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From the Editor



The October Budget to be released by the Federal Government is shaping up to be even more important than when the ALP came to government at the May election.

Whilst there were some warning signs at the time, the economy is facing increased challenges, including the highest inflation rate for some decades and the prospect of a possible global recession.

The Government came to power on the back of a series of promises and the Budget will address some of the Government's priorities, including climate

change, tax, employment, skills, health, and aged care. It must now balance these priorities against the increased challenges we face.

The RBA is addressing inflationary pressures with the short-term solution of raising interest rates. Interest rates are unfortunately a very blunt tool, treating all sectors of the economy the same, whether it is strong or struggling. It also is more effective with "demand pull" inflation whereas much of the current inflationary pressures are of the "cost push" variety. Interest rates can also have some lag in their effects on inflation. The RBA must tread carefully or risk pushing the economy into recession.

Housing prices have already fallen, by a considerable amount in some parts of Australia. This will result in a fall in consumer confidence. Those with substantial mortgages are facing real challenges, particularly those new in the market that may well find that their outstanding mortgage is greater than the current value of their property. Many will have some savings they can dip into, but this has its limits.

It is pleasing to see that the RBA eased back on the rate of interest rate increases in October and it is hoped that future increases will now be smaller.

It is also welcome to see that the ABS is now releasing monthly CPI figures, instead of quarterly, to help reduce the lag between rate increases and the release of inflation figures.

The Government is faced with addressing inflation with longer term but more targeted measures, including energy costs and labour shortages.

At the same time it must support the local economy to keep growth positive and prevent a recession.

The October Budget will need to be very carefully crafted and a delicate balance between political and economic imperatives. It also must leave some flexibility in dealing with a changing economy and world.

We wait with interest for the release of the October Budget in what will be a major test for the new Government.

Garry Hardie
Publisher and Editor

ON THIS MONTH'S COVER

Nihon University which won two awards for Built at the 2022 Master Builders Newcastle Excellence in Building Awards. Built also won the Commercial Builder of the Year Award as well as an award for their Coal LSL office fitout. See page 18 for more information on these Awards.



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Allambi Care wins industry collaboration award

Allambi Care has won the 2021 NSW Industry Collaboration Award at the NSW VET Training Awards for their dedication to providing the very best training for its army of out-of-home care workers.

In collaboration with Bradford Institute of Advanced Education, Allambi Care employees have been offered the chance to complete a Diploma of Community Services through a work-integrated program that offers a 360-degree learning experience. Since its inception in 2016, more than 200 Allambi Care employees have completed the Diploma through the training program. Of those, 72 have continued on to study a Bachelor of Human Services.

The design of the training program demonstrates Allambi's commitment to responding to the multiple needs of its people, rather than their case workers following a pre-determined course booklet.

By moving away from that traditional style of teaching, Allambi instead brought together several effective teaching methods to ensure the program catered for everyone's needs. This included workshops delivered by sector-skilled and qualified trainers, utilising the abilities of Allambi's full media team to deliver content numerous engaging ways, and calling on the real experiences of Allambi's teaching crew to improve the learning experience.

Allambi Care CEO, Simon Walsh, said he was proud that Allambi's determination to better their people and their services had been recognised.

"Our training program has been invaluable for Allambi Care and our people. It's allowed us to retain more staff which provides stability to the young people we serve," Simon said.



Allambi Care team

"The program boasts a 95% completion rate, which is unbelievable, and we've seen an ability and a willingness of our education partners to co-invest in the learning of our people.

"We're proud to have been recognised at a state level for our program, and we're committed to continuing to improve the lives of those in our community through the dedication and commitment of our people to service excellence."

In addition to this award, Allambi was also announced as state finalists in two categories at October's NSW State VET Awards. These were:

- The 2021 NSW Industry Collaboration Award, which recognises exemplary skills development collaboration between an employer and at least one organisation delivering nationally recognised training; and
- The 2021 NSW Large Employer of the Year Award, which recognises a large enterprise which has achieved excellence in the provision of 'nationally recognised training' to its employees.



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Local researchers tackling cyberattacks against IoT devices

A joint research project between Newcastle-based IT company Strategic Group and The University of Newcastle (UoN) is tackling the risk of cyberattacks on Internet of Things (IoT) devices. IoT devices are becoming increasingly used in various applications, ranging from home use to critical national infrastructure.

A compromised device, such as a smart home or commercial system, can act as a zombie, intensifying the scale of a cyberattack on other devices on the same network. This poses a significant risk to businesses and in homes.

Researchers have found a Secure Smart Device Provisioning and Monitoring Service Architecture (SDPM) for improved security and management of rogue devices that can improve monitoring and maintenance of a business' fleet of IoT devices.

Strategic Group was assisted by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources - Innovation Connections Programme which is delivered in partnership with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). The Innovation Connections Programme assists companies connect and engage with publicly funded research organisations, and for the Strategic Group this Programme facilitated a connection with The University of Newcastle to work on the project.

The local Innovation Connections Facilitator Dave Fleming assisted with an introduction to The University of Newcastle which had the local facilities and expertise to assist with the project and work with Strategic Group.

Currently farms and agriculture producers use a range of smart technologies, from monitoring soil moisture and pH levels, through to drones taking aerial photographs of crop fields.

While all these devices are beneficial and can help improve productivity, they also have the potential to create vulnerabilities in information and cyber security.

"It has been well publicised how easy it can be to hack into different IoT devices which leaves these agribusinesses open to having their data stolen or accessed for nefarious purposes," Aron said.

"In the research paper, myself and my fellow authors have explored a new solution for provisioning IoT devices that will enable secure data collection and devise a plan to trial the developed system in customer environments," Aron said.



Aron Robertson, Kallol Krishna Karmakar, and Peter Spiers with some IoT devices

The team developed a prototype application for Secure Device Provision Monitoring (SDPM) using Microsoft Azure. This cloud-based security application enables secure access to sensor data of devices and secure control of the devices, allowing precise control over the smart infrastructure. To present the efficacy of SDPM, they presented some attack case studies and attack scenarios which demonstrated how SDPM can defend against such attacks in real-time.

Peter Speirs, Internal Programmes Manager from Strategic Group worked part-time at the University, in conjunction with Professor Vijay Varadharajan, the Global Innovation Chair in Cyber Security, Dr Rukshan Athauda, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Information and Physical Sciences (Information Technology) and Mr Kallol Krishna Karmakar, Research Fellow in the College of Engineering, Science and Environment, to facilitate the project.

"Part of our work at Strategic Group is finding a way to make IT solutions easy and hassle-free for our clients. To be able to conduct research into a product which can offer the wider business community a safe and secure way to manage a range of different IoT devices and third-party software has been extremely exciting for our team," Aron concluded.

The research paper was formally published in the peer reviewed IEEE Internet of Things by Kallol Krishna Karmakar, Vijay Varadharajan, Peter Speirs, Michael Hitchens and Aron Robertson.



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Roberts Legal is now Roberts Crosbie Mortensen Lawyers

Newcastle law firm, Roberts Legal, has rebranded as Roberts Crosbie Mortensen Lawyers. The rebrand coincides with the firm opening offices in the Sydney.

Founded by Sam and Anna Roberts in October 2007, Roberts Legal established a reputation as a specialist business and litigation practice. Mr Roberts, who obtained Law Society Specialist Accreditation in Commercial Litigation in 2013, was one of only four Solicitors so accredited outside of Sydney at the time.

The firm now boasts more Accredited Specialists in Commercial Litigation than 99% of all law firms in New South Wales and is continuing to grow. With a team of 12 Lawyers including three Accredited Specialists in Commercial Litigation and a dual Accredited Adjudicator, the firm is now one of the most recognised commercial litigation and construction law teams in New South Wales.

Managing Director, Sam Roberts, said "We made a strategic decision earlier this year to revisit our trading name as part of our plans to tackle the Sydney market. We considered a number of options, but this name just felt right."

"The new name recognises the significant contributions that Partners, Amanda Crosbie and Ned Mortensen, have made to the growth of the firm over the last 5 years and the prominent reputations that they have each established in their own right."

Interestingly, Mr Roberts explained that when his firm engaged a consultant in 2021 to help them develop a mission statement, they were asked to reflect on past successes to uncover why they do what they do. In doing so they identified that a key motivator of each of Mr Roberts, Ms Crosbie and Mr Mortensen was a love of solving complex legal problems. Incidentally discovered that they had also each studied 4-unit mathematics for their High School Certificates, perhaps explaining why they have a knack for problem solving.

Ms Crosbie, who grew up in Newcastle, began working for the firm in 2015 and became a partner in early 2019. She now heads up the firm's Corporate Advisory & Business Services team and acts as virtual in-house counsel and trusted advisor to many of the firm's larger clients.

"Amanda was always an exceptionally capable and diligent lawyer. She could do it all and clients loved her because she was highly organised and delivered great client service. We knew from very early on that she would be a great leader and that we wanted her to be with us for the long run" said Mr Roberts.

Ms Crosbie said "It feels surreal to be a named partner of a law firm and I am incredibly proud to be part of a team that supports and encourages staff to further their careers. It's been a big year so far. We've already experienced solid growth in our corporate advisory and commercial transaction practices. With the rebrand, our new Sydney offices and a new website about to go live, I'm really excited for what the future holds," she said.

Mr Mortensen, who came to the legal profession after having worked for 20 years in the construction industry as a project manager and expert witness, joined the firm in 2017 and became a partner in late 2019.

He now heads the firm's Building & Construction Law team and is an accredited Adjudicator under the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999 (NSW) with both Adjudicate Today and the ABC Dispute Resolution Service.

"Ned [Mortensen] is an amazing lawyer and a real asset to the firm. He is highly regarded [in the legal industry] and sought out by clients because of his dual qualifications and experience in both law and construction. Commercial contractors and home builders love him because he is extremely knowledgeable, talks their language and gets straight to the point. He is particularly adept at dealing with security of payment adjudications and claims involving defective works and delays," said Mr Roberts.

