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Hunter Business Review

DECEMBER 2020
VOLUME 16 NUMBER 11
Print Post Approved 100002454

16TH YEAR
OF PUBLICATION



WOMEN IN BUSINESS

MINING &
ENERGY UPDATE

Australia \$6.60

ISSN 2202 - 8838 (Print)
ISSN 2202 - 8846 (Online)



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PUBLISHED BY:

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Published monthly (except January)
 Hard copy circulation: 5,000
 Also available online

www.HBRmag.com.au

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From the Editor



Well, 2020 has certainly been a challenging year.

We commenced the year in the grips of the worst bushfire season on record in many parts of Australia, with widespread destruction of millions of hectares of bush and thousands of buildings. Along with the deaths of dozens of people, the fires are estimated to have killed billions of animals.

This was then followed by floods in numerous parts of Australia, including some that were just in the process of trying to recover from the fires.

Then of course the COVID-19 pandemic hit, disrupting life in almost every country on the globe.

Economically, most Australian businesses have had a very difficult year, with quite a number closing and unemployment rising.

Economic support packages, especially by the Australian Government, have kept many businesses afloat and there are positive signs that the business sector is starting to recover, just as most of the Government support is coming to an end.

Real GDP increased by 3.3% in the September quarter – above market expectations and the largest quarterly increase since 1976.

The unemployment rate rose slightly in October, rising from 6.9% to 7.0% but this was as a result of more people looking for work. An estimated 178,800 jobs were actually created, again a figure above market expectation.

We still have a long way to go to be at the pre-COVID level of economic activity but have made some significant steps towards recovery.

There will be some new challenges to face, including ongoing tensions with China. It will also be interesting to see how the election of Joe Biden will change US policy, particularly on more global issues.

But all in all, we can face the new year with greater optimism than we had for most of 2020.

HBR would like to thank our readers, advertisers and story providers for their support throughout the year.

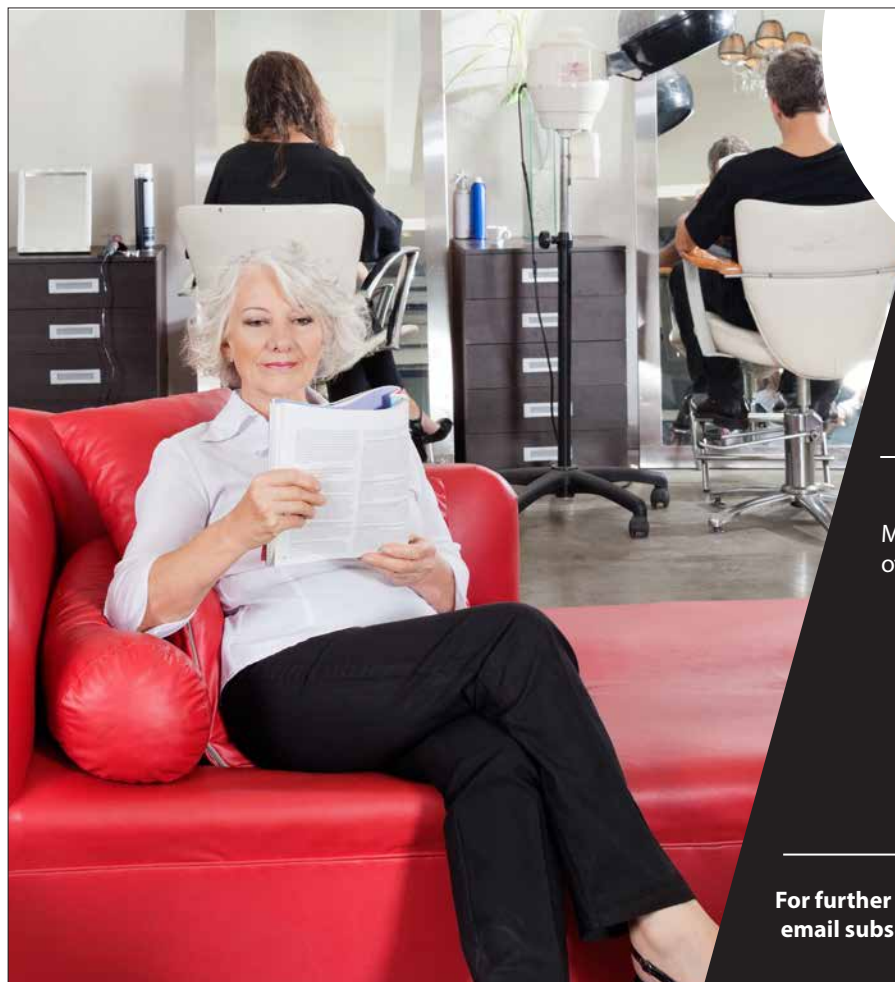
We hope you have some time to relax over the Christmas period and recover from a very challenging year.

We wish you a happy and prosperous 2021.

Garry Hardie
Editor and Publisher

ON THIS MONTH'S COVER

This issue includes the annual **Women in Business** feature. On the cover are five local businesswomen that have interesting but different stories to tell. See page 20 for the start of the feature.



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F/A-18A Hornet on its way to the Australian War Memorial

Image courtesy of: Department of Defence

F/A-18A Hornet A21-022 ready for transport at RAAF Base Williamtown prior to its move to the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

The first of two 'Classic' Hornets allocated to the Australian War Memorial for heritage display has been transported by road from RAAF Base Williamtown to Canberra.

Minister for Defence Industry Melissa Price said the arrival of the F/A-18A Hornet A21-022 is a major step in the preservation of Australian war history.

"This is a special aircraft for the RAAF," Minister Price said.

"It employed the first Australian weapon on Operation Falconer in 2003, and was also deployed on Operation Okra in 2016-2017.

"It is very fitting that it will now spend its next life on permanent display at the Australian War Memorial.

"This will be a fantastic opportunity for generations of Australians to view and appreciate example of Australian Air Force capability."

A21-022 was retired on 14 May 2020, having completed 30 years in service and 6131.5 flying hours with the Royal Australian Air

Force. The aircraft was partially disassembled for transport and was reassembled at the Treloar Technology Centre by Boeing Defence Australia during November.

An official ceremony to hand F/A-18A Hornet A21-022 over to the Australian War Memorial is planned for December 2020.

Newcastle Permanent partners with Fintech Australia

Newcastle Permanent has become the first customer owned financial institution in Australia to partner with Australia's national fintech association FinTech Australia, which strives to foster a thriving fintech ecosystem.

"This is a natural partnership for NPBS as we make connections to exciting fintech brands to enable us to further innovate, inform our digital evolution, and grow our business. This, in turn will support us providing a great experience for our customers," said Bernadette Inglis, Newcastle Permanent CEO.

FinTech Australia brings together players within the financial technology ecosystem, facilitating collaboration, connection and conversation between fintechs, government and companies.

The partnership is part of Newcastle Permanent's three year strategy which includes actively pursuing beneficial partnerships to help better support customers, grow the business and leverage the financial strength of the organisation.

The new relationship follows Newcastle Permanent's September announcement of a partnership with fintech Athena Home Loans. The Athena partnership was recognised with an industry accolade in mid-November for its partnership model.

"We are confident that this partnership with FinTech Australia will create opportunities for us: ones which align with our core expertise and strategy, while enabling us to grow our business and deliver high-quality retail banking services for our customers," Ms Inglis said.



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Builder appointed for Knights Centre of Excellence

The Newcastle Knights' \$20 million Centre of Excellence at District Park, Broadmeadow is a step closer following the appointment of construction company Richard Crookes Constructions to build the high performance, training, administration and multi-purpose community facility. The announcement comes a month after Hunter-based civil construction services firm Daracon Group commenced work on the three new playing fields at the site.

Member of the Legislative Council Taylor Martin said the project will create 80 jobs and provide a major boost to the Hunter construction industry as it recovers from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Acting Minister for Sport Geoff Lee said the Knights' Centre of Excellence would be the envy of sporting administrations around the country.

"Improving the quality and quantity of sports infrastructure in regional areas is a NSW Government priority," Mr Lee said.

"The Centres of Excellence Program provides integrated world-class high-performance training, administration and community facilities for the identification, development and fostering of rugby league talent.

"Once completed, the Newcastle Knights Centre of Excellence will be the leading rugby league facility in regional NSW and ensure the Knights continue to challenge for premierships in the years to come."

Newcastle Knights & Wests Group Australia CEO Philip Gardner said the Knights were on track to move into their new home ahead of the 2022 pre-season in 12 months' time.

The Newcastle Knights Centre of Excellence will include three full-sized training fields, a state-of-the-art gym, multipurpose community and function area, lap pool and sauna, theatre and players' lounge, rehabilitation space and office areas, walkway and cycle path.

The NSW Government is contributing \$10 million towards the project through its NRL Centres of Excellence Program which has been matched by Wests Group Australia on behalf of the Newcastle Knights.

\$1.5 million for improved access in the Cessnock CBD

Cessnock City Council has welcomed an announcement from the NSW Government that will provide more than \$1.5 million under the Active Transport Grant to help deliver new infrastructure to promote walking and cycling in the Cessnock CBD.

Catherine Cusack, Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter said the new infrastructure would make it easier for the community to get around their local area using active transport.

"This grant from the NSW Government will enable the construction of more than 3 km of shared path linking the Cessnock CBD with public schools, sporting complexes and community centres," said Ms Cusack.

"Active transport is a great way for the local community to get around and this new infrastructure will help to provide safe access for pedestrians and cyclists to schools and other local facilities."

Cessnock City Mayor, Councillor Bob Pynsent said it's fantastic news that will improve connectivity for both cyclists and pedestrians.

"Council will construct shared paths, for pedestrian and cyclists in the Cessnock CBD and a number of pedestrian refuges that will make it easier and safer for people moving around the town centre. The paths will better connect Bridges Hill Park to the CBD."

The project also includes pathways that provide safe passage for both pedestrians and cyclists looping the Cessnock CBD, connecting to two public schools and the Cessnock Youth Centre and Outreach Service.

2020 University of Newcastle Alumni Excellence Awards

A world-leading researcher and advocate for Indigenous health, a match-maker for species conservationists, a 'Power 50' in the Australian music industry and the co-host of Australia's first all Indigenous breakfast show are among the 2020 University of Newcastle Alumni Excellence recipients.

Celebrating the triumphs of the University's global alumni community, the Awards recognise innovation, creativity, and the exceptional leadership of alumni who have inspired others through their local, national and international achievements.

Professor Gail Garvey was awarded the Alumni Medal for Professional Excellence, the highest honour of the University of Newcastle's Alumni Awards. A proud Kamilaroi woman, Professor Garvey is Senior Principal Research Fellow at the Menzies School of Health and Deputy Division Leader for the Wellbeing and Preventable Chronic Diseases Division.

Professor Garvey's research career has focused on investigating cancer experiences and outcomes of Indigenous Australians. She has publicly advocated for better prevention and treatment of cancer in remote areas in Australia. Her work in cancer has illuminated critical shortcomings in health system performance for Indigenous Australians affected by cancer and has identified pathways to improve equity of access and outcomes.

