

HBR

mag.com.au

Hunter Business Review

JULY 2026

VOLUME 22 NUMBER 6

Print Post Approved 100002454

22ND YEAR OF
PUBLICATION

DEFENCE

INSURANCE & RISK
MANAGEMENT

Australia \$6.60

ISSN 2202 - 8838 (Print)

ISSN 2202 - 8846 (Online)



9 772202 883002 >

HUNTER BUSINESS REVIEW
Connecting & informing business people



Your WORKCOVER Specialists

Everything in one place



Walk-in purpose built clinics

Open 7 days a week, HEAL clinics offer emergency specialist-led medical care. All WorkCover is billed directly to the insurer.



Experts in work injury and capacity

HEAL treats all non-life-threatening injury and illness. From fractures and crush injuries to wash outs and strains, HEAL knows workplace injuries.

Heal are a 'one stop shop' for workplace injury assistance... reducing the cost and impact of workplace injuries should they occur. They provide high quality medical care for our team.

Brad, Safety Manager
Australian Construction Group



Understands your business

The health & wellbeing of your workforce is our priority. HEAL partners with you to understand suitable duties and RTW pathways.



Coordinates appointments and paperwork

HEAL takes care of it for you. Our multi-disciplinary team work together to manage the needs of your injured worker, saving you time and stress.



Work Health Hub

A membership-based service that offers a complete medical pathway solution for your business.

HEAL
Specialist Urgent Care

HEAL Newcastle, Cnr Parry & Union St, Newcastle West

HEAL Maitland, 30 Metford Rd, East Maitland

healurgentcare.com.au

13 0009 0009

PUBLISHED BY:
Hunter Business Publications Pty Ltd
ABN: 15 112 838 945
PO Box 853, Hamilton NSW 2303
Phone: (02) 4062 8133

PUBLISHER and EDITOR:
Garry Hardie
Mob: 0414 463 125
garry@HBRmag.com.au

ART DIRECTOR:
Sandie Collie
sandie@HBRmag.com.au

CONTENT MANAGER:
Jason Duncan
jason@HBRmag.com.au

PRINTING:
NCP Printing
Phone: (02) 4926 1300
sales@ncp.com.au
www.ncp.com.au

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

www.HBRmag.com.au



GARRY



SANDIE



JASON

HUNTER BUSINESS PUBLICATIONS PTY LTD
2026 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Reproduction in any part prohibited without the written consent of the publisher. While every effort has been made to ensure all information in this magazine is accurate, no responsibility is accepted by the publisher, Hunter Business Publications Pty Ltd. Opinions expressed in externally supplied stories are not necessarily those of the publisher.

- 4 From the Editor
- 5 Business News
- 14 Coming Events
- 16 Insurance & Risk Management
- 18 Defence
- 30 Business Services Directory
- 31 Funny Business



QUALITY STEEL FABRICATION YOU CAN DEPEND ON

BJJ Welding & Fabrication are specialists in custom steel fabrication, trusted by clients for our precision, dependability, and top-tier workmanship

From residential renovations to large-scale commercial projects, we offer comprehensive solutions to meet our clients' unique needs.

We approach every job with passion, technical skill, and a focus on long-lasting results. Our Beresfield-based workshop is fully equipped to handle everything from detailed metalwork to structural steel fabrication and on-site welding.

When you're ready for your next project, think **BJJ Welding & Fabrication**. Give us a call for a free quote on steel fabrication services.

BJJ Welding & Fabrication - Unit 2, 3 Pippita Close, Beresfield NSW 2322
P: (02) 4942 6555 E: admin@bjjwelding.com.au W: www.bjjwelding.com.au

From the Editor



The 2026-27 NSW Budget released on 23 June was announced in a fairly challenging economic environment with slowing growth, falling household spending, reduced employment growth and inflation above the RBA's target rate.

It was also the last budget released before next year's election, so it was always likely to focus on household measures rather than measures to help business. \$1.1 billion has also been set aside for further announcements in the lead up to the election.