Mr Mortensen finished his career in construction in Sydney

as a senior project manager for Bovis Lend Lease where he was responsible for project managing large projects including an infrastructure project with a value in excess of \$200 million.

"I completed some additional legal subjects when finishing my construction degree in 1998 and always had an interest in law after that. After leaving Lend Lease I started a building inspection company in Newcastle and completed a law degree while operating that business and appearing as an expert witness in home building disputes in NCAT [the NSW Civil & Administrative Tribunal] on several occasions," said Mortensen.

"I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities that I have had with Roberts Legal. I was able to really accelerate my career with a focus on the construction industry and be involved in some interesting and complex building disputes," he said.

"I enjoy advocacy work and the challenge that comes with appearing in the Supreme Court before Justice Hamemerschlag and running hearings in NCAT where my opponents have briefed Barristers. More recently I have been privileged to be appointed to Adjudicate Today's select panel of Adjudicators, where my role is to determine building disputes under the [Building and Construction Industry] Security of Payment Act".

Mr Mortensen said "Having my name on the door feels extremely rewarding. I am thankful because it will help me to get my name out further and to attract and help more businesses in the construction industry, an industry that I am still very passionate about.

Roberts Crosbie Mortensen Lawyers specialise in Commercial Litigation, Building & Construction Law, Business & Company Law, Workplace Law and Corporate Insolvency & Restructuring. Their Newcastle office is located in the Telstra Civic building on Hunter Street (adjacent Newcastle Court House).

The firm opened its Sydney office on 1 September 2022 located in the CBD at Level 15, The Chambers, 370 Pitt Street, Sydney.

Sam Roberts



Amanda Crosbie



Ned Mortensen





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Atwea Values in Education Awards 2022

Atwea College celebrated its annual Atwea Values in Education Awards (AVEAs) on 7 September, held during Adult Learners Week. Atwea's night of nights recognises the hard work and dedication of the trainers, teachers and students of Atwea College and Alesco Senior College.

Over 160 people gathered at Fort Scratchley, Newcastle to connect and share stories about educators and students that bring to life the values of the college, integrity, inclusion and innovation.

Atwea is unique in facilitating both Adult and Secondary Education and the AVEAs allow us the opportunity to recognise and celebrate this uniqueness. Adult Learners Week is a global celebration and in 2022 the theme is 'Connect with Learning'. Every day at Atwea, our students and educators create connections that lead to positive outcomes. Not just a connection to their work and study, but a connection with their peers, and a connection to a purpose that will build a better future.

Adult Learners Week gives us a chance to celebrate these connections. At the AVEAs we acknowledge the work of our educators and students who are at the frontlines of our organisation. We appreciate their efforts every day and the work they do in transforming lives and unlocking potential.

"These awards recognise staff and students who embody our values, consistently strive to deliver high standards of work, have respect for others and can share their solutions for our changing world", said Chris Seyenser, Chairperson, Atwea College Board.

Alan Melling Memorial Award for Integrity	Michelle Gorton
Atwea Award for Inclusion	James Vial
Ray Sandy Memorial Award for Innovation	Stacey Street
Atwea Award for Integrity	Ivy Kelly
Atwea Award for Inclusion	Amanda Dawson
Atwea Award for Innovation	Beaudene Jackson
Integrity in Education	Sharni Doyle
Inclusion in Education	Juliet Hinchliffe
Innovation in Education	Wendy Ratcliffe
Alesco Award for Integrity	Emma Peka
Alesco Award for Inclusion	Talitha Quinn
Alesco Award for Innovation	Callum Mills
Atwea Student of the Year	Olivia McLean
Atwea Trainer of the Year	Jaimie Adamson
Alesco Teacher of the Year	Grant Dennis
Paul Mather Memorial Award:	
Alesco Student of the Year	Emily Large

Atwea Training Coordinator Sharon Galanis with Beauty Trainers Alison Yarnold, Jaimie Adamson (Atwea Trainer of the Year) and Thida Murphy



Alesco Student of the Year Emily Large; Jae Shelton, Alesco Award for Inclusion nominee; Alesco Student Welfare Officer Sarah Fergus; Alesco Head Teacher Sally Tassell and recipient of the Alesco Award for Inclusion Talitha Quinn



City of Newcastle presents vision for sustainable waste future

Summerhill Waste Management Centre will be transformed into an innovative regional recovery hub under a 20-year vision to reduce waste, increase recycling rates, strengthen the economy and create new jobs in Newcastle.

The vision has been outlined in City of Newcastle's (CN) draft Our Sustainable Waste Strategy, which was tabled at the Council meeting on 27 September ahead of a proposed six-week public exhibition period.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said developing a sustainable solution for waste was crucial for the future of our planet, our people and our prosperity, while also ensuring we're able to manage the waste generation associated with ongoing population growth.

"During the next 20 years, Newcastle's population is expected to grow by more than 15 per cent, which in turn will lead to an increase of almost 18 per cent in waste generation," the Lord Mayor said.

"Our Sustainable Waste Strategy focusses on reducing the amount of waste going to landfill and changing the way we return, reuse, repair and recycle resources.

"Our draft Strategy will deliver significant benefits to the planet by preserving our finite resources and reducing emissions, while also protecting and creating new jobs in Newcastle and unlocking economic opportunities for local businesses and industry through the circular economy."

"This is an important milestone for City of Newcastle in our journey to reduce our emissions, protect our environment and implement our commitments to sustainability under our adopted Climate Action Plan and Community Strategic Plan."

Newcastle Deputy Lord Mayor Declan Clausen said the Strategy proposes a mix of infrastructure and service provision supported by educational campaigns and includes construction of the planned material recovery facility and organics processing facility at Summerhill.

"We're committed to increasing our capabilities for the recycling and reuse of products in order to meet the State and Federal targets of diverting 80% of recycling and 50% of food waste from landfill," Cr Clausen said.

"This includes investing in the infrastructure needed at Summerhill to allow residents to easily increase their recycling rates, with a recent kerbside waste audit showing that more than half of the waste in our red-lidded bins has the potential to be recovered in an organics processing facility, which can then be processed into compost for reuse in agriculture, landscaping and home gardens.

"By capturing more of the value from more of our waste, we're localising a new resource stream, which may have significant benefits to local businesses and industry, kick-starting a local circular economy.

Deputy Lord Mayor Declan Clausen at Summerhill Waste Management Centre solar farm



Get Smart Promo Group scoops five awards at APPA 2022

On 24 August, The Australasian Promotional Products Association (APPA) announced Get Smart Promo/Unipromo as the winner of five Awards at the APPA Marketing Excellence Awards ceremony and gala dinner held at the Crown Casino, Melbourne in front of hundreds of the promotional product industry's elite. These highly prestigious awards recognise the phenomenal marketing creativity in the promotional products industry.

Michelle Ford, General Manager said "Get Smart Promo started from humble beginnings to now employ over 20 staff and next year celebrating 23 years in business, I'm very proud of our team. They are passionate and creative and their number one focus is delighting our clients, finding the right merchandise solutions to

exceed our client's business objectives".

Get Smart Promo & Unipromo received four Gold Awards in the following categories:

- Event Merchandise
- Not for Profit
- Integration to a Media Campaign
- Product Innovation & Design.

Topping off the night, Get Smart Promo & Unipromo also walked away with the industry's highest award, the Platinum Award for Overall Excellence, for outstanding work in the Event Merchandise category.

"This is the second time our team have won the Platinum Award for Overall Excellence, reaffirming our team's creativity and ability to take a client's brief from concept to final product including designing, sourcing and logistics", said Karen Thomas, Operations Manager.



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Stockton Local Centre receives \$5 million upgrade

City of Newcastle has completed a \$5 million facelift of Stockton's Local Centre, delivering new footpaths, increased shade and improved pedestrian and cyclist safety in time for the school holidays.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said upgrading Mitchell Street in Stockton will provide a range of benefits for locals and visitors and continues City of Newcastle's significant investment in the coastal suburb.

The Local Centre upgrade is one of 26 projects valued at more than \$17 million delivered in Stockton during the past five years, including coastal protection works and the hugely popular Active Hub.

"I'm pleased to see the finished work on this important upgrade, which has created a safer, and more vibrant public space for the Stockton community to enjoy," Cr Nelmes said.

"With the school holidays now underway, this refreshed space encourages residents to support local Stockton businesses, providing improved spaces to shop, dine, and meet with friends.

"The Stockton Local Centre upgrade also includes a significant improvement to the natural environment with the number of trees in the area being increased from three to 40 trees, which is a major boost to the shade canopy along the main street.

"In a nod to Stockton's character and heritage, sandstone from existing kerbs has been retained and reused to frame garden beds and raingardens at three key intersections along Mitchell Street, while interpretive signage developed in collaboration with the Stockton Historical Society, will be installed along the street as well. "I am looking forward to celebrating the conclusion of works with the community on Sunday 30 October at our fun, family-friendly event celebrating all things Stockton and featuring lucky-door raffles, face painting and more."

Lucas Gresham, a local Stockton resident and President of Creative Property, states that the upgrade of infrastructure has been long awaited.

"The Stockton Local Centre upgrade entices new business to the area and as a community, it encourages people to shop local and provides a big economic boost."

Neighbouring Crown Street will also benefit from further enhancement works to be completed by end of this month.

The Stockton project was completed under City of Newcastle's Local Centres program, which is delivering upgrades to suburban centres across the local government area. Previous projects have included Beresford Avenue, Beresfield, Young Street, Carrington, James Street Plaza, Hamilton, Llewellyn Street, Merewether, Joslin Street, Kotara, and Sandgate Road, Shortland while construction is underway at Orchardtown Road, New Lambton.