The International Leadership recipient was Dr Kira Mileham for her work on species conservation; the National Leadership recipient is former Sydney Water Managing Director Kevin Young; and Special Advisor to the National Suicide Prevention Taskforce Dr Jaelea Skehan, OAM, is the Regional Leadership recipient.

Managing Director of BMG Australia, Heath Johns, received the Newton-John Alumni Medal; Dr Kasey McLoughlin was named the Beryl Nashar Young Researcher; and Senior Associate at King and Wood Mallesons, Luke Hawthorne, was named Young Alumni Award recipient.

Political Correspondent for NITV/SBS Shahni Wellington is this year's Indigenous Alumni Award recipient.

A new award introduced this year, the inaugural Convocation Medal for Exceptional Contribution, has been awarded to the Friends of the University.

Established to recognise individuals or groups who have contributed to the advancement of the University of Newcastle as influencers, advocates, advisors or supporters, the Convocation Medal recipient is selected by the Vice-Chancellor.

For nearly 40 years, the Friends have fostered a connection between the University and the wider community and have supported many important initiatives including the Student Scholarships, collectively raising more than \$1m.

The Friends connect the University to the community through a program of volunteering, enabling fundraising and community events, and by forming a bridge between the general public and the University's social and academic life.

Nominees must demonstrate an outstanding contribution to the University of Newcastle, enhancing its commitment to be a world-leading University for all its regions through the values of excellence, equity, engagement and sustainability.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alex Zelinsky, AO, said the Alumni Excellence Awards were an opportunity to acknowledge the influence and achievements of the University's thriving alumni community, which now totals more than 148,000 graduates across 144 countries.

Since 1975, the University of Newcastle's Alumni Excellence Awards program has recognised more than 170 alumni recipients.

Fourtree Lawyers officially opens Newcastle office

From an acorn of an idea six years ago, Central Coast's Fourtree Lawyers has proved true the old adage - from small things, big things grow.

And to top it off, the firm celebrated the official opening of its Hunter Street, Newcastle office on November 6.

Opened late last year, Covid-19 delayed the much-anticipated launch party but the firm's phenomenal growth has not been stunted.

Established as a home-based criminal law firm in November 2014 by sole practitioner Kevin Vierboom, the business branched into family law, employment law and wills and estates and an office was opened in the Platinum Building in Erina in 2017.

Since its inception, Fourtree Lawyers has provided legal assistance to more than 3000 clients and has a staff of 14 which includes eight solicitors and six support staff.

It now services an area which includes the Central Coast, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Hunter Valley, Port Stephens and as far north as Coffs Harbour and west to Armidale and Tamworth.

The firm's success can be attributed to its 24/7 legal assistance, comprehensive online presence, sound legal advice and strong representation. Fourtree Lawyers has garnered a loyal following with many client referrals and more than 135 google reviews.

Commenting on the opening of the Newcastle office, Fourtree Lawyers Principal Solicitor Kevin Vierboom said "As a small business owner it was apparent to me that Newcastle was rapidly becoming one of the premier regional business cities in Australia.



Kevin Vierboom & Jane Hogan

"I made the decision to open a Newcastle office despite the restrictions that were imposed to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The opening of our Newcastle office has seen Fourtree Lawyers staff expand to 14 and we are currently recruiting another local solicitor and a support person to join our Hunter Street team."



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FORWARD

20 YEARS OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE

This year SHAC celebrated its 20th birthday. Reflecting on the past 20 years, Managing Director Justin Hamilton attributes its success to its ongoing commitment to the people whose lives we improve, the craft of architecture, excellence in design, staff mentoring and training and a culture of continual improvement. For the SHAC team, design excellence is not just an objective – it is a way of life.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE ALUMNI

SHAC is proudly Novocastrian - its architectural team being almost exclusively honours students from Newcastle University, including Directors Justin Hamilton, Chris Vlatko, Elizabeth Brown, Joel de Carle, Matt Travis and Nick Smith.

AWARD WINNING

SHAC is proud to have received the highest state significant accolades in Educational, Civic, Health and Residential Architecture. Major awards include:

Australian Institute of Architects – The Blacket Prize

2018 - St Patrick's Primary School, Lochinvar

Australian Institute of Architects – NSW Educational Architecture Award

2019 - St Pius X Library, Adamstown
2018 - St Patrick's Primary School, Lochinvar

Australian Institute of Architects – Newcastle - Educational Architecture Award

2020 - St Bede's Catholic College
2019 - St Pius X Library, Adamstown
2018 - St Patrick's Primary School, Lochinvar
2017 - Bishop Tyrrell Anglican College
2015 - Sister Marie Centre, Adamstown

Australian Institute of Architects – Newcastle - Award for Excellence

2015 - Sister Marie Centre, Adamstown

Additionally, SHAC has won over 60 Lower Hunter Urban and Civic Design Awards, hosted by all Lower Hunter Councils over the past 20 years.



THE FUTURE OF NEWCASTLE

SHAC are keeping their eyes firmly focussed on the future, excited by ever-increasing opportunities here in Newcastle, now emerging as Australia's favourite lifestyle city, where SHAC will continue to shape the places where we live, work, learn, play, relax, heal and invest.





Port Stephens HealthOne

SHAC

Hunter Business Chamber toasts business success in a challenging year

Business achievers were awarded and COVID champions rewarded at the 2020 Hunter Business Awards, sponsored by the University of Newcastle, at the Civic Theatre on 20 November.

Awards were presented in 17 categories before nearly 300 people at a ceremony that itself took on a distinctly COVID-era feel, with the usual gala dinner replaced by a more socially distanced theatre-style event.

The winners included:

- Hunter New England Health Chief Executive **Michael DiRienzo** was named Business Leader of the Year
- **Ampcontrol** won the Innovation and Adaptability category for its emergency ventilator
- Out of the Square Managing Director **Marty Adnum** received the President's Award for his pro bono campaigns supporting business during the pandemic
- **Whiteley Corporation** won both the Excellence in Business and Excellence in Import of Export awards
- **Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation** won the Contribution to the Region Award after implementing a range of COVID initiatives
- Fund-raiser and Ronnoco Managing Director **Jodi O'Connor** was voted the region's COVID Business Hero.

Chamber President Tony Rhodes congratulated all winners and finalists on their resilience and entrepreneurship in what has been the most challenging of years for business owners and operators.

"Winning a Hunter Business Award in any year is a significant achievement. In 2020, the year of COVID, bushfires, drought and many other challenges, it is all the more remarkable," Mr Rhodes said.

"Whether businesses have had to scale up or scale down, tweak their business model, change it entirely or just grind it out to survive, the past twelve months have demanded flexibility, versatility, courage and innovative thinking from us all.

"Those qualities, essential in building great businesses, are reflected in all of the finalists represented in our Awards tonight, who collectively demonstrate the strength and resilience of our diverse business community."

2020 HUNTER BUSINESS AWARDS WINNERS

COVID Business Hero (sponsored by University of Newcastle) - Jodi O'Connor - Ronnoco

President's Award (sponsored by Newcastle Permanent) - Marty Adnum, Out of the Square

Love Water Love Business (sponsored by Hunter Water) - University of Newcastle, Cargill (joint winners)

Business Leader of the Year (sponsored by CPA Australia) - Michael DiRienzo, Hunter New England Local Health District

Contribution to the Region (sponsored by Port Authority of NSW) - Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation

Excellence in Business (sponsored by NSW Minerals Council) - Whiteley Corporation

Excellence in Social Enterprise (presented by Hunter Business Chamber) - BU Coaching

Excellence in Sustainability (sponsored by Umwelt) - Port of Newcastle

Excellence in Workplace Culture, Diversity & Inclusion (sponsored by Castle Personnel) - Hall & Wilcox

Kristen Keegan Young Business Leader (sponsored by Quarry Mining) - Elizabeth Napier, Animal Referral & Emergency Centre

Start Up Superstar (presented by Hunter Business Chamber) - Next Legal Conveyancing

Excellence in Import or Export (sponsored by Port of Newcastle) - Whiteley Corporation

Excellence in Innovation & Adaptability (presented by Hunter Business Chamber) - Ampcontrol

Excellence in Micro Business (sponsored by Glencore) - CK Health

Excellence in Small Business (sponsored by Newcastle Herald) - Mara Consulting

Local Chamber of Commerce (presented by Business NSW) - Singleton Business Chamber

Outstanding Young Entrepreneur (sponsored by AGL) - Jonathon Power, Empowered Community Services



Whiteley Corporation

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Whiteley Corporation

Whiteley Corporation won both the Excellence in Business and Excellence in Import of Export categories. The awards acknowledge the hard work and dedication the company has endeavoured to provide its customers and suppliers during the pandemic.

Dr Greg Whiteley accepted both awards on behalf of Whiteley Corporation and congratulated the entire Whiteley team and thanked the sponsors.

He went on to say "This is truly a companywide award for all of the team at Whiteley. 2020 has been a very challenging year, and our team has risen to the enormous and unexpected challenges posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Well done for a truly outstanding result."

The COVID-19 pandemic saw Whiteley adapt its business operations rapidly to maintain supply for the Australian and regional healthcare market. Whiteley more than doubled its production capacity by expanding its workforce, adding a second shift and working additional days to meet demand. Manufacturing capacity was improved by the recruitment of

specialists and procurement roles, wider training for current staff and purchasing additional capital equipment for production, packaging and dispatch.

"Our export business has grown dramatically over the pandemic with a large increase in demand from existing customers, and many new countries coming online" said Darran Leyden, Whiteley Managing Director.



Hunter Business Chamber CEO Bob Hawes and Dr Greg Whiteley of Whiteley Corporation

Out of the Square

After their most challenging period in 23 years of business Out of the Square (OOTS) was a finalist in not one but three Hunter Business Award categories – COVID Hero, Contribution to the Region and Business Leader of the Year, the most of any small business in this year's awards. OOTS Founder and Managing Director, Marty Adnum, also won the much-coveted President's Award.

"I can't tell you how surprised and humbled I was. This significant award is the culmination of a lot of hard work by the incredibly talented OOTS family which I am honoured to lead and generate ideas for to work on together" said Marty.

Out of the Square's goal is always to 'give back' when they can through their passion projects. This year alone they created and



Hunter Business Chamber Outgoing President Hennie Du Plooy, Newcastle Permanent CEO Bernadette Inglis and Out of the Square Managing Director Marty Adnum

collaborated on: helphunter.com.au offering online resources to small business heading into the unknown: TogetherNotAlone.com.au in collaboration with Greater Bank and the Herald designed to celebrate and highlight acts of kindness, creativity and innovation; and ExperienceHunter.com.au a video and web portal showcasing the Hunter's diverse tourism offerings to help struggling local operators.

Marty said "There's a quote from Hamilton the musical 'history has its eyes on you', and this drove me every day of the last 9 months. Both personally and for OOTS, I did not wish to look back and say, 'we could have or should have'. This was about giving it all with maximum benefit to the community as swiftly as possible".