The household cost of living assistance included \$100 off private vehicle registration and \$80 for motorcycles, Opal fares frozen at 2025 prices, weekly toll cap reduced from \$60 to \$50, \$480 million in interest-free loans for solar panels and batteries and \$77 million in cash subsidies for energy-saving upgrades for low-income households.

The measures that were announced for business included \$37 million over four years for a new business advisory service to replace Business Connect, a two-year worker's compensation premium freeze and \$225 million to create more local manufacturing jobs, particularly in relation to low carbon industries. \$6.4 million was also announced for the Local Jobs First Commission aimed at giving SMEs better access to government contracts.

Locally, there wasn't a great deal but there was \$14 million to begin development of the new Newcastle Entertainment Centre as well as continued funding for a number of existing local infrastructure projects.

This issue contains the annual Defence feature, including a preview of the Hunter Defence Conference.

With continued unrest in Europe and the Middle-East, an assertive China and a more unpredictable USA, it is no surprise that the Federal Government is increasing its spend on Defence.

The Hunter has a long history of a strong local defence industry. The focus at the moment is at Williamstown, home to RAAF Williamstown, Newcastle Airport, Astra Aerolab and an increasing number of defence organisations. Williamstown is also home to the majority of Australia's F-35A Lightning II aircraft. Current projects also include massive investments from the likes of KONGSBERG Australia and Lockheed-Martin.

With record investment in the local defence industry, there are also an expanding range of opportunities for local business.

Sometimes the belief is that the opportunities are for just the larger end of town, but this is far from the case, with many business opportunities for local SMEs to support the local defence industry.

Supplying to defence does have some challenges but the potential rewards can be huge.

HunterNet Defence can be of great assistance for any SME considering supplying to the local defence industry.

Garry Hardie
Editor and Publisher

\$500 million investment in Hunter steelmaking

Greensteel Australia announced on 7 July that it has secured the historic 70,000 sqm site at 51 Industrial Drive, Mayfield North, and will invest \$500 million to build Australia's first new steel mill in more than 30 years. The mill will be the first in the country to run entirely on electricity, with no gas used anywhere in the process.

The Greensteel Australia site was home to the BHP Newcastle Steelworks for most of the twentieth century. Greensteel Australia's investment will return steel manufacturing to this historic site. Greensteel Australia Head of Government Relations, Patrick Buchan, said "The investment was made possible by the recent policy directions set by the NSW and Federal Governments. The Future Made in Australia agenda, together with national and state housing targets and NSW's support for industry in the Hunter, has given us the certainty we need to manufacture steel in Australia rather than overseas."

"Australia stopped building steel mills a generation ago. Thanks to the leadership of the NSW and Federal Governments, we're building again," Greensteel Australia Chief Executive Officer Romany Ibrahim said.

They've made it possible to bring manufacturing home to Newcastle, where Australian steelmaking began and where it never should have left."

The mill will produce up to 600,000 tonnes of finished steel per year for the housing, transport and energy sectors. Greensteel Australia expects the extra local supply to reduce the construction industry's reliance on imported steel and, over time, help stabilise and bring down steel prices for Australian builders. Because the process produces no direct CO₂, it will also lower the embodied carbon of Australian construction, supporting state and federal housing targets, including the national goal of 1.2 million new homes.

The heartbeat of this transformation is electric induction furnace technology.

In a traditional mill, steel is heated in massive gas-fired furnaces that are inherently carbon-intensive. Greensteel Australia's process replaces those fossil-fuel burners with a green solution that prioritises electricity. With its innovative design the mill will tap into renewable energy grids. The significance of this world-leading technology is defined by two critical advantages:

- Zero direct emissions. By using electricity to generate heat, the process produces no direct CO₂.
- Energy independence. The technology gives the facility complete independence from gas supplies, providing a stable, future-proof energy model.

Refurbishment and modernisation at the site will begin before the end of this year. The main equipment, including the world leading, all-electric-induction furnace to be supplied by leading global steel infrastructure group Danieli of Italy, is expected to arrive from October 2027, and the mill is expected to be operational by January 2028.

Steel will be forged at Mayfield, with reinforcing bar the first product and wire rod and coil planned for future stages. The mill will directly employ over 200 direct fulltime staff, including fitters, electricians, crane drivers, metallurgists and engineers, with more jobs created during construction and through Hunter supply chains.