Front row: Stockton Historical Society Research Officer Michelle Watson, Stockton resident Bernie Bernard, Pirate Point Surf Supply junior employee Fred Watson, Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes, CN Senior Project Planner Sarah Horan, Stockton Community Group Co-President's Alison Rigby and Melanie Taggatt. Backrow: CN Greening team member's Brett Milajew, Brett Foran, Josh Allen and CN Project Manager Dean MacMillan.



New brand for Northern Settlement Services

Northern Settlement Services Ltd (NSS) has launched a new name - Mosaic Multicultural Connections - at an official brand launch, recently held at the Newcastle Harness Racing Club.

The organisation, which was established in Newcastle in 1981, is a not-for-profit, working with multicultural communities across the Hunter, Central Coast and New England regions.

Originally established as a Migrant Resource Centre, Mosaic Multicultural Connections has supported multicultural people and communities to thrive in the local areas, for over four decades.

The organisation was renamed Northern Settlement Services in 2004 to better reflect the larger geographic region and has now chosen to rebrand to align with their 40th anniversary.

CEO of Mosaic Multicultural Connections, Sharon Daishe says she's delighted to have the new brand and logo for the organisation after operating as NSS for nearly two decades.

"The new brand and logo truly encompass who we are now and what we do and the ongoing evolution of our purpose," Sharon said.

"We've adapted and grown since our first name change in 2004, and it's important that our new brand represents all aspects of our organisation."

"The Mosaic logo is all about many different elements coming together to create one beautiful design, and that's who we are – we're many different cultures and many different services coming together to create a greater community."

Since their inception in 1981, Mosaic Multicultural Connections has grown to offer a broad range of multicultural programs including settlement services, aged care, youth and families. The organisation is led by Sharon Daishe, with support of a Board, led by Chair, Jon Chin and eight other members.

Guests at the brand launch heard from staff, a Dr Elizabeth Adamczyk from the City of Newcastle and those who have been assisted by Mosaic Multicultural Connections who explored the history and what the organisation means to them.

Dr Elizabeth Adamczyk representative for Newcastle City Council, Jon Chin (Chair), Sharon Daishe (CEO) and guest speakers Elina Hussein and Fryal Makhoul.



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University of Newcastle Alumni achieving on a global scale

A 'Corona Warrior' helping patients in India, a leading Australian film director, one of Australia's first Aboriginal doctors and a lawyer encouraging local women to join the Bar are just some of the University of Newcastle's high achieving alumni who were recognised at the Alumni Excellence Awards on 8 September.

The awards saw 11 University of Newcastle alumni celebrated, with awards for categories recognising Regional Leadership, Indigenous Alumni and Young Alumni.

Vice Chancellor, Professor Alex Zelinsky AO said the Alumni Excellence Awards recognised the qualities that have seen these alumni succeed after graduating.

"Students from the University of Newcastle are achieving great things from a local and an international perspective and continuing to recognise and celebrate the achievements of students even after they graduate is important.

"We have seen some outstanding alumni who have made a really positive difference to the world, including Dr Nashwa Najib who studied a Master of Philosophy (Medicine) at the University was recognised with the Young Alumni Award for showing tremendous tenacity, compassion and determination working in India as a Doctor.

"At the height of COVID, Nashwa would consult almost 300 patients during a six-hour shift and when the hospital ran out of ICU beds, she made the decision to assess patients in vehicles or ambulances upon arrival.

"Nashwa's unwavering dedication to her patients, secured her the honorary title of 'Corona Warrior' for her medical services to the hospital during the pandemic.

"We have a network of more than 161,000 graduates across 152 countries. I hope the achievements of our graduates are an inspiration for both our current students and people who are about to complete their HSC and might be wondering what the future holds for them. Our message to these students is – there's a place for you at our university and it can be an incredible springboard for your career.

"The achievements of our Alumni are a great reminder of what can be achieved after studying at our University."

Dr Amandeep Hansra, who received the National Leadership Award and studied a Bachelor of Medicine credits her experience at the University of Newcastle for helping her to become a leader within her field.

"The University motivated me to want to do something great. Not to just accept the status quo, but to really change the whole system," said Amandeep.

It is Amandeep's entrepreneurship and leadership that led her to instrumental roles in telehealth services such as Medibank's Nurse Triage and GP After Hours, as well as Telstra's Readycare, for which she served as the CEO and Medical Director.

Local Solicitor, and Bachelor of Law alumni Elizabeth McLaughlin was also awarded the Regional Leadership Award. Lizzie has spent her career committed to making positive and constructive contributions to her community.

Lizzie worked as Associate to a Judge of the High Court of Australia. As a mentor of Newcastle Law students, she also established the 'Making the Leap' program that encourages young women in Newcastle to join the Bar.

Professor David Newman was honoured with the prestigious Alumni Medal for Professional Excellence for his work as a world authority on the effects of G forces on pilots.

Former Merewether local, Mike Exton who now heads up a \$4 billion global cardiovascular business was also recognised with the International Leadership Award.

The Alumni Excellence Awards were held at the University of Newcastle on 8 September. More information is available at www.newcastle.edu.au/engage/alumni/alumni-awards

Expansion of Newcastle Airport gains pace

Newcastle Airport's expansion is taking shape with enabling works for the new passenger terminal starting soon.

Newcastle Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock said the works will include a new premium car park offering, directly in front of the existing terminal.

"Newcastle Airport is growing to ensure we're fulfilling our purpose of being the airport our region deserves.

"Our work to be international-ready is gaining pace, and visitors to the airport will start to notice some changes over the coming months as our brand-new Premium Car Park begins to take shape.

"The design of this car park, as with the expanded terminal, is driven by sustainability. The 1,212 solar panels covering the car parks will produce 983,315 kWh annually, representing 21% of the airport's annual consumption.

"There will be around 160 parking spaces, with eight electric vehicle charging spaces, accessible and motorbike spaces. This complements the additional parking spaces we are adding at the airport in 2022," said Dr Cock.

This is the first stage in the delivery of the Newcastle Airport terminal expansion that will commence in 2023. The car park works will commence soon and run through to Q2 2023.

To make way for the construction of the new Premium Car Park there will be some changes to the existing car parks at Newcastle Airport, and from Friday 16 September the Short Stay 1 Car Park will close to vehicles.

Dr Cock said the closure of this car park will have minimal impact on the availability of parking spaces at the airport.

"While some changes are being made to the car park layout, there will always be plenty of parking spaces available for you at Newcastle Airport including the existing Premium Car Park which will continue to operate until the new facility is opened."

"We are working hard to minimise disruption to passengers and visitors throughout the project and will do our best to make everyone's journey through the airport as stress-free as possible."

While Short Stay 1 Car Park is closed, visitors to the airport will still be able to park close to the terminal in the existing Premium Car Park or the upgraded Short Stay Car Park, previously known as Short Stay 2.

This car park has been upgraded with additional spaces and new entry and double exit lanes, and is a short 3-5-minute walk to the terminal much of which will be via a covered walkway. The Long Stay Car Park has also been upgraded with additional parking spaces.

The number of accessible spaces in both car parks has also increased, and visitors always have the option to drop or collect passengers in the drop-off and pick-up zone directly outside the terminal.

There will be minimal impact for pedestrians moving from the Short Stay Car Park to the airport terminal, with pedestrian access available through the closed Short Stay 1 Car Park via a temporary undercover walkway.

Wayfinding signage will be in place to help guide visitors around the airport precinct with ease, and construction of the new Premium Car Park is expected to be complete in early 2023.

Newcastle Airport is on track to be ready for long range, high-capacity Code E aircraft by 2024, with both airfield and terminal works scheduled for completion in the first half of that year.





ROBERTS CROSBIE MORTENSEN LAWYERS

Tanya Chapman has been appointed as Senior Associate at Roberts Crosbie Mortensen Lawyers. Tanya specialises in assisting high net worth individuals and individuals with complex property and business interests with Wills, Family Estate Planning and Elder Law Issues. It is Tanya's mission to ensure that every client has the information they need to make informed decisions and plan for the future.



HOME IN PLACE

Lyndall Robertshaw has been promoted to CEO Australia at Hunter-based community housing provider Home in Place. Lyndall has worked with the organisation for 18 years and previously worked in the construction industry for five years. She holds director positions with PowerHousing Australia and the NSW Community Housing Industry Association. She is also a member of the City of Newcastle's Building Better Cities Committee and Newcastle Affordable Housing Working Party.



THE MUTUAL BANK

Felicity Laczina is the Mutual Bank's new Chief of Corporate Services. She brings a wealth of sector knowledge, having spent 11 years in People and Culture with Newcastle Permanent. Her most recent role was as Chief People Officer at Varley Group, one of Australia's oldest and most advanced engineering and manufacturing companies. Felicity leads a portfolio that includes People & Culture, Facilities, and Corporate Support.



MONICA CLARE RECRUITMENT

Monica Clare Recruitment has welcomed **Michelle Crawford** to the team. Michelle joins as HR Organisational Development Manager, leading a new HR Consultancy service in partnership with Being More Human. With Michelle's 20+ years of HR experience this service expansion means MCR now offers clients and candidates a more integrated partnership at a local level.



ADVITECH

Martin Belk has joined Advitech as Senior Environmental Engineer. Martin is an Air Quality Specialist, focused on Air Quality and Odour Impact Assessments. Martin began his work life as a Trainee Chemical Engineer at the Newcastle Steelworks and studying part time at the University of Newcastle. In the last two years of his traineeship he worked as a supervisor/metallurgist in the Steelmaking Department. He then moved to Environmental Consulting and has over 20 years' experience in all types of Air Assessments for a broad range of clients.