Collaboration was a strong ongoing theme through all OOTS did this year and something they strongly wish all Newcastle businesses to take into 2021 and beyond. "It's not about defaulting back to our 'old ways', we seemed to open up and drop personal agendas, it became more about the 'we' than 'I'. This attitude of shared learning and taking care of each other is just what we need to make this city and region the best it can be," explained Marty.

Newcastle, let's Defy expectations in 2021!

We truly are a region ready, with so much to offer.

If you believe in the city and region's potential and are willing to think **out of the square**, let us know. Together, let's do this!

OUT OF THE SQUARE

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Robotics company provides 10 years of computer education to Aboriginal communities

Mayfield based robotics company, Robotic Systems, has recently completed their 2020 goal of providing 3,684 days - or 10 years - of computer education to Aboriginal communities in northern Queensland.

Robotic Systems is an engineering consultancy that specialises in accelerating the journey from an initial idea to manufactured devices that their customers own and sell.

Robotic Systems Director, Adam Amos, established the 2020 goal calling it '10 for 2020', with the sole purpose to provide 10 years (3,650 days) of computer education to Aboriginal communities in Australia. Partnering with the global business giving movement, B1G1, each project or design that Robotic Systems delivers that allows humans to spend time on more important things, they give back by providing computer education facilitated by B1G1.

By the end of November 2020, Robotic Systems were able to achieve their goal of providing 3,684 days or just over 10 years of computer education. Whilst Robotic Systems is happy to achieve their goal, there is more excitement surrounding the fact they have been able to help this Aboriginal community with skills that enables them to have a more accessible future.

Adam and the team at Robotics Systems also hope that this also provides a springboard for other local organisations, whether big or small, that are unsure about how they can help and make a noticeable impact in the wider community. Through using the B1G1 platform, other organisations, like Robotic Systems, can find socially responsible giving goals that align to their values and overall vision, that they too can give towards.



The Wests Group signs on to Fibre City super-fast internet initiative

One of the largest community organisations in NSW has signed on as the maiden subscriber to Lake Macquarie City Council's Fibre City super-fast internet initiative.

Wests Group, which boasts more than 150,000 members, and landmark sites throughout the Hunter Region, will use the new direct-to-premises optic fibre network to accelerate its online business and offer high-speed free wi-fi for members and guests.

CEO Phil Gardner said the decision to join Fibre City meant speeds 20 times faster than normal broadband would be available throughout the Wests portfolio of sites.

Fibre City is a partnership between Council and telecommunications giant TPG, with super-fast underground fibre optic cable laid in Charlestown and key parts of the new North West Catalyst Area.

Lake Macquarie Mayor Cr Kay Fraser said the Fibre City network would be expanded to other areas to promote innovation, technology and growth across the City.

"COVID-19 has really highlighted the increasingly vital role the internet plays in doing business," Cr Fraser said.

"For far too long, we've lost young people to cities like Sydney. We don't need that brain drain leaving our City, so it's really

important we have this kind of innovation and technology for the future."

TPG Northern Region Sales Manager Chris Pilgrim said Fibre City created new opportunities for residents and businesses.

The Fibre City connection will mean Wests members will be able to access free on-site wi-fi up to five times faster than normal. Mr Gardner said that paved the way for Wests to launch a new member app designed to streamline communication and feedback.

"It's going to allow us to support great digital strategies going forward," he said.

"There's going to be a lot more interaction between guests, members and staff with the new app, so to have a reliable, fast connection is highly important to keep it up and running."

Council Director Organisational Services Laura Kendall said discussions were underway with other businesses and not-for-profit organisations to gauge their needs for fast network services.

\$1 million boost for City of Newcastle projects

An active sports hub in Wallsend and the long-awaited upgrade of the local centre at Blackbutt Village in New Lambton, have jointly received a \$1 million boost from the NSW Government's Resources for Regions program.

City of Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nemes has welcomed the funding announcement on 26 November by the NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro of support for community projects that will provide much-needed recreational facilities within the western corridor of Newcastle.

"The funding announced today by NSW Deputy Premier adds to the multi-million-dollar investment that City of Newcastle has previously committed towards realising these fantastic projects for Wallsend and New Lambton," Cr Nemes said.

"\$500,000 for the Wallsend Active Hub expands on the \$1 million already committed to the project by City of Newcastle, while \$591,677 for the Blackbutt Village renewal will ensure the timely delivery of a much-needed upgrade at Orchardtown Road, which we have allocated more than \$4 million towards.

"The Wallsend Active Hub will be a drawcard for the suburb, attracting families from outside the area to enjoy the multi-purpose space in the same way the hugely popular Stockton Active Hub does.

"A concept plan for the project, which is still in the initial planning stages and will be put forward for community consultation, includes a range of potential facilities such as basketball and multipurpose courts, a bike track, fitness facilities, play equipment and shade structures."

"The revitalisation of Blackbutt Village will improve safety and enhance the look and feel of the area to boost visitation and support local businesses," Cr Nemes said.

"Key features include an off-road shared pedestrian and cycle path, new pedestrian crossing and footpath connections to Blackbutt Reserve and Richley Reserve, as well as wider footpaths to improve outdoor dining and promote activation of the centre.

"The project will also involve the renewal of drainage, kerb, gutter, road, footpaths, lighting and street furniture, as well as tree planting and landscaping.

"Following the adoption of the Blackbutt Village Public Domain Plan at the September Council meeting, the project has progressed into the detailed design phase, with construction expected to start next financial year."

Scone Airport airside repairs underway

Upgrades and repairs have started on the airside infrastructure at Scone Regional Airport, the first stage of a \$23.5 million project backed by the Australian Government, NSW Government and Upper Hunter Shire Council.

To meet Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) requirements, contractors Daracon are fixing or replacing the runway, drainage, resealing, and the taxiway, a \$7.75 million project. At the same time \$423,000 worth of new lighting is being installed. These stage 1 airside works are expected to be completed in February 2021 (weather permitting).

Stage 2 construction of the terminal and Warbirds Visitor Attraction and Terminal which will include flight simulators and working warbirds, will begin and is due to be completed in 2021.

Member for Upper Hunter Michael Johnsen said Scone Regional Airport is a key regional asset and the aerodrome upgrades are crucial to the region's development.

"As the only airport in the Upper Hunter, Scone Regional Airport provides a critical service through hosting private charters, pilot training schools, local equine, mining and farming industry flights and emergency services," Mr Johnsen said.

"Strengthening the runway will ensure safe passage of planes during take off and landing, new lighting will ensure clear visibility for pilots and airport workers, and extending the taxiway will lower operational hazards and ensure adequate obstacle clearances.

"These upgrades will bring to life the 20-year masterplan for the airport and ensure it can continue to service the Upper Hunter as we look to not only survive but also thrive in a post COVID-19 world."

Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce, said the upgrade was important for local tourism, the racehorse industry and emergency services which will all benefit from the modern facilities and infrastructure this airport will soon offer.

The project is funded through grants from the NSW Government (\$6.5 million from the Drought Stimulus Package and \$6.25 million from Restart NSW Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund), and \$3 million from the Australian Government's Regional Airports Program. The \$7.75 million balance will come from loan funding taken by Council.

Indigenous STEM scholarships

Port of Newcastle has partnered with the University of Newcastle to launch its first Indigenous STEM Scholarship. The \$30,000 partnership aims to enhance the Hunter's capacity in meeting future technology-led jobs and to support tertiary education pathways for Indigenous students.

The scholarship is open to Indigenous students who plan to complete a Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) related degree at the University of Newcastle. Three scholarships, each worth \$10,000, will be awarded over the three-year period of the program.

Port of Newcastle CEO Craig Carmody said the scholarship forms part of a broader commitment to creating social, environmental and economic benefits for NSW and the Hunter Region.

"The Indigenous STEM scholarship has been established to develop and attract the advanced skills that will be needed by the port and local industry in the future," Mr Carmody said.

"Importantly, it also aims to inspire and support pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to be a part of this technology-led environment.

"The port is already a significant driver of economic prosperity in the Hunter. Port projects started today will ensure the region has several significant growth industries to create jobs now and for our children in the decades ahead."

University of Newcastle Director, Indigenous Engagement and Reconciliation, Mrs Leah Armstrong, said the new partnership was



Craig Carmody and Leah Armstrong


an exciting pathway leveraging the unique insight of Indigenous students.


"Our connection with the Port of Newcastle evolved as a result of our mutual focus on sustainability and understanding of our environment," Mrs Armstrong said.

"As an organisation, the University of Newcastle is committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students coming into higher education. Cultural understanding of our land and habitats aligns itself beautifully with this opportunity for our Indigenous students and we look forward to watching them shine."

As well as financial support, the scholarship includes the opportunity to take part in professional development at Port of Newcastle and learn more about port operations.

Applications are open until 3 March 2021 and scholarships will be awarded based on university enrolment, merit and community involvement.


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Industrial mental health initiative

With 45% of Australians experiencing mental health issues in their lifetime and 70% of those not seeking professional help, Waratah based manufacturer Molycop partnering with Newcastle Creative Agency Out of the Square brought together over 20 Hunter companies from the industrial sector to share their stories and ultimately support their workforce.

Each organisation has recorded incredibly moving and heartfelt interviews where their team members have courageously shared their personal struggles, challenges and the coping processes.

"Through the sharing of personal stories, we aim to break down the barriers and build common ground amongst our employees to reduce any stigma surrounding mental illness" Michael Parker - President Molycop Australia.

These very raw and real videos will be shared with hundreds of employees Australia wide in "toolbox talks" and internal communications to help others in their daily life challenges, particularly in this extremely difficult year.

"The selfless bravery of those that have spoken will be of immeasurable assistance to many. In a world of hi-vis so much goes unseen. This initiative is a small first step to help that. In 34 years of shooting and editing videos I have not been moved so immediately and intensely as these stories have done" Marty Adnum, Managing Director.

With October being Mental Health Awareness Month, Molycop organised a first of its kind Hunter Industry event day, bringing together these organisations to share their stories, hear guest speakers and collaborate to work towards the ongoing wellbeing of the Hunter's workforce. The success of the event and the shared passion to continue this initiative indicates this will be an ongoing commitment from all involved to help the workforce of the region.

A video of the Event Day can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/31R1x1Y>

A video of some stories can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/34D94U5>

Speakers included: Michael Parker, President of Molycop Australia; Patrick Calabria, Snr Business Development Manager at Lifeline; Renata Roberts, Chief Corporate Services Officer, Bloomfield Group; Keith Ritchie, General Manager Manufacturing at Molycop Australia; Briony Kennedy, East Coast HRBP; Britt Cook, Executive Head of HR, DSI Underground; Julian Pace, Founder of Happiness Co.; and Trevor Stuart, Regional Manager AI Group.



Maitland Regional Art Gallery project wins major national award

Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG) has won a major National Museums and Galleries Award for Interpretation, Learning and Audience Engagement for their 2019 project, 'Stories from Wonnarua Country'.

The award category recognises highly successful community engagement and education projects by art galleries, museums and art centres right across Australia.