"Every tonne of steel we forge at Mayfield is a tonne Australia doesn't have to import," Greensteel Australia Chairman, Ross Garnaut AC, said.

"That means more reliable supply and better prices for builders, and because there is no gas anywhere in our process, it also means lower embodied carbon in the homes and infrastructure this country needs. That's a win for builders and home buyers, and a win for the Hunter."

YOUR PARTNER FOR BUSINESS INFORMATION AND TARGETED B2B MARKETING IN THE HUNTER SINCE 2005

Distributed as a high quality hard copy magazine and online.
View the latest issue online now at www.HBRmag.com.au

TARGET BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS!

As the Hunter's leading hard copy and online specialist business publication, HBR offers unique targeted promotional opportunities for your business.

DON'T MISS YOUR OPPORTUNITY
Contact Garry Hardie and the team at HBR for further information on how we can help you reach the Hunter business market!

WE WANT YOUR NEWS!

HBR is always happy to consider story submissions for possible inclusion at no charge. If you have company news, major new appointments, business advice or other information of interest, we would like to hear from you.

P: (02) 4062 8133
W: www.HBRmag.com.au
E: info@HBRmag.com.au

LOCAL EXPERTISE NATIONAL STRENGTH

Legal advice and representation in the Hunter

- Construction & Projects
- Corporate & Commercial
- Estate Planning & Disputes
- Insurance & Risk
- Litigation & Dispute Resolution
- Planning & Environment
- Property & Development
- Workplace

MORAY & AGNEW
LAWYERS

moray.com.au

\$12 billion investment to rebuild Hunter train manufacturing

The Hunter is set to once again become one of Australia's largest train manufacturing hubs, with the NSW Government investing \$12 billion to establish a long-term pipeline of passenger train manufacturing in NSW. The investment will deliver a new state-owned train manufacturing facility in the Hunter, operated by a private manufacturer, alongside a rolling stock pipeline over 15 years.

Rather than buying trains project by project from overseas, this will provide the long-term certainty needed for industry to invest locally, train apprentices, strengthen local supply chains and rebuild train manufacturing in NSW.

After an extensive search, two potential sites have been identified - a former coal mine at Teralba and the Broadmeadow Locomotive Depot near where the original Tangara fleet was manufactured between 1986 and 1998. Site selection will be subject to due diligence and stakeholder consultation. In the case of Teralba, it will also be subject to further engagement with Glencore and partners over potential site acquisition.

The new facility is expected to anchor more than 30 years of train manufacturing in the Hunter. Following construction of the new Tangara fleet, the pipeline will continue with the replacement of the Millennium and OSCAR fleets in the 2040s, before the Waratah fleet in the 2050s.

This investment is part of the long-term plan to rebuild local train manufacturing after 12 years of offshoring transport manufacturing jobs by the former Government.

It also delivers on the Government's election commitments to set a target of a minimum 50% local content for rolling stock contracts, and to begin procurement of the new Tangara fleet by the end of the first term in office.

This landmark investment in stable, well-paid manufacturing jobs will address decades of industrial change in the Hunter following the closure of steelworks, changes in the mining industry and the loss of train and bus manufacturing.

The site is expected to employ up to 780 workers in construction and 550 ongoing jobs in the facility and supply chains.

To begin rebuilding the Hunter train manufacturing workforce, the NSW Government has established two production lines of the \$447 million Tangara Life Extension program at the Cardiff rail facility, which will employ 100 qualified workers and 20 apprentices.

In addition to rebuilding train manufacturing, the Government is also investing in local bus manufacturing with a 10-year \$6.5 billion investment in last month's NSW budget for a ten-year pipeline of new electric buses and electric depot infrastructure.

Next steps include finalising site selection and a formal Expression of Interest for the contracts to build the facility and manufacture the train fleets.

World Class entertainment centre coming to Newcastle

Newcastle will soon be home to a new world-class arena with the NSW Government committing \$14 million to unlock the next stage of planning for the new Newcastle Arena.