THE MUTUAL BANK

Matthew Dunnill has joined The Mutual Bank as the new Chief Member Officer. He has a strong banking pedigree been Head of Retail and Third-Party Distribution at Queensland Country Bank (QCB) which has approximately \$3 billion in assets. It's a homecoming for Matthew who is originally from the Hunter. He has an MBA from the Australian Institute of Business and has worked in the financial services sector his entire career, originally with St George/Advance Bank and later with Auswide Bank.



PROSPERITY ADVISERS GROUP

Prosperity has appointed **Ben Travers** as Associate Director of Financial Services. Ben has over 20 years' experience across boutique, accounting and ASX listed firms with the knowledge and experience to design comprehensive and personalised strategies. Ben has been recognised in the industry with several awards, including Money Management's Financial Planner of the Year and Financial Standard's Power50 Most Influential Advisers in Australia.



THE MUTUAL BANK

With a diverse legal and governance background, **Merran Magill** has been appointed Company Secretary and Corporate Governance Manager at The Mutual Bank. As a solicitor, Merran also conducts the in-house legal responsibilities along with contract management. With a Bachelor of Business along with a law degree, Ms Magill has worked as a solicitor in Sydney, Newcastle and New York, and most recently in a similar role at the Newcastle Airport. She also serves on the Board of Directors for a Newcastle-based training and education provider.



MERRIDY ELPHICK LAWYERS

Joanne Gunaratne has been promoted to Solicitor at Merridy Elphick Lawyers after working as a Senior Legal Secretary and Paralegal for the last two years. The position involves providing support, advice and representation in Courts and at mediation to clients in the areas of parenting, property settlement and divorce. In May 2022, Joanne was admitted to the NSW Supreme Court, allowing her to practice as a solicitor in the Courts of NSW. Joanne is also admitted to practice in the High Court allowing her to appear in Courts with Federal jurisdiction.



ADVITECH

Joining Advitech as their new Structural Engineering Group Leader is **Guy Douglas**. Guy has nearly 30 years' experience in all types of structural engineering, including new builds and upgrades of multi-story commercial and residential buildings, shopping centres, mining infrastructure and hospitals. Guy has a varied and interesting work history, having started work as an apprentice plumber. He then moved on to structural draughting on both drawing-board and computer CAD and later completed a diploma in mechanical engineering, followed by a BE in structural engineering.

Turning the spotlight on the Newcastle economy

Steve Dick
Movable

We are not a capital city up here in Newcastle, and we are overlooked hugely as a region when you compare what we bring to the state, which is significant when compared to other major growth centres in NSW.

The Newcastle economy generates an estimated \$38.807 billion in output, 3% of the \$1.307 trillion output generated in New South Wales and 0.9% of the \$4.218 trillion output generated in Australia¹. The City of Parramatta, in comparison, has a Gross Regional Product of \$32.882 billion².

But this is the macro view, and plenty of business owners are wondering what's happening in different sectors of the economy and away from the realms of prices at the bowser or the checkout at the local Coles or Woolies. Here's my independent observations, based on over 20 years operating a successful business in Newcastle.

Coal drivers

Coal is driving this region, and the companies are splashing money with gay abandon. What was US\$50 per tonne in September 2020 is now US\$437.65 per tonne. The miners want to capitalise, so they are spending money to get more out of the ground.

The trouble is that when the price is US\$50, the mining companies don't invest in equipment, and now, with the supply chain issues we all hear about, sourcing new machines can take two years. Do you know that new Toyota you tried to order? Well, it's much worse for new mining equipment.

Thus, the miners are spending big to keep the current fleets running. I just completed a lease where a primary equipment service provider was involved. They told me they could not take another order for a machine rebuild until March 2024.

This spending won't last forever and will align with coal price movements. The price of coal is expected to decline back to US\$60 per tonne in 2027. This crossroads is half a decade away and should be enough time to carry the region through any national economic downturn.

Industry is being harmed

Our region has always taken pride in supporting highly competitive, very flexible, innovative industries that use our location costs to their advantage.

The establishment of Hunternet is an example of this innovation, allowing manufacturing industries to pool resources to compete nationally and internationally.

At the core of all our industries is property. However, property includes land, and land is the problem. The trouble is that we have a shortage of land in Newcastle, and if an owner rings in with a block for sale, they become your new best friend. A lack of land is not unique to the Hunter Region.

The trickle release of industrial land is driving prices up throughout the state, with prices north of \$1,500 per m² in western Sydney. These prices are making our \$500 per m² look cheap - especially given that for the first time in my 30 years, there is a constant influx of new businesses into the industrial areas of the Lower Hunter from outside the region.

However, it's not only land component driving rents up, but also basic supply and demand for industrial premises. There is little supply but high demand! In many circumstances, we are obtaining 30% increases in rent reviews. In one circumstance a major owner increased the rent on a large shed from \$800,000pa + OGs + GST to \$1,200,000pa + OGs + GST. Initially, the owner was told to bugger off, only to have the tenant call two months later to accept the offer.

Competitive advantage lies in manufacturing not coal

While the price of coal is going through this massive spike, the region needs to rethink how it handles itself and quickly because on the other side of the current boom times could be a catastrophic downturn as the developed world turns its back on coal as an energy source.

Now is the Hunter region's time to boost our competitive manufacturing advantage. Moreover, as the pandemic showed, Australia needs to bring back onshore some of the essential manufacturing lost to China and Eastern Europe over the past 40 or so years.

To do this we need the shackles on industrial land at Hunter Economic Zone released.

[1] <https://app.remplan.com.au/newcastle/economy/industries/output?state=gZ5wFklQP9AlmYAJuOkqkYFD54lvc5fwpKFgP1PeipDKD956f83lvfjHoo5wHo4m>
[2] [https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/business/invest-in-parramatta#:~:text=Parramatta%20by%20the%20numbers,-\(Back%20to%20top&text=The%20City%20has%20the%20perfect,NSW%20\(after%20Sydney%20CBD\).](https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/business/invest-in-parramatta#:~:text=Parramatta%20by%20the%20numbers,-(Back%20to%20top&text=The%20City%20has%20the%20perfect,NSW%20(after%20Sydney%20CBD).)

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.

Three Hunter-based builders in top builders list

Three Hunter-based builders are now in the Top 100 builders list for the previous year. Hunter Homes join, MJH Group and Montgomery Homes on the prestigious list for the first time.

The annual HIA-COLORBOND steel Housing 100 Report ranks Australia's largest 100 residential builders based on the number of homes commenced each year.

"Continuing its move up the ladder, Hunter-based MJH Group (NXT Building Group) moved up a spot to be the second largest home builder nationally with 4,143 starts in 2021/22. With 3,675 starts MJH Group also took second spot on the list of largest detached house builders nationally, and second spot on the list of the largest semi-detached dwelling builders nationally, with 468 starts."

"MJH Group, which trades predominantly in NSW as McDonald Jones Homes and Mojo Homes, also retained its established mantle as the #1 home builder in NSW with 2,556 starts during 2021/22."

"With 216 starts, Belmont based Montgomery Homes, moved up the national list 22 spots to be ranked the 66th largest home builder nationally and 19th largest in NSW," said Mr Jennion.

Placed 70th Nationally, 20th largest in NSW and on the list for the first time, was Heatherbrae based Hunter Homes with 202 starts, consisting of 188 houses and 14 units. As a result of their inaugural listing Hunter Homes also made the list of the Biggest Movers in 2021/22.

The key highlights from this year's HIA-COLORBOND steel Housing 100 Report 2021/22 shows that the largest 100 residential builders:

- Reduced their share of the new home building market from 44% (all time high) in 2020/21 to 36% in 2021/22.
- Accounted for 77% of the detached homes built in Australia in 2021/22.
- Built 15.0% fewer homes, from 88,215 home starts in 2020/21 to 74,973 in 2021/22.
- Built 4.0% fewer detached houses compared to the previous year, 21.3 per cent more multi-units.
- Despite this fall in the number of homes, earned 8.8% more revenue from home construction, up to \$34.7 billion in 2021/22 due to the rise in the cost of construction.

Constrained land supply sees knock-down rebuild market grow

"An unusually sharp rise in the price of residential land indicates the supply of land is not keeping up with new demand that has emerged during the pandemic," said HIA Senior Economist, Nick Ward

The HIA-CoreLogic Residential Land Report provides updated information on sales activity in 51 housing markets across Australia, including the six state capital cities.

"Over the year to the March Quarter 2022, median lot prices increased by 19.7 per cent. This is not a normal increase – it is the strongest annual growth rate since 2004.

"Constrained supply of land will limit housing activity in Greenfield areas from mid-2023 onwards."

"New data released by the ABS on demolitions suggests that knock-down rebuilds and small redevelopments are around 25 per cent of the market for house and townhouse builders in New South Wales. Encouragingly, this segment of the market appears to be growing rapidly, creating new opportunities for the industry," added Mr Ward

According to CoreLogic Economist Kaytlin Ezzy: "The scarcity of available residential land continues to be a driving factor across Australian land markets, with land prices surging at a time when the number of lots sold is declining. While increasing interest rates, rising construction costs and increased uncertainty, particularly across the building industry, has likely smothered some land demand, the surge in land prices suggests that those that want to build are finding it difficult to secure lots."

"With land often taking more than a decade to move through the development pipeline, it's unlikely we'll see any material change in land supply for some time," says Ms Ezzy.

Confidence returns in NSW property sector

Confidence within NSW property industry has held firm in the face of uncertainty around macroeconomic conditions, with firms remaining confident in their own work schedule and staffing levels, according to the latest ANZ/Property Council survey.

The latest survey of NSW Property Council members found the overall Confidence Index increased by 9 points in the September quarter to 121 points. A score of 100 in the Confidence Index is considered neutral.

Property Council's Acting NSW Executive Director Adina Cirson said the results reveal companies have confidence in their own operations, but external factors such as interest rates and construction costs are weighing on sentiment.