Stories from Wonnarua Country was an 18-month project led by the Junior Aboriginal Education Consultative Group student committee members, supporting teachers and communities from seven local schools: Francis Greenway High School, Hunter Valley Grammar School, Maitland High School, Metford Public School, Tarro Public School, Telarah Public School and Woodberry Public School.

The project included workshops on Wonnarua Country at Baia's Cave, Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council and MRAG where students explored ideas and experiences of Country, language, art and stories. Students were then encouraged to develop their own school artworks about what it means to them to be on Wonnarua Country today.

The exhibition was held at MRAG from between June and October of 2019 and opened with a Celebration Day attended by over 150 school and community members before being experienced by over 20,000 people over its duration.

MRAG Gallery Director, Gerry Bobsien says 'Stories from Wonnarua Country continues to reverberate through the community.

'We're amazingly proud to be acknowledged with an award of this magnitude. I would like to congratulate our Learning and Development Curator, Anne McLaughlin for leading this project and to all the schools and students involved.'

The Principal of Metford Public School, Cathy Watt said 'This project gave our Indigenous students invaluable time and space to reflect on their connection to Wonnarua Country.'

Newcastle Financial Advisor recognised in national Awards

Ben Travers from Infinity Financial Advisors has been named in the 2020 Financial Standard Power50 Most Influential Advisors and took home the Individual Transformation of The Year title at the IFA (Independent Financial Adviser) Excellence Awards 2020.

This is the fourth year in a row Ben has been listed amongst the FS Power50 - who exemplify the best aspects of the advice industry nationally, as voted by their peers, and are instrumental in shaping the future of advice.

Ben is also a committee member of Kaplan's Advisors of the Future, which plays a fundamental role in taking advice into the future, identifying key trends, changes impacting advisers and innovations around technology.

"The 2019 Final Report of the Royal Commission has already seen significant changes to education in our industry, and this will continue over the coming years," said Ben.

"Compliance with the (Financial Adviser Standards and Ethics Authority) FASEA Code of Ethics is also now a requirement for all financial advisers. These changes provide a benchmark to measure ourselves in a uniform way."

With 20 years' industry experience, Ben completed a Master of Financial Planning in 2018 and has been focused on how the financial industry can move towards becoming a profession in an ethical manner. Ben is a passionate advocate for future education and presents at universities.

Ben joined Newcastle's Infinity Financial Advisors as a Senior Financial Advisor this year after two decades in boutique, accounting and ASX listed firms, designing comprehensive and personalised strategies for clients.



Lake Mac Council and Committee for the Hunter strengthen partnership



North West Catalyst Area

Lake Macquarie City Council is now a gold member of the Committee for the Hunter, building from their shared advocacy in the Federal and State Budgets.

Council's CEO Morven Cameron reflected on the positives of joining the Committee for the Hunter.

"Being a Committee member demonstrates Council's ability to be a capable partner to other levels of government, in the community, and with industry and investors and enables our City to participate wholly at a regional level," Ms Cameron said.

"We work with our partners to harness the opportunities to be a thriving City with a diverse economy that is resilient and adaptable to change. Joining the Committee means we have more opportunities to make the most of our unique location and lifestyle."

Committee for the Hunter CEO Alice Thompson welcomes Council joining the Committee.

"We are already working closely with Lake Mac to secure more investment in the region, and now we are formalising this partnership," Ms Thompson said.

"We are excited about what we can achieve when joining forces with a council of significant capability like Lake Macquarie to deliver in the interests of the communities and businesses of the City and the Greater Hunter."

Committee for the Hunter Chair Richard Anicich said the Committee provides a platform for a united voice and collaborative action on the big plays that move our region forward.

Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club appointed operator of Sailing and Aquatic Club

Port Stephens Council has appointed the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club (NCYC) as the new licensee and operator of the Port Stephens Sailing and Aquatic Club facility effective 20 November 2020.

Corporate Services Group Manager Tim Crosdale says the appointment is the start of an exciting new chapter for the facility.

"After reviewing the submissions received as part of the expressions of interest process, we decided that Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club is the preferred proponent for the new licence of the facility.

"The NCYC brings a wealth of knowledge, expertise and potential benefits to the community that made the decision a unanimous one.

"As well as continuing community sailing programs, the new operators are excited to create a destination to encourage visitation to the area and support our local tourism and business economy," he said.

President of the Port Stephens Sailing and Aquatic Club Lachlan McPherson believes the appointment is a great outcome for all.

"Many are excited that a professional and well-resourced group who share the same objectives, to further promote sailing and aquatic sports from this community asset, have the licence.

"Moving forward, this will benefit the whole Port Stephens area and sailing in general," he said.

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Dantia Announces New Chair and Board Directors

Dantia, Lake Macquarie's Economic Development Company, has announced the appointment of six new board directors to continue to progress transformational growth and employment outcomes for the Lake Macquarie economy.

The new board is made up of senior business leaders with local and national expertise including Chris Liddell, as Chair. Chris is Co-founder and Director of GoSourcing Pty Ltd, a Non-Affiliate Member and volunteer at Lifeline Australia, and an angel investor with a distinguished career providing technology and consulting services to Australia's major banks and largest superfunds.

New directors include Katherine O'Regan, Executive Director at Sydney Business Chamber, Gillian Geraghty, Head of Regional Project Delivery at Transport for NSW, Stephen Barr, Director of Barr Property and Planning, Colin Sales, Board Director at Summerland Credit Union and former COO of Mine Super, Josh Jeffress Managing Director of Design Anthology join the board as Directors.

The new members join current board directors, Wayne Lowe, Managing Director of FNZ Australia, Professor Alex Zelinsky AO, Vice-Chancellor and President of University of Newcastle, Councillor Kay Fraser, Mayor of Lake Macquarie City, and Morven Cameron, Chief Executive Officer at Lake Macquarie City Council.

Over \$4.5 million for Singleton projects

Mayor of Singleton, Cr Sue Moore said she was ecstatic with the announcement by the NSW Government that a total of \$4,571,283 is coming to the community from the revamped Resources for Region program.

Member for Upper Hunter Michael Johnsen MP delivered the news, paving the way for a host of community projects and programs including \$500,000 for a new grandstand for Singleton Rugby Club, \$560,000 to deliver the Broke Village Shared Footpath, \$299,000 for the Wonnarua Healing Centre and \$600,000 for upgrades to Hamiltons Crossing Road Causeway.

"Many of these projects are driven by community organisations that would otherwise take years of fundraising before they could happen, and now we're going to see work underway sooner rather than later," Cr Moore said.

"Council has worked long and hard on advocating for reforms to the Resources for Regions program and it's wonderful to see that the people of Singleton are finally reaping the rewards."

Cr Moore said reforms to the Resources for Regions program were a high priority on Singleton Council's Advocacy Agenda to secure a better return on the mining royalties that Singleton delivered to the State Government each year.

She said it was particularly important that the reforms included provision of funding for community programs as well as infrastructure.



Madeline Freemantle

Another win for Leah Jay at REINSW Awards for Excellence

Now into its third decade, the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales (REINSW) Awards for Excellence is the most prestigious and respected industry awards in NSW. This year a new category was introduced, to recognise the people who first assist and develop relations with property investors, known as Business Development Managers.

Once again Leah Jay has enjoyed success, receiving this inaugural award at the virtual event held on 30 October. REINSW President, Leanne Pilkington, said this year's Awards for Excellence were bigger than ever despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which completely disrupted the industry's usual working practices.

From its Newcastle office, the Leah Jay team celebrated as Madeline Freemantle won the Business Development Manager award at the online event.

Madeline joined Leah Jay in 2017, after relocating from the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, where she had worked in the real estate market for 16 years. Madeline is committed to delivering her clients great experiences and starting off the relationship in the best possible way. Her unique approach has fitted well with Leah Jay's client centred approach and seen success all round, culminating in the recognition that goes with the prestigious award.

Leah Jay had another finalist. Holly Ekert, the youngest Senior Property Manager in Leah Jay's 26 year history, who was in the running to be named property manager of the year. Holly hails from Osterley and began her career with Leah Jay 4 years ago. Currently halfway through an MBA at Newcastle University, Holly epitomises the new face of property management.

"I am so pleased for all of our teams across the business. We are all about property management and work tirelessly to continually improve everything that we do," Cassandra Lantry, Director & Operations Manager said.

"Our nominations in two categories illustrates our determination to remain at the forefront of property management." Now with nine wins and 25 finalists since the awards began in 1997, Leah Jay has confirmed themselves as the most awarded property managers in NSW.

Lord Howe Island service launched

The Hunter now has a direct connection with Lord Howe Island with the launch of the first direct service from Newcastle Airport from 14 November.

Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock said that launching the service to the World Heritage site was an important occasion for the airport and a sign of more positive things to come.

"The opening of interstate flights has conjured a real sense of optimism in the region," he said.

"With Queensland borders now open and Victoria not far away, as an airport, we are thrilled to once again play an important role in the lives of our community.

"Adding an exciting new destination to our schedule, particularly one as iconic as Lord Howe, will only heighten that sense of hope."

Port Macquarie based airline Eastern Air Services will land their Beechcraft B200 aircraft at Williamtown at midday on 14 November, before leaving on the return journey at 12.45pm.

CEO of Eastern Air Services Christian Corse, said he was very excited about the new opportunity.

"Lord Howe Island is incredibly popular with the people living in this part of the world, so we expect this service to grow quickly," he said.

**FIREWIRE DIGITAL**

Firewire Digital has welcomed **Shonavee Simpson-Anderson** as their SEO Strategist. Shonavee is a copywriting and SEO professional with experience across a variety of industries, including solar, trades, coffee, arcade and gaming, property development and non-for-profit organisations. She looks forward to achieving long-term, sustainable business growth for Hunter and Australian businesses.

**ASQUITH WORKFORCE**

Asquith Workforce has announced **Ryan Fibbens** as National Client Relations Manager. With an entrepreneurial spirit and decades of recruitment experience, Ryan will be building our Asquith's portfolio across white and blue collar as well as in workplace health and safety services. His passion for putting people first sets him apart in understanding a client's unique needs and curating a recruitment solution that achieves their business goals.

**MONICA CLARE RECRUITMENT**

Monica Clare Recruitment has added **Jessica Collinson** to the team. Jessica joins as a Recruitment Consultant, bringing with her over five years' local recruitment experience and an exceptional network. She looks forward to growing the customer service, office support and sales desk as well as building her reputation in the industry.

**MORAY & AGNEW**

Highly experienced workplace relations lawyer **Michelle Dawson** has joined Moray & Agnew's Newcastle office, bolstering the well-established practice. A skilled practitioner with more than 20 years' legal experience, Michelle advises and represents clients across all legal aspects of employment, industrial relations, workplace and anti-discrimination.

**ASQUITH WORKFORCE**

New Asquith Workforce Recruit **Brodie Eaton** is a born and bred Novocastrian with a background in recruitment, administration, and customer service. In Asquith's rapidly growing business, she brings additional order and efficiency to the office systems and uses her software and technology expertise to help her colleagues.

