- Artificial Intelligence (27%)

Untapped opportunity to attract and retain staff

A majority (79%) of workers surveyed want to learn more digital skills to further their career but only 39% of businesses offer training in this area. This presents an untapped win-win opportunity for businesses wanting to attract and retain talent.

One practical way business owners can meet this need and improve their business' cyber resiliency at the same time is by signing their team up to COSBOA's free online Cyber Wardens program, which is Australia's first-ever cyber safety workplace certification program that will equip employees with basic cyber security skills to help protect against cyber security risk.

Businesses need support with technology

While the opportunities are clear and Australian businesses show an appetite to embrace new technology, more than half of respondents (54%) agree it's hard to stay up to date with developments and know what to invest in, and 40% agree they want more support to help use digital technologies more effectively.

"Australian businesses are adaptable and entrepreneurial by nature, but they need help keeping up with the pace of change and prioritising what to invest in. In an environment where there's no time or money to waste, businesses need good support and advice to adopt technology that will deliver the highest returns for their business," Ms Hutton said.

BRINGING ENTERPRISE LEVEL SECURITY TO SMALL BUSINESS

Today's threat landscape is constantly evolving. Ransomware and new and emerging threats are on the rise, and there is no sign of this slowing down. Traditionally, advanced security controls and software were limited to the enterprise market. They were typically costly and difficult to implement for small businesses.

Application control and allow listing is a solution that gives a huge boost to your business's overall security posture. Application control is also part of the Australian Essential 8 Security Framework and can help you meet the requirements of the framework.

Application control uses a "Deny by Default" approach. This means that you have an approved "allowlist" of software, DLLs, and scripts that are allowed to run on your devices. Everything else is blocked, including unknown threats.

This solution can give your team confidence that they are secure while completing their work. In combination with an Antivirus, Endpoint Detection and response and email security, they can feel secure knowing that you are doing everything possible to keep them, and your business secure.

The system we use also allows your staff an easy process to request access to software. If the software they need is not on the allow list, they can simply press the "request" button that appears when they try to install it. We can then review and if deemed acceptable by the business we can add it to the list, the team member is then prompted that they can now install their software.

One real world example is scripts and macros that can be embedded in word documents, when a staff member opens the document, the script runs. This script could do any number of things including exporting data to the attacker or running malicious software. This can be blocked by our application allowlisting. Word is disallowed from interacting with terminals or scripts, essentially sandboxing it from other applications.

This is only small percentage of what we can offer; elevation control, sandboxing and more are all part of the package. There is no downtime or disruption during setup and there is a learning period where we compile a list of approved applications from your devices.

If you'd like to discuss your business's IT and Cybersecurity, get in touch. We'd love to help you with Managed IT, Cybersecurity and Insights for your business. We work with Australian businesses just like yours to implement these solutions ensuring you have top notch cybersecurity.

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We must all do our bit for the planet!
I just unplugged a row of electric cars that nobody was using!

A house cat ends up lost in the African rainforest. Thinking the cat would be easy to catch, a big lion begins to prowl. The house cat notices a pile of bones to his left and the lion coming towards him on his right and comes up with a plan. "Ah, that LION meat was

DELICIOUS!" he exclaims loudly.

"Wow, maybe he is tough," the lion thinks to himself.

A rat, who'd just seen the cat's trick explains the situation to the lion.

"Let's teach him a lesson," the lion roars.

As the two race back towards the cat, the cat quickly yells:

"Where is that damn rat? I told him to fetch me another lion a few hours ago!!"

When I was a kid, bedtime was 9 pm and I couldn't wait to be a grownup so I could go to bed anytime I wanted.

Turns out that is 9 pm.

Annoyed at her mum, a teenage girl decides to prank her to get some attention. The girl wrote a note saying, "I have run away – don't bother trying to find me", put it on her desk, and hid under her bed to catch her mum's reaction.

The mother comes home, sees the note on the desk, and

immediately pulls out her iPhone to call her husband. "Good news honey, we don't have to send her off to college and spend all that money, she left on her own!"

The daughter waits for her mom to leave the room and then bursts into tears. She climbs out from under the bed and sees a note taped to the door. The note reads "I can see the light of your phone from under the bed. I'm making dinner, it'll be ready in 30."

I just realised that I messed up and bought tickets to the NRL Grand Final that's taking place on the same day as my wedding. So, if anyone would like to take my place, it's on Sunday and her name is Sophie.

"My three favorite things are eating my family and not using commas."

A man is interviewing for a new job:

"What is this big gap on your resume?" a recruiter asked.

"I went to Yale for 4 years," he says.

The recruiter is impressed and offers him the position.

The man is excited and responds:

"That's awesome, I am so happy about this because I badly needed this Yob."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel"

- Maya Angelou

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