"Housing supply and affordability has remained as the most critical issue surveyed as we continue to face the issues and challenges the industry brings," Ms Cirson said.

"Confidence in the property industry is torn between the largely positive indicators within their own businesses and the swift moving uncertainties in the macroeconomic environment.

"On the one hand, work pipelines and employment expectations look strong, while on the other hand interest rates, inflation, construction costs, skill shortages and recessionary fears in Europe and the US give real cause for concern.

"While property industry confidence went up slightly, it masks these strong forces pulling sentiment in opposite directions," she said.

Over the quarter, future staffing level projections were strong in all states and territories, with the national average sitting at 22, significantly above the historical average of 16.6. A score of 0 is regarded as neutral.



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Expressions Of Interest PAUL TILDEN 0425 302 772



*Artist Impression
B2/7 Poynton Place, Thornton 460sqm*
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\$115,000 Net + GST ALAN TONKS 0474 744 422

LEASE



91 Elder Street, Lambton 186sqm*
Rear Parking – Yes! Disability Access – Yes! – Office or Retail.
\$70,000pa + OGs + GST STEVE DICK 0425 302 771

LEASE



8 Denison Street, Newcastle West 340sqm*
Large office suite with (8) car spaces, close to transport.
\$74,000 + OGs + GST JOSH BARNES 0425 302 773

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*Approximate

2022 Master Builders Newcastle Excellence in Building

On Friday, 9 September 2022, Master Builders Association Members and their guests, celebrated the 2022 Master Builders Newcastle Excellence in Building Awards. With over 500 guests, coming together at the NEX to celebrate the industry's night-of-nights and showcase building excellence in the Newcastle, Hunter, Central Coast, Manning, Tamworth and Oxley regions.

The 2022 Major award winners were: Greenbuild Constructions who took out Residential Builder of the Year for their incredible work on The Ridge; and Built NSW who won Commercial Builder of the Year for the impeccable work on both Nihon University and Coal LSL.

JPM Plastering won the 2022 Residential Subcontractor of the Year and Mullane Plumbing were announced as the 2022 Commercial Subcontractor of the Year. 2022 Young Builder of the Year went to Joel Skelton and Joanne Lever won the 2022 Women in Building Award for her achievements in the industry.

With acoustic entertainment from Tyler Chapman, laughs from Akmal Saleh and late night dancing with the great, Master Blaster Trio, it truly was a great night.

Master Builders would like to thank once again the judges for their time, expertise and knowledge in judging these awards, as well as major sponsor Newcastle Master Builders Apprenticeship Schemes and valued Gold and Silver Sponsors Alinta Energy, Buildcert, CBUS, Cranfield Group, Keystone Lawyers, Master Builders Insurance Brokers, Monica Clare Recruitment, SafeWork NSW, The Wests Group and Truecore Steel.

Master Builders congratulates all entrants on an outstanding year of quality projects and to all the deserving winners of the Newcastle Excellence in Building Awards.

Entries for the 2023 Newcastle Excellence in Building Awards will open in March 2023, and the 2023 Awards Gala Dinner will be held on Friday 9 September 2023.



Representatives from Built NSW, winners of Commercial Builder of the Year as well as awards for Restoration of an Historic Building over \$1 million, Extensions, Renovations & Refurbishments over \$50 million and Interior and Shop Fitouts over \$5 million.

AWARD WINNERS

2022 Commercial Apprentice of the Year - Aaron Laksa, North Construction & Building

2022 Housing Apprentice of the Year - Isaac Gordon Davis, Hainesbuild

Newcastle MBA Group Training Apprentice of the Year - Jack Garside, Country 2 Coast Carpentry

2022 University Graduate of the Year Award - Michael Sturn, Multiplex Constructions

Residential

Contract Homes under \$500,000 - Pycon Homes and Constructions, McNeil Residence

Contract Homes \$500,000-\$650,000 - Mavid Construction, Mavid Signature Home, Caves Beach

Contract Homes \$650,000-\$800,000 - Sorensen & Caldon, Mondrook Hideaway

Contract Homes \$800,000-\$1 million - Maple Design and Construct, Sea Haven

Contract Homes \$1-1.2 million - Maple Design and Construct, Lekker

Contract Homes \$1.2-1.5 million - Builtbyeli, King Residence

Contract Homes \$1.7-\$2 million - Custom Built Projects NSW, Redhead

Contract Homes \$2-2.5 million - Davis Builders NSW, Rocky Point House

Contract Homes over \$4 million - Greenbuild Constructions, The Ridge

House Alterations, Additions and Renovations under \$300,000 - Coastline Builders and Designers, Charlestown Extension/Renovation

House Alterations, Additions and Renovations \$300,000-\$450,000 - Bull & Bear Projects, Lee House

House Alterations, Additions and Renovations \$450,000-\$600,000 - Builtbyeli, Vogel Residence

House Alterations, Additions and Renovations \$900,000-\$1.2 million - Builtbyeli, Hamilton Courtyard House

House Alterations, Additions and Renovations \$1.2-1.6 million - RTC Construction NSW, Claut Residence Alterations & Additions

House Alterations, Additions and Renovations over \$1.9 million - Trademark Building, Legato House

Medium Density - Dual Occupancy - Custom Built Projects NSW, Navala Duplex

Medium Density - 3 - 5 Dwellings - Mavid Construction, Mavid Multi Residential, Whitebridge

Medium Density - over 5 Dwellings - Pycon Homes and Constructions, Cameron Grange

Display Homes Under \$400,000 - Pycon Homes and Constructions, The Bayside Display Home

Display Homes \$400,000-\$600,000 - Coral Homes, Lisbon 31 Coffs Harbour

Display Homes over \$600,000 - McDonald Jones, Panorama 39

Granny Flats - DCorp Constructions Renovations, The Loft Pearl Beach

Outdoor Landscaping Projects Residential Dwelling - Trademark Building, Legato House

Residential Fitout - Nadin West Joinery, Black Hill

Kitchen Projects under \$50,000 - Pluim Joinery, Wamberal Kitchen

Kitchen Projects over \$50,000 - Pluim Joinery, Noraville Kitchen

Bathroom Projects under \$100,000 - BRW Constructions, Lloyd Street, Merewether

Bathroom Projects \$100,000-\$200,000 - Builtbyeli, Booral Bath House

Bathroom Projects over \$200,000 - RTC Construction NSW, Claut Residence Master Bathroom

Swimming Pool Projects - Greenbuild Constructions, The Ridge

Energy Efficiency and Environmental Sustainability - Lou Projects, Copacabana House

2022 SafeWork Excellence in Work Health & Safety Award - Residential - Coastline Builders and Designers, Charlestown Extension/Renovation

Continued Page 20

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Commercial

Civil Engineering & Infrastructure - Milleen Constructions, The Cliff House

Extensions, Renovations & Refurbishments under \$500,000 - Bull & Bear Projects, Argyle Cafe

Extensions, Renovations & Refurbishments \$1-5 million - Skelcon, Mount Pleasant Winery

Extensions, Renovations & Refurbishments (MERIT) \$1-5 million - Graph Builders. Trinity Point Marquee - 8 at Trinity

Extensions, Renovations & Refurbishments over \$50 million - Built NSW, Nihon University

Restoration of an Historic Building Under \$1 million - Australian Heritage Restorations. Scone Railway Station Upgrade and Repairs

Restoration of an Historic Building over \$1 million - Built NSW, Nihon University

Interior and Shop Fitouts under \$150,000 - Bull & Bear Projects, Pop Eye's Laundromat

Interior and Shop Fitouts \$300,000 - \$400,000 - Skelcon, Indulgences Skin & Health

Interior and Shop Fitouts \$500,000 - \$900,000 - Skelcon, Vamp Cosmetic Clinic

Interior and Shop Fitouts over \$5 million - Built NSW, Coal LSL

Public Buildings under \$1 million - Parkwood Modular Buildings, Mount White

Public Buildings \$2-3 million - Lipman, Fern Bay Public School Pavilion

Public Buildings \$3-6 million - North Construction & Building, The Glen for Women

Public Buildings \$8-10 million - Kingston Building, Hunter Warbirds Museum & Scone Memorial Airport

Public Buildings \$20-30 million - Hansen Yuncken, University of Newcastle Q Building

Public Buildings over \$300 million - Multiplex Constructions, New Maitland Hospital

Apartment Developments under \$30 million - Stevens Construction (NSW), Ravello

Apartment Developments over \$100 million - Richard Crookes Constructions, East End Stage 1

Medium Density Developments under \$10 million - North Construction & Building, Compass Housing, Wickham

Medium Density Developments over \$10 million - Richard Crookes Constructions, Foreshore Lake Macquarie

Commercial Projects under \$10 million - Skelcon, Tallowood Lifestyle Clubhouse

Commercial Projects over \$10 million - North Construction & Building, Cutcher & Neale Head Office

Energy Efficiency and Environmental Sustainability - Stevens Construction (NSW), ING Tower Building, Wyong

2022 SafeWork Excellence in Work Health & Safety Award - Commercial - North Construction & Building, Cutcher & Neale Head Office

Judges Awards

Best Use of Masonry - Richard Crookes Constructions, East End Stage 1

Best Use of Timber - Skelcon, Mount Pleasant Winery

Best Use of Glass - Hansen Yuncken, University of Newcastle Q Building

Major Awards

2022 Women in Building Award - Joanne Lever

2022 Young Builder of the Year - Joel Skelton

2022 Subcontractor of the Year - Commercial - Mullane Plumbing

2022 Commercial Builder of the Year - Built NSW

2022 Subcontractor of the Year - Residential - JPM Plastering

2022 Residential Builder of the Year - Greenbuild Constructions

A national business with a local heart

Since Built was formed in 1998 the construction group has grown from delivering small quality fitouts to successfully delivering large scale construction, fitout and refurbishment projects across most property classes.