**INFINITY FINANCIAL SERVICES**

A Hunter local, **Steve Moore** has joined Infinity Financial Advisors, which has continued its growth in 2020. Steve is an experienced financial planner who works with clients to design a roadmap to personal wealth, providing guidance so they can make financial decisions with confidence. Originally from Scone, Steve moved to Newcastle to study and completed his Bachelor of Commerce (BCom), majoring in Accounting and Finance at the University of Newcastle.

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Just email around 80 words on the employment plus a high resolution head shot to **editorial@HBRmag.com.au**.

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**UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL**

Upper Hunter Shire Council has appointed a new General Manager, **Greg McDonald**, who will commence work with Council on 18 January 2021. Mr McDonald is currently Director Customer and Corporate, and previously Director Planning and Infrastructure, for Willoughby City Council and has extensive leadership, technical and engineering skills working within local government and utilities environments since 1990. He has previously worked at regional councils in Dungog and Wyong.



2020 an extraordinary year but we need the banks to do some heavy lifting

Steve Dick
Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle

There is probably plenty of introspection going on in the minds of politicians and business leaders not only in Australia but also around the world, given the exceptional year, we have just experienced.

As a business owner myself, I'm no different and looking back over the last 12 months, I can't work out whether the blur is on account of the seemingly endless stream of events, or is it because I'm getting older. Headlined by the pandemic, not to mention the climate, political and economic challenges, it's been an extraordinary year.

This time last year, the first of the bush fires were raging, and then we were still yet to realise the calamity that was to follow over Christmas and the new year. Internally, we were planning on trying to take property photographs on days when the smoke was not as thick. Meanwhile, ash was falling all around, and there was a community debate about whether the New Year's Eve Sydney fireworks should proceed.

Bush fires give way to coronavirus

We were catching our collective breaths in March when the distressing realisation struck us that COVID-19 had crossed into humans and was out of control and spreading as any diabolical contagion does.

The entire world changed in days, and we must congratulate our people in power in Australia for:

1. getting the spread of coronavirus under control
2. maintaining the economic life of the nation.

Sure, we are still under threat. But we are all looking to the much-mooted vaccines as the light at the end of the tunnel. Despite improved optimism, some businesses have folded, and I suspect many more will follow as government support is wound back in March. But with Christmas approaching, the combination of the vaccines and the rewinding of many social distancing restrictions have delivered a dose of energy to our social consciousness.

The residential conundrum

Despite the good news, from a residential real estate perspective can someone explain when the supply and demand relationship ceased to function. Was it at the same time Keynesian Economic Theories began to fail and gave way to Neo-Keynesian thinking that is also under stress from Modern Monetary Theory?

According to The Light House from Macquarie University, "Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) proposes that a country that issues its own currency, such as Australia, should throw caution to the wind and forgo the desire for a balanced budget that may be limiting the economy from reaching its full potential. Instead, the government should spend as much as needed to maximise the welfare of everyone in the economy, despite widening budget deficits. This includes spending on education, targeting maximal employment and, in the current climate, offsetting the effects of the pandemic."

This is all well and good, but this theory needs the Big Banks to play ball. Government money is welcomed, but businesses require the Banks to provide funding to help keep the wheels of commerce and cashflow turning and workers employed.

Research by small business lender OnDeck found that 40% of the SMEs surveyed have, at some stage, applied for finance across a variety of sources. Among these, one in four (24%) have had their application rejected by a bank, a figure that rises to 38% of SMEs that have been in operation for less than five years and these statistics are 12 months old, its worse now!

So, while residential property activity is as crazy as I have ever seen it in my near 30 years in the real estate industry, the underlining principle is that for individual borrowers to afford a

house, they need a job. However, to have employment, you need a job with a business with cash flow, and that's where the current state of affairs could easily unravel as JobKeeper is wound back and the banks continue to play hardball.

Businesses need the support of the banks, and that isn't happening. Time delays in finance approvals, unrealistic LVRs and commercial lending intransigence headlined by the regular refrain, "we are not lending for that sector" is the feedback we are receiving from business owners.

So, while we are facing a far merrier Christmas than anyone could have expected in the early months of 2020, we need the banks to free up funds for small business and not just their mates in the \$100 million-plus club to ensure 2021 is a happy new year.

If you're considering investing, buying or leasing commercial space in the Hunter region, contact Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle on (02) 4915 3000.



Steve Dick is a Director of Raine & Horne Commercial Newcastle.

Construction industry strengthens in November

The Australian Industry Group/Housing Industry Association Australian Performance of Construction Index (Australian PCI) improved by a further 2.6 points to 55.3 in November – a second consecutive month of positive conditions and the strongest monthly result since April 2018 (readings above 50 indicate expansion in activity, with higher results indicating a faster expansion).

Three of the four sectors in the Australian PCI recovered strongly in November, with only the apartment sector still contracting (down 6.2 points to 40.9) amid reduced demand from developers and investors. The indices for house building activity and new orders reached new record highs in November, with house builders noting the success of government grants plus low interest rates in supporting demand for new houses and renovations. Builders in commercial and engineering construction said activity and forward orders are returning to a more 'normal' pace in Q4.

Ai Group Head of Policy, Peter Burn, said "The Australian construction sector grew more strongly in November with both activity and employment decisively stronger in the month. House building was the cornerstone of the lift in performance with support from commercial and engineering construction.

"Apartment building remains in the contractionary state it has been in for more than two years and, with question marks over population growth and falling new orders, this sector is the major dampener on the otherwise encouraging outlook for the broader construction sector.

"Looking to the months ahead, new orders for house building and commercial construction lifted promisingly while new infrastructure plans are yet to translate into a growing pipeline of new orders for engineering construction. In part due to fiscal and monetary policy support, the construction sector is looking ready to play a major role in consolidating the general economic recovery into 2021."

Australian property continues to lead on global ESG benchmarks

Australia's property industry has retained its world-leading position on environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance for the tenth straight year.

The Oceania region has topped the Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark (GRESB) global rankings – the international benchmark for ESG performance of real estate and infrastructure investments.

Global participation in the 2020 Assessment grew by 22% to cover 1,229 portfolios worth around AUD \$6.6 trillion AUM and covering more than 96,000 assets across 64 countries.

The average score for the Oceania region was 77, ahead of the Asia region on 72, followed by Europe at 69.5 and the Americas at 69. The 2020 scores were slightly lower than those reported for 2019, based on changes in this year's reporting structure and scoring weights.

"Australia's property industry continues to lead the world on ESG initiatives," said Ken Morrison, Chief Executive of the Property Council of Australia.

"Our companies are making the investment in sustainability and supporting the transition to a low-carbon, more sustainable and resilient future, often well ahead of the baseline set down in government policy.

"We operate in a global market where ESG performance is deeply scrutinised and highly valued by investors.

"Australian property companies are among the best in the world in this respect, and through innovation and investment they are leading the transformation of our built environment to a sustainable and net zero emissions future," Mr Morrison said.



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WOMEN in BUSINESS

ANNA ROBERTS



Anna Roberts is a Family Lawyer and a Family Law Mediator. She is a Director of Roberts Legal Services Group Pty Limited and the Practice Leader of Delaney Roberts Specialist Family Lawyers. Anna also runs a Family Law Mediation practice, Blue Sky Mediation.

Roberts Legal Services Group Pty Limited now has 30 staff, including 16 solicitors, and operates two separate legal brands – Delaney Roberts Specialist Family Lawyers and Roberts Legal Business and Litigation Experts.

Anna is also the mother of two children, aged 11 and 9 years. Outside of work, she loves spending time with her four siblings and their children.

Family Law has been a perfect fit for Anna from the start. She was fascinated by this area of law from her time at Law School. In her first five years of practice, a large component of her practice was in Commercial Law and Estate Planning which provided an excellent

grounding in commercial aspects relevant to Family Law. Anna's area of expertise is the division of complex asset structures (including businesses) after separation. This includes securing clients' cash flow and income. She is equally able to assist the supporting spouse who does not have control of assets and/or income to secure their fair share after separation.

During the last 10 years Anna has focused her practice on Family Law. This led to her becoming accredited as a Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner (or Family Law Mediator) and founding a mediation practice, Blue Sky Mediation.

She says the favourite part of her work is helping clients through the transition to their new life path. The person she meets in the initial appointment is just a fragment of the person who emerges.

This journey has been as tough as it's been rewarding. Anna's 11-year-old son has a diagnosis of Level 3 Autism. He struggles with all aspects of his life and his tenacity makes Anna so grateful for the opportunities she has been given in her life.

The last decade has been a blur of work, therapy, daily struggles and good times for Anna. She says she owes so much to the women around her for their enduring love, support and hard work. Anna also says that she knows that her struggles have made her a better and stronger advocate for my clients.

Anna has some strong views on her industry, saying that the Family Law profession has a heavy reliance on a publicly-funded Court system in which government funding is being reduced to unsustainable levels. Court delays are long and Judges are forced to self-manage unendurable workloads. Anna would like us to strive towards a partially privatised system of Family Law where those who can afford to pay, pay their way, and public monies are reserved for those in our community who are the most vulnerable.

She says that we are starting to see a slight shift towards the profession's uptake of Mediation and Arbitration as privately funded alternatives to Court, however, the investment needs to be greater to make room in the Courts for those who have no alternative.

For those starting out on a similar path, Anna recommends that you make sure you're doing something you love, learn how to run a business, attract and maintain good people around you and strive for continuous improvement.

PEITA HEFFERNAN



Peita Heffernan is Head Trainer at Glencore's Bulga Open Cut Mine. Her journey into the resources industry was not a traditional or linear one. She grew up in Caves Beach and on leaving school tried a variety of retail roles before transferring to the financial services sector in 2000, where she worked up to a management role.

It might be said, though, that supersized equipment and trucks were always in her blood. Peita's father drove trucks interstate for a living and, growing up, she would often take long trips on the road with him. She saw the pride he took in maintaining his vehicle to the highest standard and learned that there were no shortcuts taken in safely reaching a destination. These values were ingrained in her.

At a career crossroads in 2008, Peita saw local media stories promoting opportunities in mining. She saw it as the perfect chance to work with machinery, have a great lifestyle and challenge the status quo.

Unfazed by the challenge of securing a position in a heavily male-dominated industry, Peita initially invested \$4,000 in "Immersive Operator Training", spending a week in Joondalup, WA, in simulator training for small dump trucks. On her return, she began introducing herself to local labour hire companies and outlaid a further \$7,000 to complete a Mine Preparation Program, a component of which was unpaid work experience with a contractor at Glencore's Bulga Open Cut coal mining operation.

She started as a Trainee for the contractor and after proving her worth, she earned a contractor role at site.

Peita was offered a permanent role in 2009 with Bulga Coal, one of Glencore's largest NSW open cut mines. At the time, Peita was only one of nine females permanently employed.

Peita was promoted to Crew Trainer in 2010 in recognition of her ability to impart her knowledge to others and in 2019, she was promoted to Head Trainer, leading a crew of around 85.

She was the first female officially appointed to this role at Bulga and one of just six Head Trainers across Glencore's entire coal business.

Peita continues to drive her belief in the transformative power of training, be a proud ambassador for the industry and, more importantly, an advocate for the development benefits it provides for women.