While the company has grown, at the heart of the business, remains delivering high-quality projects and building relationships based on being flexible, adaptable and reliable.

Looking to deliver for its clients on a local and state level across all sectors, Built expanded into the Newcastle and Hunter region. Built's Newcastle business started operations five years ago to deliver Spicers Guesthouse in Pokolbin, which later was awarded the Master Builders Excellence in Construction Award. Built had previously delivered for Spicers in Sydney and based on the successful delivery wanted to retain Built to also construct their latest guest house in the Hunter.

The 20+ strong Newcastle-based team, under the leadership of General Manager, Rod O'Neill has since delivered Master Builders Awards nominated projects, The Prince of Merewether fitout that revitalised a historic pub delivering new spaces and amenities, and dynamic food and entertainment precinct at Charlestown Square, The Corner, with 2021 award nominations including Creating Spaces LMCC Refit, and Newcastle Family Law Courts.

More recently, Built have proudly won Commercial Builder of the

Year in the 2022 Master Builders Association Newcastle Excellence in Building Awards, which cements its reputation for exceptional levels of quality and management on multiple jobs.

Taking the win for refurbishment of the former historic Newcastle Court House into the new \$49m Nihon University's Newcastle campus; with awards for both Restoration of an Historic Building over \$1m, and Extensions, Renovations & Refurbishments over \$50m. The team proudly also accepted the award for their Coal LSL office fitout, a 4255m² fitout over three levels including new interconnecting stairs, Studio M fitout and Stockland Greenhills Travelator, winning the Interior and Shop Fitouts over \$5m category.

"It was a great honour to receive the Newcastle and Hunter Commercial Builder of the year award. Despite only operating a few years in the market we have brought our Built Worthy philosophy and work ethics which have helped us to secure the top award. The Nihon project is a showcase of Fitout, Refurbishment and Construction combined which is Built's competitive advantage. A big thanks to the Built team, consultants, and our overseas client for assistance on the project. We're looking forward to more opportunities in the future." said Rod.

Other notable completed projects include CSIRO Cladding Newcastle, DESE Newcastle Office fitout and refurbishment, along with Uniting Garden Suburb and, LMCC Refit Lake Macquarie City Council. With new projects on the horizon, the team looks forward to continuing to deliver quality, innovative and sustainable projects throughout Newcastle and the Hunter Region for their clients.

THE NEW WAY FORWARD



Proud winners of Commercial Builder of the Year

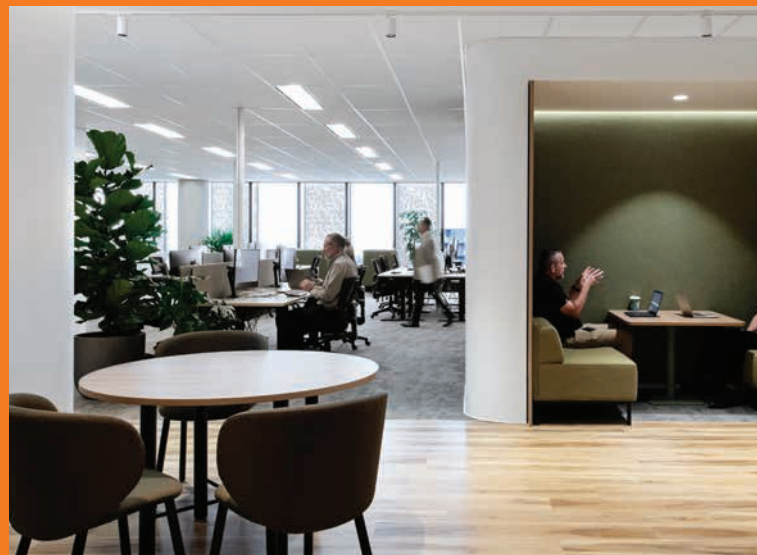
Since Built was established in Newcastle only 5 years ago, we've grown from delivering small quality fitouts to successfully delivering large scale construction, fitout and refurbishment projects across many property sectors. From reinvigorating Newcastle's heritage and cultural treasures to cutting edge education facilities, we specialise in innovation, quality and craftsmanship across every project.

We're proud to have our projects recognised at the 2022 Master Builders Association Newcastle Excellence in Building Awards, including refurbishment of the former historic Newcastle Court House into Nihon University's Newcastle campus; with awards for Restoration of an Historic Building over \$1m and Extensions, Renovations & Refurbishments over \$50m and our Coal LSL project, winning the Interior and Shop Fitouts over \$5m category.

Congratulations to our project teams, consultants, subcontractors and clients for delivering these award-winning projects.

We look forward to continuing to deliver quality, innovative and sustainable Newcastle and Hunter Projects for our clients. We're constantly growing and always on the lookout for great people to join.

Visit built.com.au to find out more



Built

THE NEW WAY
FORWARD



Metricon opens state-of-the-art Studio M in Newcastle

Metricon, Australia's leading home builder is ramping up their regional NSW presence, opening a brand-new selection studio and workplace, in a \$5 million investment to support the company's growth in the Newcastle and the Hunter region.

Located at 27 Donald Street, Hamilton, the state-of-the-art space spans over 1000 sqm and delivers the next level in design, style, customer inspiration and innovation.

The progressive customer selection centre, Studio M, delivers Newcastle home buyers with a seamless customer service experience with great levels of personalisation and customisation opportunities, without home buyers having to travel to Sydney to experience this.

The facility has undergone an extensive build program with Cunsolo Architects working in collaboration with Metricon, to develop a contemporary and interactive showroom designed to help customers with their interior and exterior selections.

In a move to complement the ever-growing display home network and burgeoning growth of builds in the Newcastle region, the opening of a second Studio M in New South Wales helps solidify Metricon's commitment and investment to the Hunter and Newcastle region.

David Shorten, Metricon's NSW Sales Manager said, "The Newcastle and Hunter region is Metricon's second largest market in NSW and the opening of a new Studio M demonstrates our commitment to customers building new homes throughout the region.

"Customers building with Metricon will enjoy a highly personalised experience in a world-class design environment.

"The innovative Studio M is designed to be an interactive showcase of a wide range of interior and exterior products from the best selection of local suppliers.

"This space is more than a showroom, it is a true design and style inspiration hub, and we cannot wait to start welcoming our customers through the doors," concluded Mr Shorten.



First look at final stage of East End revitalisation

City of Newcastle, together with Iris Capital, have unveiled the winning designs of an architectural design competition to complete the \$880 million redevelopment of its award winning East End development. A three-member independent competition jury unanimously selected the architectural design submitted by SJB, Durbach Block Jagers and Curious Practice for stage three and four of Iris Capital's development of 3 Morgan Street and 22 Newcomen Street.

The winning design features 235 dwellings across five buildings, as well as 1,731 square metres of retail floorspace and approximately 300 parking spaces, with an estimated overall construction cost in excess of \$150 million.

Strong design elements supported by the jury include a Market Square public space concept and perimeter colonnade, multiple public viewing corridors to the harbour, integration of green spaces, and a distinct character for each building.

The architectural design competition was run by an independent jury process under the governance of City of Newcastle and the NSW Government Architect's Office. It was administered by consultants Urbis on behalf of Iris Capital.

Iris Capital's CEO Sam Arnaout complemented the competition process and expressed his gratitude at the high quality of design that all the architects displayed.

A development application for the site will be lodged by Iris Capital by the end of this year.



Metricon named HIA's Top Home Builder seventh year in a row

Metricon has been named Australia's number one home builder for the seventh consecutive year with the release of the HIA COLORBOND Steel Housing Top 100 Report.

The 2021/22 Report which ranks Australia's top 100 residential builders based on the number of home builds commenced each year saw Metricon top the list with a total of 5,969 starts, across Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia.

Metricon CEO Peter Langfelder said he was proud of Metricon's ability to navigate through and thrive in the midst of arguably the most challenging market conditions the industry has ever experienced.

"Escalating construction costs, weaker consumer confidence, consecutive central bank interest rate increases, rising inflation plus speculation around the industry's stability all conspired against us and our competitors alike.

"Despite this, we managed to deliver 5,969 new Metricon homes to Australian customers during the past year. This is a very tangible proof point of our continued business strength.

"We're very proud to be ranked number one for the seventh consecutive year and to have grown Metricon's share of the national residential build market during this challenging period for the construction industry. This is a demonstration of the dedication of our team, our passion for what we do, and most importantly the Australian families we do it for.

"Much of the credit for our success must go to our staff, trades and suppliers whose in-depth knowledge, expertise and hard work has meant we've been able to deliver homes that are matched to the unique lifestyles and needs of our customers."

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My Home Builder is “running late”. When can I terminate my residential building contract and get another builder to complete the work?

Ned Mortensen
Roberts Crosbie Mortensen Lawyers

The General Contractual Position on “running late” in HIA, MBA and Fair Trading Contracts

Most residential building contracts used by home builders are the standard form of contracts published by the Housing Industry Association, the Master Builders Association, or the Department of Fair Trading (together, the Standard Form Contracts).

Helpfully, these Standard Form Contracts all deal with contractual terms stipulating the period of time for a builder to complete their works in a similar way.

The Building Period

Each of the Standard Form Contracts has a Building Period specified, usually by an item within the Schedules.

At the time of writing, the Building Period can be found in the HIA contract at item 6 of Schedule 1 and in the MBA Contract it's item 5(b) of schedule 2. Fair Trading's Contract has the period within the body of the Contract at Clause 6.

When does the Building Period start?

The Building Period does not automatically start once the Contract is signed by the parties.

Each of the Standard Form Contracts have a number of essential preconditions which must be satisfied in order to trigger the start of the Building Period.

These preconditions often include:

- a requirement for the owner to provide proof of their capacity to pay the contract price to the builder,
- production by the owner of evidence of their title to the land on which the house will be built, and
- the obtaining of certain approvals for the works.

It is within the builder's contractual rights to rely upon an owner's non-compliance with these preconditions to delay the start of the Building Period. The Building Period will, therefore, commence when each of the preconditions stipulated in the contract have been satisfied or waived. So, if you're an owner, be sure to meet these obligations as promptly as you can.

Adjustments to the Building Period (Extensions of Time)

Each of the Standard Form Contracts automatically entitle a builder to a reasonable extension of time if the works are delayed due to:

- inclement weather,
- variations to the works by the owner,
- anything done or not done by the owner,
- delays in getting any approvals,
- delays in the supply of materials selected by the owner,
- the builder suspending work in accordance with the contract,
- a dispute with an adjoining or neighbouring resident or owner, and
- just about anything else you can think of that is out of the builder's control.

In the case of both the HIA and Fair Trading Contracts, if the builder wishes to claim an extension of time, the builder must notify the owner in writing of the cause and estimated length of the delay within 10 business days of the occurrence of the causing event, or there will be no entitlement for an extension. So, if you're a builder, be vigilant, diligent, and do not let that opportunity pass.

In the MBA Contract there is no restriction on when an extension can be notified so if you're an owner, you must take events like inclement weather, variations and even material or trade shortages into account when considering reasonable adjustments to the Building Period.

Do Extensions of Time have to be approved by the owner?

It is a common misconception amongst homeowners that extensions of time have to be approved. They simply do not, they're automatic or pre-approved when the contract was entered into.

However, notifications of extensions of time by a builder can be disputed by an owner, giving the builder notice in writing setting out reasons for the dispute. The MBA Contract is silent on the owner's time window for notifying of disputes, the Fair Trading Contract gives the owner 10 business days and the Fair Trading Contract gives five.

Common reasons for disputing a notification of an extension of time include:

- That the period of extension is not reasonable having regard to the event causing the delay,
- That the delay was not caused by an event covered by the relevant contract, and
- That the cause of the delay was not beyond the sole control of the builder.

These justifications are frequently not straight forward and care should be taken before denying any claim for an extension of time, particularly where the denial is used to justify a conclusion that a builder is overrunning the Building Period.

Building works overrunning the Building Period

Other common misconceptions amongst owners are that; the contract somehow “expires” after the Building Period has ended; or that the builder overrunning the building period is a substantial breach of the contract that gives the owner a right to terminate the contract.

Nothing could be further from the truth, and there are two (2) reasons for this. To explain these reasons, however, it is necessary to explain some very basic contract law.

Some Basic Contract Law

Contracts consist of a collection of “terms”. A term is a description of an obligation of one party to another. For example, it is a term in each of the Standard Form Contracts that the owner has an obligation to make a progress payment to the builder within five working days of receiving a progress claim. Another example is the term obligating the builder to build the owner's house in accordance with the agreed drawings and specifications.

All terms, however, are not created equal. Lawyers divide terms into three classes. These are “conditions”, “intermediate terms” and “warranties”.

At a very high level, a condition is a term of a contract so important to a party, that the party would not have entered into the contract if not for its inclusion. A breach of a contract term that is a condition will give the other party a right to terminate the contract.

A warranty is a less important term of a contract that is collateral to the main purpose of the contract and is usually a statement of a required level of performance of a party to a contract.

Typical examples of warranties found in home building contracts are warranties that the work will be done with due care and skill.

A breach of a contract term that is a warranty will not give the other party a right to terminate the contract. A breach of a warranty will only give rise to the right for the non-defaulting party to be paid damages by the defaulting party.

An intermediate term is one with importance laying somewhere between a condition and a warranty. When an intermediate term is breached, it will only entitle a party to terminate if that breach is deemed serious enough to substantially deprive a party of the whole benefit they were intending to obtain by performance.

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Whilst sometimes a contract term prescribing a Building Period can be classified as an intermediate term, care needs to be taken if relying upon a breach of that term to terminate. For the vast majority of residential building contracts, the Building Period will not be an intermediate term. For the purposes of our brief residential building contract law discussion, we need not concern ourselves too much with intermediate terms.

So, back to warranties. In each of the Standard Form Contracts, the wording used is that the builder warrants that the work will be done with due diligence and within the time stipulated in the contract, or if no time is stipulated, within a reasonable time.

As explained above, a party cannot terminate a contract for breach of a warranty. Therefore, the builder's failure to complete within the time stipulated in the contract is a breach of warranty that does NOT give rise of itself, to the right of an owner to terminate the contract for breach.

In answer to the title question, this is the first reason why owners cannot terminate solely by reason of "late" delivery of the build.

Liquidated Damages

Returning to our brief summary of contract law, you will recall that a party's breach of a warranty will give the non-defaulting party an entitlement to claim for damages. Both the HIA and MBA Contracts anticipate such a remedy for a breach of the builder's warranty that the works will be delivered within the building period. That remedy is commonly known as "liquidated damages".

Liquidated damages is a specified amount of monetary compensation payable for delay damages which is agreed by the parties at the time the contract is entered into. These liquidated damages are payable by the builder to the owner in circumstances where the builder overruns the Building Period adjusted for any extension of time to which the builder is entitled. To be valid and recoverable, liquidated damages must be a genuine estimate of the loss the late delivery of the build will cause to the owner.

If you think a little more deeply about this, a contract that contemplates liquidated damages actually shows that, at the time the parties entered into the contract, they had effectively agreed in advance that the build might run for longer than the Building Period and what would happen if it did run late. That is, that if the build ran late, the remedy would be that damages would be payable, and not that the owner could terminate.

This is the second reason why an owner cannot usually terminate for a breach of a term stipulating work to be performed within the Building Period.

A quick note about Nominal Liquidated Damages

This next point is perhaps a little off topic, but worth mentioning.

Many builders will attempt to mitigate potential liability for liquidated damages by specifying a nominal amount for liquidated damages in the contract schedule, frequently \$1.00 per week. Following the builder's logic in doing so, if the build was delivered 20 weeks late, he would only then be liable to the homeowner in the amount of \$20.00.

Recently though, the NSW Supreme Court has pulled that security blanket from the builder altogether, ruling that nominal liquidated damages in home building contracts were incapable of capping the liability in the way the builder hoped, and that homeowners could still sue to recover compensation for the actual damage caused by the late delivery of the build. We call this suing for "damages at large".

As the Fair Trading contract is silent on liquidated damages altogether, damages at large is the starting point for recovering damages for late delivery of a build under that contract.

The slow but steady builder

So far, we have only thought about situations where the builder is building more slowly than the owner would like. We might call this builder "the slow builder". He comes to site more often than not, puts in a decent day's work when he is actually there, and is progressing the build. Yes, he's "running late" when viewed in the context of the contractual Building Period but he is still there and will finish a little late but within a reasonable time, albeit that he may be liable to the owner for damages for late delivery.

But what about the situation where a builder turns up to site less often than not, and does not even seem to care whether the works are progressing or not? That's an entirely different scenario which may actually give an owner the right to terminate.



The builder not building (Repudiatory Conduct)

Distinguishable from the slow builder is the builder not building or the absent builder. He is probably absent from site more often than not, and does not even seem to care whether the work is progressing or not.

This builder is likely to be "repudiating" the contract. The expression "repudiation" is used in several different senses. Here, we are using "repudiation" to refer to:

- conduct which evinces an unwillingness or an inability to render substantial performance of the contract, or
- conduct of a party which evinces an intention no longer to be bound by the contract or to fulfil it only in a manner substantially inconsistent with the party's obligations.

In this situation an owner can lawfully terminate for repudiation. However, homeowners need to be very cautious about deciding that their builder is such a builder and should not do so without first obtaining legal advice.

This is because an owner who incorrectly asserts that a builder has repudiated a contract and terminates on that basis, will themselves be repudiating the contract. The owner therefore will be liable to be sued by the builder for his lost profit on the unclaimed portion of the contract value at the time of the owner's unlawful termination, in the event that the builder elects to terminate for the homeowner's repudiation.

In a nutshell, the right of an owner to terminate for delay is generally not founded in the builder's lack of speed, nor is it founded in the builder having missed contractual milestones. Instead, any right to terminate is founded on the builder's lack of due diligence in progressing the works. A lack of due diligence that can evince repudiatory conduct.

But where is the magic line between the slow builder and the builder without diligence?

The NSW Court of Appeal has described the benchmark for lack of diligence as an elusive concept that has avoided judicial clarity for generations.

There are, however, a few cases that shed light on the proper tests for lack of due diligence and the Appeal Panel of the NSW Civil & Administrative Tribunal has in recent years been consolidating these judgments to formulate a determination as to whether an owner has the right to terminate for their builder not diligently progressing the works.

Steps to building a case for repudiation

The starting point is clear. In any contested Court or Tribunal proceedings, it will be up to the owner to establish a lack of due diligence, and a failure to do so at a final hearing can end up with a builder successfully suing the owner for any unpaid progress claims and his lost profit.

The next point is also clear. The contractual Building Period is not relevant to any assessment of whether a builder is progressing the work with due diligence.

What is relevant is what a reasonable time period would be for a diligent builder to complete the works. In most cases, this will require an owner to adduce expert evidence from an independent building consultant as to what a reasonable time for their particular build is.

An owner's hard lesson

The case of *Patel v Redmyre Group Limited* [2021] NSWCATAP 132, which was heard by the Appeal Panel of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, concerned, amongst other things, an appeal by an owner against an NCAT decision that an owner had unlawfully terminated their builder for delay, in circumstances where the contractual date for completion had come and gone, and the builder had only finished about half of the works under contract at the date of the owners' termination.

The owners were not successful in the initial hearing because, amongst other reasons, they had failed to prove that their builder lacked due diligence, and, therefore, that they had the right to lawfully terminate for what was a very late delivery.

The owners were also unsuccessful in the appeal.