Peita doesn't let stereotypes define her or her role. She entered the industry at a time when women operators were seen as the exception rather than the norm and continues to be a standard-bearer for diversity in the industry.

At the very heart of Peita's success story is a person who is deeply passionate about a career that's been made all the more rewarding because of the challenges she's faced.

Not least among these have been a marriage breakdown, failed IVF attempts and significant health challenges that interrupted her training career for two years.

Peita's experiences, however, have made her far more sensitive to the challenges that women in mining face and, in her role as Head Trainer, the support she can provide to all employees.

NICOLE REDMOND

Nicole Redmond is the Corporate Services Manager at North Construction & Building and is one of twelve shareholders of this fully employee owned business.

Established in 1987 North Construction has become one of the most trusted regional commercial construction companies in NSW. With offices in Tuggerah, Newcastle and Dubbo and over 100 permanent employees North was recently named in the Top 20 Best Places to Work in Australia for 2020.

Before joining North in 2011, Nicole spent over 20 years at Myer/Grace Bros in numerous roles which would cement her passion for the construction industry and for developing others. Completing a management cadetship Nicole held roles including Operations & Store Manager before moving into a Project Manager role for new and refurbished stores across NSW, Qld and ACT.

Since joining North, Nicole has undertaken further study in Cooperate Governance and has joined both the TAFE North Region and Business NSW - Central Coast, Regional Advisory Councils.

Through her role as Vice President of WIBAS (Women in Building and Associated Services), Nicole provides support to the women in our industry and advocates the many and varied pathways available to enter the industry,

One of the biggest challenges starting out can be believing in yourself. Nicole has learnt that one our greatest gifts can be failure and feedback and knowing that the magic happens when you step out of your comfort zone.

She says it would be wonderful to see a significant increase in the number of women choosing to work in her industry especially in trades. Currently women make up only 12% of the workforce with less than 3% in Trades. With the projected skills shortage in the industry there has never been a better time to consider a rewarding career in construction.

The diversity in Nicole's role allows her to interact across the whole business from a people, operational and leadership perspective. An absolute highlight is working with apprentices and cadets and seeing them develop into future leaders.

She says there is a lot to like about her industry; no day is ever the same; with new projects, new challenges and new relationships to build. Another key enjoyment for Nicole is that what she helps build matters to people, bringing schools, hospitals, homes and transport infrastructure to communities across her regions.

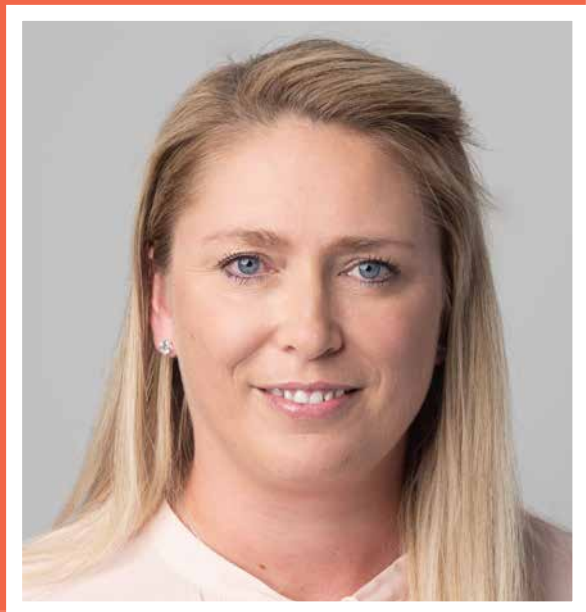
When asked about advice for anyone setting out on a similar career, Nicole says to be curious and maintain a growth mindset, one of continuous learning. She also recommends that you should seek out a mentor, live a physically and mentally healthy life, and to make sure you talk about your career aspirations so that others know your goals.



WOMEN

IN BUSINESS

KIM LENOX



Kim Lenox is the Manager Commercial Supply Agreements for ARTC. ARTC manage and maintain 8,500 km of rail network across five states. Kim works for the Hunter Valley which is one of the busiest and most diverse networks in the country. Coal services are the primary customers however ARTC operates a mixed use network which also includes grain, general and bulk freight together with passenger services. 2020 is likely to be one of the busiest grain seasons in a long time which is so fantastic for regional farmers who have done it tough in recent years.

Kim also volunteers on a number of committees including being the President of WIBAS (Women in Building and Associated Services), the Equal Futures Project, the Australian Institute of Project Management and the City of Newcastle's Infrastructure Advisory Committee.

Kim has a background in law and started working in construction just over a decade ago. She has been privileged enough to work on some significant and high profile infrastructure projects.

Working in a male dominated industry has posed some challenges over the course of her career but it has also been the catalyst for the work she does in advocacy, mentoring and supporting women which is a real passion.

Kim would love to see an improvement in diversity in construction, particularly in management. We know that a diverse workforce has no downside.

Women are incredibly underrepresented in management in construction and Kim would love to be around long enough to see that change.

She says she is very outcome and delivery focused so getting to be part of a team that delivers a tangible end product is the part she enjoys about construction and particularly infrastructure.

Her advice for others setting out on a similar career path is to find your tribe. Find a group of like-minded people who will share their experiences with you. Most people are more than happy to give you their time when you're new to an industry.

TINA VAN EPEN

Tina van Epen is Corporate and Commercial Partner, Moray & Agnew Lawyers.

Nationally Moray & Agnew has over 630 people but the core of the commercial practice is in Newcastle. The office here opened in 2006 and has grown to 19 partners and 120 staff, making Moray & Agnew the best resourced commercial, workplace and insurance legal practice in the Hunter region.

Tina attended school and University in Newcastle. She worked at the ACCC in Canberra and Sydney, before coming home to Newcastle 17 years ago. Tina worked at another law firm before joining Moray & Agnew as a partner in 2015. She now works for government, state-owned, private and publicly listed clients across a range of industries.

Working in the legal profession is demanding, with strict client deadlines. Tina says that asking for more responsibility when she was a junior lawyer exposed her to a greater variety of challenging and rewarding work. Now – when workloads allow it – she takes a more balanced approach to her work and family life.

Tina also says that all experiences have helped shape her into the lawyer she is. In particular, she tries to emulate the people who have inspired and mentored her, while avoiding the tendencies of those who have not!

The corporate and commercial legal world is certainly never dull, and there are always new things to learn. Every matter is nuanced in different ways, bringing real interest to Tina's day.

The legal industry is changing. It's no longer the case that lawyers need to be seen sitting at a desk long into the night to prove their worth. Most tasks of most roles can be done from wherever people happen to be. As long as the work is done well and on time, it shouldn't matter where you are. Offering flexibility and understanding to staff brings engaged people who are willing to go above and beyond during workload peaks.

Tina's advice includes to be prepared to work hard, treat others well and expect them to do the same. Have a good support network around you, and don't forget to look after yourself. In the end, a job can enable you to have a fulfilling, rounded and great life, but no job should ever be your actual life!



MORE WOMEN AT THE TOP PROVES BETTER FOR BUSINESS

As Australia moves towards economic recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a report shows that more women on Boards and in senior leadership positions drives better company performance, greater productivity and greater profitability.

Research released by the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (BCEC) and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) found that an increase in the share of female 'top-tier' managers by 10 percentage points or more led to a 6.6 per cent increase in the market value of Australian ASX-listed companies, worth the equivalent of AUD\$104.7 million.

The report, Gender Equity Insights 2020: Delivering on Business Outcomes, reveals a strong and convincing causal relationship between an increase in the number of women in key decision-making positions and subsequent improvements in company performance.

Report author and BCEC Principal Research Fellow Associate Professor Rebecca Cassells said leadership has never been so important, especially when the world is dealing with the fallout and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"When businesses are looking to a post COVID-19 world, our research shows that having a female CEO has the potential to help companies navigate through the crisis," Associate Professor Cassells said.

"In this report, we have identified a compelling causal relationship between an increase in the share of women in leadership and subsequent improvements in company performance."

The report found that in Australian ASX-listed companies, having a female CEO led to a five per cent increase in their market value. This is

worth the equivalent of AUD\$79.6 million on average.

It also showed that increasing the number of women in leadership positions increased the likelihood of companies outperforming in their sector on three or more key profitability and performance metrics. These include return on equity, earnings before interest and tax, sales per worker, return on assets, dividend yield and Tobin's Q (the market value of a company divided by its assets' replacement cost).

Libby Lyons, Director of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, hailed the BCEC research as a significant contribution to the international business case for gender equality.

"Using the Agency's world-leading dataset, this ground-breaking study has provided important new evidence of the crucial need for improving gender diversity in company leadership. As we 'snap forward' to a post-COVID-19 economy, this report demonstrates that CEOs and senior executives must include gender equality as they develop recovery plans," Ms Lyons said.

"This report provides tangible proof to support the established business case for gender equality. More gender-balanced leadership will improve the bottom line and financial performance of any organisation.

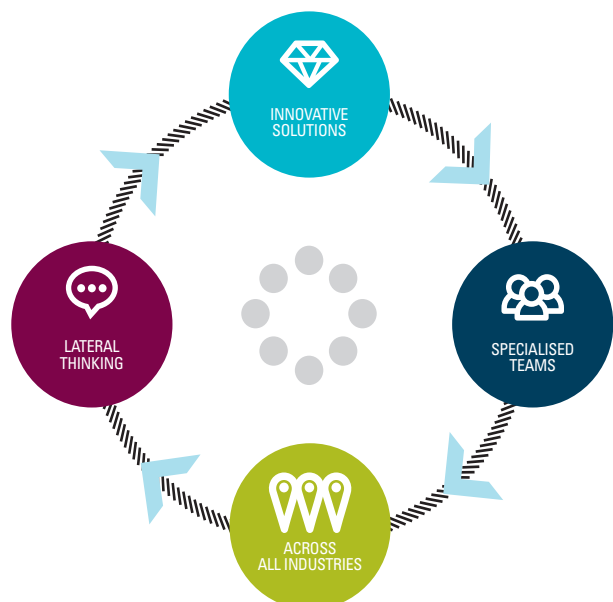
"Workplace gender equality is not just about fairness, it also has a compelling commercial imperative. This research provides hard evidence that more women in top-tier management levels will deliver improved profitability for business. Now more than ever, achieving workplace gender equality is an absolute necessity for every organisation in Australia."

STAYING AHEAD OF THE CURVE

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TRAINING PARTNERSHIP DELIVERS JOBS FOR GOT YOUR BACK SISTA COMMUNITY

A new training program for women who are re-establishing their lives after escaping domestic violence has already begun to deliver results.

The charity recently established a partnership with experienced disability service provider Castle Personnel to deliver a Certificate II in Retail Services to women who were part of the Got Your Back Sista community and were looking for practical ways to gain skills and find a job in the retail sector.

On Thursday 19 November 2020, eight women (aged from their 30s to 50s) attended a special graduation ceremony at Got Your Back Sista HQ (15 Elizabeth Street Tighes Hill).