Relevantly, the Appeal Panel observed that:

1. It is not sufficient for an owner to hold the firm belief that the builder has inappropriately delayed the completion of the building works and had therefore proceeded without due diligence. Rather, it is necessary for an owner to adduce appropriate evidence concerning the period during which a builder carrying out the work competently should have performed the work under contract.
2. Additionally, the owners should also show evidence that there were no circumstances preventing the builder from having performed the works at a more rapid rate.

The owner's inability or failure to demonstrate either in the case was their downfall.

When contract termination is valid

Only when the above two matters can be satisfactorily proved should an owner take the sometimes risky step of terminating for delay. Get this process wrong, and you can lose rights that you thought you had under the contract for compensation or worse; become liable to your builder for his lost profit.

For further information contact Roberts Crosbie Mortensen Lawyers on 1300 553 343.

They offer a Free Case Evaluation for all new enquiries.



Ned Mortensen is a Principal lawyer with dual qualifications in both law and construction and an adjudicator appointed by Adjudicate Today and ABC Dispute Resolution Service for adjudication applications made pursuant to the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999.



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NCC 2022 Stage Two published – prepare for change during the transition period

Ben Robertson
Arch Law

The 2022 edition of the National Construction Code (the NCC 2022) will be published on 1 October 2022.

Due to the number of changes introduced in the NCC 2022 it was published in two stages. Stage 1 on 9 May 2022 did not contain the new energy efficiency and condensation management provisions (now included in stage 2).

Transitional arrangement dates

To allow industry to time to adapt the following transitional periods are in place:

1. **1 May 2023** – General provisions of the NCC 2022 commence (excluding new liveable housing provisions and energy efficiency and condensation mitigation requirements).
2. **1 October 2023** – New liveable housing provisions commence, for those states and territories that have adopted the liveable housing provisions. NSW and WA will opt out and not adopt the new provisions due to concerns about construction costs. The provisions are aimed at “future proofing” dwelling accessibility – e.g. step-free entrance, a toilet on the entry level, and reinforced walls in the bathroom should future grabrails be required.
3. **1 October 2023** – New energy efficiency and condensation mitigation requirements commence.
4. **1 September 2025** – New lead free product requirements commence.

Actions

Builders should take action to prepare for the NCC 2022 during the Transitional Arrangement periods, including:

1. Review terms of construction contracts, sub-contracts, procurement agreements.
 - a. Are the increased costs for design, materials, labour and compliance able to be passed through by the builder to the client.
 - b. For projects with delayed construction certificate issuance (e.g. unregistered land), can the construction contract pass on any increased compliance costs.
2. Prepare with design team and design consultants to implement NCC 2022 changes.
3. Modify construction and procurement methodologies and work-flows to implement NCC 2022 changes.

Stage II NCC 2022 – Energy Efficiency and Condensation Management Provisions

The new energy efficiency provisions for residential dwellings contain two main features:

1. Thermal performance to meet the equivalent of 7 stars under the Nationwide House Energy Rating System (NatHERS); and
2. New homes to meet a whole-of-home annual energy use budget, having regard to energy use for heating/cooling equipment, hot water systems, lighting, and swimming pool/spa pumps.

The ABCB has indicated that NatHERS benchmark software will be updated. NatHERS has advised that beta versions of NatHERS software tools are now available, however, that software has not yet incorporated proposed thermal bridging changes for steel-framed dwellings.

Condensation management provisions include:

1. Mould index in the Verification Method (F8V1 of Vol One, and H4V5 of Vol Two, of NCC 2022);
2. DTS provisions for vapour permeance of external wall and roof space materials, and enhanced ventilation requirements (F8D1 of Vol



One of NCC 2022, and Part 10.8 of ABCB Housing Provisions);

3. Provisions for tightly sealed buildings within the Verification Method (H6V3 of Vol Two and J1V4 of Vol One, of NCC 2022).

Builders should take advantage of the transitional arrangement period to review their suite of contracts and adapt and modify their construction and procurement methodology and workflow to adapt to the new NCC 2022 requirements.

For further information contact Arch Law on (02) 4961 0002 or email Ben Robertson on ben.robertson@arch.law



Ben Robertson is a Solicitor at Arch Law. He has practised both within in-house environments (working for a project home builder with a footprint in NSW, Queensland and Victoria) and in private practice, acting for developers, builders, subcontractors, and property owners in relation to construction law matters. Ben has acted for clients in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, NSW courts, Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, Victorian courts, and Federal courts.

Sovereign Park development launched

Stronach Property has launched the Sovereign Park development in the Newcastle Suburb, The Hill. An official launch event was held in the project display suite in Darby Street, Newcastle on 15 September.

Keith Stronach, Managing Director, spoke to the attendees about the history of his company and the impressive range of development they had delivered in the city over four generations.

Steve Zappia from Marchese Architects spoke of the design of the development and the empathy to the surrounding green corridor and how the architecture paid homage to the history of Newcastle, whilst also delivering contemporary luxury apartments. Ed Crawford, Director, Colliers Residential, Newcastle, discussed the strength of the current market and how well Sovereign Park is situated for buyers in terms of offering, quality and location.

Sovereign Park comprises three low rise buildings and an elegant arc of Town Homes, surrounded by tropical gardens and private manicured grounds, fostering an active lifestyle and social connection amongst residents and friends. Facilities include a heated rooftop pool and wellness deck and a private pavilion for resident's use. An exceptional selection of spacious 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments or 4 bedroom townhomes are on offer, with completion anticipated in 2025.

Big wins for Parker Scanlon

Parker Scanlon is grateful to have been the recipient of some prestigious business awards recognising their outstanding team culture and contributions to the Surveying and Development Industry.

In 2021 they received the Professional Organisation of the Year Award from The Institution of Surveyors NSW, and also, the National Surveying Consultancy Excellence Award.

Earlier this year at the National Conference in Cairns, they once again received the Surveying Consultancy Excellence Award for a medium-sized business. This award acknowledges those who have shown an outstanding commitment to business vitality and culture, business accreditation, staff development, community involvement, support for young professionals and the professional image of surveying.

Being recognised at the highest level of excellence in the delivery of Surveying, Project Management and Town Planning is a huge win and an accolade for the team of which Managing Director, Mark Scanlon, is exceptionally proud.

Mark says he is continually growing in his knowledge as a business leader, creating an environment whereby his 30 talented staff can shine in their own area of expertise. He finds that when people are calm, and they have all the resources they need, then creativity and efficiencies come to the fore. Parker Scanlon has achieved this by implementing feng shui principles into their office, daily yoga stretching, lots of plants and break-out areas. A local masseur also helps with soothing tight necks and shoulders.

When employees perform at their best and deliver the best outcomes for clients, this in turn ensures the business can be at its best which is good for everyone.

All businesses have their moments of triumph. At Parker Scanlon when there is a win, they ring the office bell. It could be for, "I got the contract for the work we quoted on", "I just completed a complex boundary survey", or "I got through all my drafting tasks today plus two extras".



Credit: East Coast Photography

Great things happen every day. Whether they be big or small, technical or administration based, they are acknowledged and celebrated.

Having a large proportion of staff involved with field work, safety has always been important to Parker Scanlon. Five years ago, it was decided we do a complete overhaul of the Company Safety Management Plan from scratch rather than procure an "off the shelf system". A committee was formed with regular meetings with an emphasis on acting swiftly on any new ideas. From this, staff soon realised that their voice was being heard and a wonderful culture of caring and inclusiveness evolved. Mark said this whole project was the most rewarding to see develop as he knew the better the system was the better it would be for all staff and their families.

Parker Scanlon prides itself on having an extraordinary company and staff want to be part of this. The business focuses on cultivating a culture where each team member is valued and is at their best. This shines through the company's motto, "Parker Scanlon, where good people come to get things done."



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I was once asked at a job interview whether or not I could perform under pressure...

"No", I said. "But I can do a cracking Bohemian Rhapsody."

A teenager brings her new boyfriend home to meet her parents. They're appalled by his haircut, his tattoos, his piercings.

Later, the girl's mum says, "Dear, he doesn't seem to be a very nice boy."

"Oh, please, Mum!" says the daughter. "If he wasn't nice, would he be doing 500 hours of community service?"

A billionaire decided to throw a party around the pool at the back of his mansion and invited all of his buddies and neighbours, including Brian.

At the height of the party, the billionaire said, "I have a 5 metre man-eating crocodile in my pool and I'll give a million dollars to anyone who'll join him in the pool."

The words were barely out of his mouth when there was a loud splash.

Everyone turned around and saw Brian in the pool fighting madly with the crocodile, jabbing it in the eyes with his thumbs, throwing punches, head butting it, getting it in choke holds, biting its tail and flipping it through the air like some kind of martial arts expert.

Finally, after what seemed like an age, Brian strangled the crocodile and let it float to the top of the pool like a dead goldfish.

An exhausted Brian wearily climbed out of the pool with everybody staring at him in disbelief.

The billionaire said, "Well, Brian, I reckon I owe you a million dollars then."

"Nah, that's all right, I don't want it," said Brian.

The billionaire said, "Come on, I insist on giving you something. That was amazing. How about a new Porsche, a Rolex or some stock options?"

Once again, Brian said, "No thanks, but there is something I would like."

"Name it and it's yours," said the billionaire.

Brian replies "Ten minutes alone with that good-for-nothing dipstick that pushed me into the pool!"

How many telemarketers does it take to change a light bulb? One, but they have to do it while you are eating dinner.

Mrs. Smythe was making final arrangements for an elaborate reception.

"Nora," she said to her veteran servant, "for the first half-hour I want you to stand at the drawing-room door and call the guests' names as they arrive."

Nora's face lit up. "Thank you, ma'am," she replied. "I've been wanting to do that to some of your friends for the last 20 years."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us."
- Winston Churchill

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