The 12 week course was delivered by Central Coast Community College and included a mix of classroom and tutorial style training as well as the opportunity to gain practical work experience at Got Your Back Sista's Village People OpShop in Islington.

One of the graduates has already secured a position with a major retailer in the region.

Meltopia said that the course provided her with skills and experience but importantly gave her the right support to prepare for the job process and interview.

"It's been some time since I went into a job application process. I felt confident because I had new and updated skills but I also had a team of people behind me who supported me through every step," Mel said.

Got Your Back Sista Founder and CEO Melissa Histon-Browning, said that the retail training program was very much in line with the organisation's ongoing commitment to find ways to help women and their children thrive and live independently after escaping the trauma of domestic violence.

"Providing access to education and training for women continues to be one of the great challenges for our community. Providing ways to build capacity and confidence is paramount and we are most grateful to Castle Personnel for piloting this program with us," Melissa said.

Castle CEO, Dianne Hamer said that the organisation recognised the impact that a traumatic relationship can have on a person's mental health.

"Building a support network, securing a job or enrolling in a course can go a long way to help address this. Through our Disability Employment Services, we hope to help survivors regain their confidence and achieve their education, employment and personal development goals," Dianne said.



Graduates with Barbara Lane & Melissa Histon

DATA SHOWS EMPLOYER ACTION ON GENDER EQUALITY HAS STALLED

Data released on 26 November by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) shows a worrying decline in employer action on gender equality prior to the impact of COVID-19. Whilst the gender pay gap for total remuneration dropped just 0.7 percentage points (pp) to 20.1%, men still out-earn women on average by \$25,534.

Other than the small improvement in the gender pay gap, access to flexible work increased and over 50% of employers now offer paid primary carer's leave. The most troubling finding was a substantial 6.1pp decline in the number of employers taking action on pay equity and women continue to dominate the more insecure part-time and casual roles.

The Agency's Director Libby Lyons expressed her disappointment at this year's results.

"Even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, I was concerned that Australian employers had become complacent. The modest rate of change in last year's results suggested they were in the grip of 'gender equality fatigue'.

"I'm now very disappointed that almost nothing has changed this year. It appears to me that Australian employers are on autopilot when it comes to improving gender equality. The issue is clearly not receiving the necessary attention to drive further change.

"Without ongoing and increased employer action, we are likely to regress and will witness a decline in the many gains achieved over the last few years, such as the gradual reduction of the gender pay gap and more women in leadership roles," said Ms Lyons.

This year's dataset offers a comprehensive snapshot of private sector employment as it was just prior to the imposition of COVID-19 restrictions. It provides an important benchmark for comparison to next year's dataset, which will capture the full impact of COVID-19 on Australia's private sector.

Ms Lyons said "The most disappointing result is the reversal in action on pay equity. This year, there is a decrease of 6.1 percentage points in the percentage of employers that took action to close their gender pay gaps. Just 54.4% of employers who did a gender pay gap analysis took action to close the identified gaps.

"This trend must not continue. Experience tells us that when employers measure their data, identify the problem areas and take action to address them, the pay gap closes."

Libby Lyons also highlighted other concerns including the progress towards increased female CEOs and board members as "glacial".

Some more positive signs were that over 50% of employers now offer paid primary carer's leave to their employees and that women's promotions and appointments to managerial roles continues to rise. There was also another strong increase in employer action on family and domestic violence, and Access to flexible work also improved.

Data shows, however, that women's working experiences and conditions are very different to that of men. Women have more precarious employment circumstances, dominating part-time (75.1%) and casual (56.3%) roles.

In conclusion Ms Lyons said "I know and appreciate that Australian employers are likely to encounter more challenges and disruptions in 2021. However, I urge all employers to redouble their efforts and action in driving better gender equality outcomes in their workplaces and to ensure that they submit reporting data to the Agency next year.

"Gender equality is not just a human rights issue. It is good for business and integral to our economic recovery," said Ms Lyons.

WOMEN IN

THE VALUE OF AN OUTSOURCED CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER (CMO)

Jacqui Daley
The Measured Marketer

COVID-19 has brought the value of marketing into focus, with many businesses having to rely on improvisational tactics and accelerate their digital efforts ad-lib to survive. At times like this, having an experienced marketing strategist to lean on is a huge advantage, but many SMEs don't see it as an option. Enter the outsourced CMO.

Many people think CMOs, or chief marketing officers, are reserved for big businesses. However, any business, in particular, small and growth businesses can benefit from having the ongoing expertise of a C-level marketing executive on their team.

Like a traditional CMO, an outsourced CMO is all about strategy. They don't manage specific activities. Instead, their role is to plan, develop and execute data-led marketing initiatives to boost profits and ROI. At the same time, they work to foster a better, more integrated culture and drive ongoing competitive advantage.

To do this effectively, a CMO must strike the difficult balance between meeting both customer and business needs. If they only focus on the customer, they won't get the attention within the leadership team. If they do the opposite, they won't satisfy the market.

The key difference, and one of the main benefits of an outsourced CMO, compared to their in-house counterparts is that they don't demand a full-time position or salary. Instead, they work as flexible 'executives for hire', engaged for their expertise as and when you need it – or on an ongoing retainer basis.

According to a recent survey (www.cmo.com.au/article/683160/report-aussie-smes-shutting-down-outsourcing-marketing-due-cost), nearly half of Australian SMEs are looking to outsource existing in-house marketing roles to cut costs. With executives for hire working out around half the cost of employing in-house, an outsourced CMO can suit a smaller budget while delivering big strategy.

"But how will an outsourced CMO know enough about my business to deliver effective strategy?" This is a question that often gets asked.

The reality is that any outsourced CMO worth their fee will make getting to know your business in-depth a priority. They'll quickly absorb themselves into your day-to-day, get to know your customers, staff and culture, and internalise your goals. If they don't, they won't drive results – and without results, they can't prove their worth.

Because they aren't in your business, outsourced CMOs bring value in the form of fresh thinking, diverse knowledge and new ideas to the table. This comes from working with a wide range of clients – and being absorbed in the discipline.

As well as bringing innovative thinking, a virtual CMO also has access to the best marketing technology – from analytical reporting tools to automation. They have done the research, tried out all the tools, and can implement the right ones in your business to drive efficiencies for the best price.

If your business lacks expertise in a specific area, whether its website management, content creation, SEO, branding, advertising, or PR, outsourced CMOs also come well-connected. After putting the strategy in place, they have a team of vetted experts they can bring in to help deliver the results you need.

If you want a business partner who can create and push your company's vision with data-driven marketing strategies, build the right team, and help you navigate today's complex marketing environment, on an affordable budget, an outsourced CMO might be the best investment you can make right now.

For further information contact Jacqui on 0449 845 595, email jacqui@tmmarketer.com or visit themeasuredmarketer.com.au



Jacqui Daley is a Chief Marketing Officer with over 17 years' experience driving strategy, change, and return on investment for SMEs and the public sector. Jacqui is the founder and managing director of The Measured Marketer Pty Ltd (TMM), a strategic digital marketing consultancy based in Newcastle. She is on the Hunter Manufacturing Awards Board of Directors and the Hunter Defence Taskforce. This year, Jacqui is a national finalist in the Australian Marketing Institute Marketing Excellence Awards for Chief Marketing Office of the Year, 2020.



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BUSINESS

WiFi helping seafarers connect with home

Port Waratah Coal Services has been providing seafarers with free WiFi services on vessels at their Kooragang and Carrington wharf facilities for over 12 months, since October 2019. In that time, seafarers have used more than 85 terabytes of data, which is enough to read every title of the 40 million titles available on Google Books twice!

Over the 12 months, more than 1200 vessels have used the service. The cost of the data usage service is just over \$16 a day, no more than a coffee with a couple of friends, but the value to seafarers is unmeasurable.

CEO of Port Waratah, Hennie du Plooy, said the value of the project was even more important this year with COVID19 restrictions in place.

"Seafarers have been unable to come ashore since March because of COVID19 restrictions. They are feeling more disconnected from community than ever before," said Mr du Plooy.

"Providing WiFi for use within the vessel while at Port Waratah exporting facilities is a small cost in comparison to the huge emotional benefit to seafarers, who can then connect with their families and friends online.

"Additionally, it adds more entertainment options by downloading movies, games, and music to help pass the time while at sea, which has positive outcomes for mental health and wellbeing for our seafaring community.

"It was an important project when it was first installed in October last year, but this was fully realised when the world closed off to seafarers for most of this year due to the pandemic."

The project had its challenges trying to enable WiFi on vessels. The Port Waratah team worked to find a reliable, portable system of technology and infrastructure to support the wireless connection.

"This project has provided a blueprint for other harbour facilities to provide WiFi to vessels. I am pleased we have been able to share our experience and enhance the digital services available to connect more seafarers with home," said Mr du Plooy.



Connecting with home: seafarers onboard a vessel berthed at Port Waratah.

Small wind turbine solution for telecommunications

On behalf of the Australian Government, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) has announced \$341,990 in funding to Diffuse Energy Pty Ltd (Diffuse Energy) to demonstrate the effectiveness of its innovative micro wind turbine technology for use on off-grid telecommunications towers and broader remote applications.

As part of the \$922,307 project, the Newcastle-based startup will install its small wind turbines at 10 off-grid telecommunications towers across various locations in Australia.

Telecommunications providers in Australia currently rely heavily on diesel generation to power their off-grid sites. It also leaves them exposed during natural disasters such as bushfires and floods, cutting off vital communications when it is most required. With resilience a major issue for the telecommunications industry, wind turbine technology is seen as a solution to keep these towers operating.

Diffuse Energy developed a novel small wind turbine capable of generating 500 W that solves a number of technical issues previously associated with small wind turbines, including low energy efficiency compared to their larger counterparts, maintenance issues, and poor commercial outcomes for the end user. Small wind turbines

are complementary to solar PV and batteries, particularly when solar and batteries are restricted due to space restrictions or lack of sun.

Founded in 2018 out of the University of Newcastle, Diffuse Energy will use the project to further validate their technology for the global telecommunications market which is expected to spend more than US\$3.4 billion on distributed energy solutions by 2024.

Diffuse Energy Co-founder and CEO Joss Kesby welcomed the funding, saying with ARENA's support, their operation could be scaled up.

"Telecommunication providers depend on secure and resilient energy generation in order to deliver essential communication services. The industry is also rapidly moving towards net zero carbon emissions creating a very strong demand for innovative, cost-effective renewable technologies."

"A nationwide rollout of our wind turbine technology to these sites could displace 17 GWh and 33,000 tonnes of CO₂ from fossil fuelled generation per year. Equivalent to \$43.9 million in savings of diesel fuel, transportation costs, and generator maintenance."

Diffuse Energy was one of seven teams that participated in ARENA's A-Lab Incubate in late 2019, successfully using that experience to help develop their project.

We invest \$750,000 each year to help local community groups, charities and programmes support our community.

Some COVID-19 response initiatives we've supported this year:



\$5,000 to 8
portside schools to support
students learning from home

\$20,000 to
Newcastle Meals on Wheels



Care Packs
and free Wi-Fi for visiting
seafarers who can't take
shore leave

If you have a project, programme or
initiative that would fit our funding
criteria, we'd love to hear from you.



PORT WARATAH
COAL SERVICES



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PWCS invests \$300,000 into medical research capability

Port Waratah Coal Services (Port Waratah) has invested more than \$300,000 over four years to part fund a new clinical informatics project with HMRI will benefit the region's health and medical researchers and local people.

Port Waratah has funded the project from its Community Investment Partnership Programme, in a new partnership with Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) and Hunter New England Local Health District. HMRI is using its Strategic Infrastructure Fund to part fund the project.

The project and role are strategically based within Hunter New England Health. It will help researchers and clinicians to efficiently unlock and interpret the wealth of existing health system data.

Port Waratah CEO, Hennie du Plooy, said that this project is invaluable to the Hunter community because it builds the region's capacity to support clinical and health service research.

"One of the most exciting aspects of this project is facilitating researchers' and clinicians' access to rich healthcare data, allowing them to plot changes in health trends and follow up patient care long term, or identify opportunities for local patients to benefit from and assist with research," Mr du Plooy said.

"HMRI is a leading research organisation with a proven track record, not just in this region, but nationally and internationally," he said.

"There's an economic benefit to the region by Port Waratah investing in research capability and having infrastructure to attract and retain the top researchers here in our region.

"Our Community Investment and Partnership Programme aims to work in partnership with our community to make Newcastle, and more broadly our region, smarter, resilient and more sustainable."

Peter Mastello is the region's new clinical informatician. Mr Mastello has years of experience working within NSW local health districts in informatics and data management. A pharmacist originally, he has a Masters of Information Technology from the University of Newcastle.

He said the health system is data rich and information poor. He said extracting good health data benefits both patients and community by building the capacity of researchers. Across HMRI, the University of Newcastle and the Hunter New England Health it will support a broad range of clinical research and accelerate translational research that improves health care, health systems, and patient outcomes.

One of Mr Mastello's priorities will be linking data across disparate and unconnected data bases and finding patterns in clinical data sets. Mr Mastello said the use of big data, "clinical informatics", is rapidly growing across Australia and the world.

"By making aggregated and anonymous patient data more available, researchers and clinicians can identify new clusters of disease and answer important questions to improve the health of our communities," Mr Mastello said.

"Accessing data that already exists can save researchers and funders time and money.

"The data and trend analysis will also help HMRI, researchers, clinicians, and health service leaders to identify research priorities."

HMRI interim director, Professor Mike Calford, said the investment by Port Waratah is a significant boost to research infrastructure. Professor Calford said it supports the strategy that HMRI, Hunter New England Health and the University of Newcastle have in place to attract and support researchers and position the region as a global leader in translational research. He said clinical informatics also has the potential to encourage private sector investment in research, such as pharmaceutical companies investing in drug trials in the Hunter.

Port Waratah also supports research into asthma and physical activity. The Port Waratah funded Daughters and Dads Active and

Empowered program won the Benefiting Society category of the Australasian Green Gown Awards on November 26. That program was also a finalist in the Engagement Australia Excellence Awards.



Port Waratah CEO Hennie du Plooy, Clinical Informatician Peter Mastello, HMRI Director Prof Mike Calford, HNE Health Manager Solution Development & Support Rachel McGovern

CSIRO signs agreement for transformational power generation technology

CSIRO has signed an agreement with U.S.-based GTI, a leader in the development and deployment of technology solutions to address energy and environmental challenges, to join a Joint Industry Program on the development of a supercritical CO₂ (sCO₂) power plant that could assist mining companies to reach large renewable energy targets.

When used with low-emission energy inputs, advanced sCO₂ power plants have the potential to be a transformational technology that can accelerate the world's transition to a low-carbon future.

"While most power plants use steam to produce electricity, sCO₂ power plants use recirculating high-temperature CO₂ instead," CSIRO Research Director Energy Technologies, Dr David Harris said.

"The advantage is that sCO₂ is a higher density working fluid which means sCO₂ power plants can be smaller, more efficient and not reliant on water for steam."

Supercritical CO₂ cycles can also operate using a wide range of heat sources.

"Their widespread implementation could be a game changer for power generation applications in Australia," Dr Harris said.

Supercritical CO₂ turbines offer an autonomous, high-efficiency power cycle which doesn't rely on steam. This makes such turbines an ideal candidate for power generation in off-grid mining and remote operations.

"With many mining companies committing to large renewable energy targets, the use of sCO₂ power could be the transformational technology that they are looking for," Dr Harris said.

CSIRO's involvement in the partnership will improve understanding of how sCO₂ power plants can enable lower- and zero-emission technology solutions, and how those plants might be used in remote mining and community locations as a low-cost alternative to diesel fuel power generation. Of particular interest is how concentrated solar thermal (CST) technologies could be used to provide renewable energy for these sCO₂ power plants. CST technologies capture and store heat, which make it an ideal solution.

The Australian Solar Thermal Research Institute (ASTRI) which is a consortium of CSIRO and six Australian universities, is leading efforts in this area.

Induction ceremony for additions to the Wambo Coal Singleton Hall of Fame



Back row: Wambo Coal Manager Environment and Community Peter Jaeger, the Hon George Souris, Gerard McMillan, Ian Neely and June Neely (representing Ken Neely).
Front row: Mayor of Singleton, Cr Sue Moore, Greg Lancaster, Wambo Coal Singleton Hall of Fame chairman Cr Godfrey Adamthwaite, Janelle Wenham (representing Charlie Shearer) and Singleton PCYC Manager David Andrews.

Six more inductions have been made to the Wambo Coal Singleton Hall of Fame, with a special COVID-safe event at Singleton Civic Centre on 18 November.

Individuals honoured at the ceremony were Gregory Lancaster (Sport); Gerard McMillan (Community Service); Ken Neely (Community Service); Charlie Shearer (Business Industry & Tourism); and the Hon George Souris (Public Service). Ken Neely and Charlie Shearer were inducted posthumously. Singleton PCYC was the only organisation to be inducted this year, in the category of Community Service.

Run in a partnership between Singleton Council and Peabody Wambo Coal, the Hall of Fame was established in 2009 to recognise those people who were born in, or have a strong association with Singleton and who have attained prominence at a state, national or international level in their field of endeavour.

Chairman of the Wambo Coal Singleton Hall of Fame Committee, Cr Godfrey Adamthwaite, said he felt very fortunate the community could come together for the 2020 induction,

although the event took a slightly different format to meet COVID-19 requirements.

"In the past 11 years, we've celebrated 58 individuals and community organisations who have given their time and energy for our community, or who have excelled on the state, national or global stage," Cr Adamthwaite said.

"I'm proud to say that we've added to that list in 2020, even in the midst of a global pandemic.

"The six names we've added to the pavers of our Hall of Fame are most deserving of this great honour to take their place on a prestigious list of individuals, families and organisations, and stand as an example to us all to strive for the highest levels of achievement in whatever field we choose.

"I congratulate today's inductees and their families, and thank Peabody Wambo Coal for their ongoing support since the inception of the Hall of Fame to recognise the outstanding people in our community."

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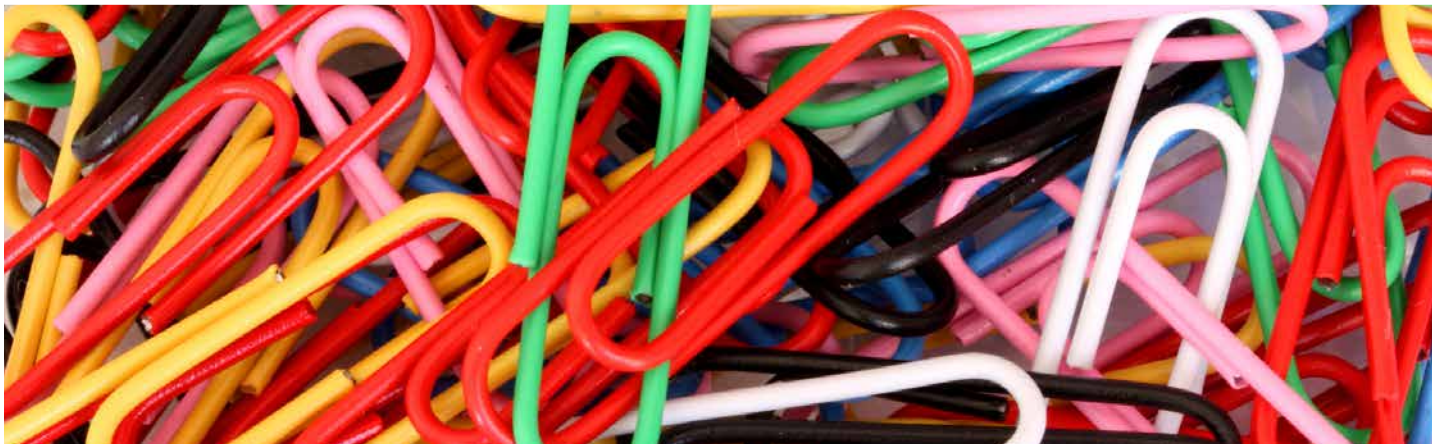
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It was getting close to my wife's birthday. She was looking at herself in the mirror. I asked her what she'd like for her birthday. She sighed and said I'd like to be eight again...

On the morning of her birthday, I woke up early and made her a nice big bowl of coco pops. I then took her on a special trip to Legoland. On the way home we stopped at McDonald's where I got her a Happy Meal. We then went to the cinema where they were playing old Disney movies. I got her a large Slush Puppie iced drink and a bag of popcorn. After the movie we walked home in the rain. I got her to jump into the puddles. I then surprised her with a

nice pink bunny rabbit birthday cake.

She was shattered as she fell into bed.

"How was it being eight again?" I asked thinking I'd smashed it.

"I meant my dress size! You nutter" she replied.

I went to a psychic once.

I knocked on her door.

She yelled "Who is it?"

So I left.

A little girl finally got to attend a wedding for the first time. While in the church, the girl asked her mother: "Why is the bride dressed in white?"

The mother replied to the girl "Well, it's because white is the colour of happiness and it's the happiest day of her life today."

After a little bit, the girl looks up at her mother and says: "But, then why is the groom wearing black?"

Guy goes to a fancy dress party in a green jumpsuit carry a woman by piggy back.

Doorman: You can't come in mate, you're not in fancy dress.

Guy: Yes I am, I'm a tortoise.

Doorman: Well I can see you're wearing green, but what's with the woman on your back?

Guy: That's Michelle.

A guest is ordering at a restaurant, "Do you think you could bring me what that gentleman over there is having?"

The waiter looks at him sternly, "No sir, I'm very sure he intends to eat it himself."

A man went to the Police Station wishing to speak with the burglar who had broken into his house the night before.

"You'll get your chance in court." said the Desk Sergeant.

"No, no no!" said the man. "I want to know how he got into the house without waking my wife. I've been trying to do that for years!"

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"We need to accept that we don't always make the right decisions, that we'll screw up royally sometimes - understanding that failure is not the opposite of success, it's part of success." - Arianna Huffington

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