The plans include a new 12,000 capacity entertainment centre, creating a world class indoor arena attracting up to 160 new events to the Hunter each year.

The current Newcastle Entertainment Centre was originally built 33 years ago, as a temporary structure to operate for only 5 years. The new Newcastle Arena will be relocated next to McDonald Jones Stadium to create a dedicated live sport, entertainment and lifestyle precinct.

Relocating the arena is the first key move to unlock the precinct for future hotel, commercial and residential development to create a thriving, year-round destination. It also continues the transformation of the precinct, which is home to McDonald Jones Stadium, the Newcastle Knights Centre of Excellence and the Newcastle International Hockey Centre.

Together with the opening of Newcastle International Airport, Newcastle is rapidly transforming into a powerhouse for the regional visitor economy, creating jobs, driving local business and showcasing the Hunter to the world.

During construction 610 jobs will be created, 133 additional jobs for the precinct, and 157 for the NSW region. With the Newcastle Arena's expected to inject an additional \$400 million in economic benefit over the next ten years, driving a near tenfold increase in interstate visitors to events.

The Newcastle Arena will be the catalyst for the delivery of the Broadmeadow Placemaking Strategy and is aligned with the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 and the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036.

The broader redevelopment will deliver more housing and green space, improved transport connections, accessible and safe walking and cycle paths, and a new outdoor plaza for events and live site activations.

SUBSCRIBE NOW
HBRmag.com.au

HBR is essential reading for anyone wanting to stay informed on local business news and issues that affect business.

Try a Trade Day at TAFE NSW

On 23 June, more than 300 high school students from across the Hunter and Central Coast explored construction-based careers, as part of the inaugural Build Your Future: Try a Trade Day at TAFE NSW Newcastle (Tighes Hill).

Delivered through a collaboration between the NSW Department of Education's Regional Industry Education Partnerships (RIEP) program, TAFE NSW, the Construction TAFE Centre of Excellence, Group Training Organisations and industry partners, the initiative brought together students in Years 9 – 12 from 16 schools to explore a range of hands-on careers, connect with industry professionals, and learn about vocational training pathways.

The initiative comes as major infrastructure and renewable energy projects across the Hunter and Central Coast are forecast to provide more than 1,400 construction and operational jobs, highlighting the growing demand for skilled tradespeople locally.

As part of the one-day event, students learnt about career pathways in high-demand trades, including plumbing, electrotechnology, carpentry and renewable energy, the role of women in the sector, and participated in practical activities to build new skills.

Lea Sharpe, TAFE NSW Partnerships and Growth Associate Director, said the initiative highlights the importance of collaboration between education and industry in developing the region's future workforce.

"We're delighted to welcome students to TAFE NSW Newcastle - Tighes Hill and give them the opportunity to discover the diverse and rewarding career pathways the construction sector has to offer," said Ms Sharpe.

"Bringing together schools, industry, the Construction TAFE Centre of Excellence and Group Training Organisations in the Hunter for the first time, we're able to connect hundreds of students to in-demand careers the region needs."



"Whether students choose a trade, an apprenticeship or further study, experiences like this give students a sense of what a hands-on career could look like and the tools to take the next step towards their dream job," said Ms Sharpe.

NSW Department of Education Regional Industry Education Partnerships (RIEP) Officer Jenney-Lee Pye, said the initiative provides students with valuable opportunities to explore in-demand vocational careers.

"Build Your Future: Try a Trade Day is a powerful initiative that helps students make informed and confident decisions about their future," said Ms Pye.

"The program highlights industries experiencing critical skills shortages across our region, helping students discover rewarding career pathways while supporting the future workforce needs of the Hunter and Central Coast."

"It's been fantastic to see so many students engaged in hands-on learning and the curiosity and excitement the initiative has sparked among the next generation of tradespeople."

BUSINESS HUNTER

WE'RE IN BUSINESS TO HELP BUSINESS

THE LEADING VOICE ON KEY ISSUES AFFECTING HUNTER BUSINESSES SINCE 1886.

We engage with stakeholders at all levels of government to advocate for public and private investment that promotes the economic growth and diversification of the region and policies that support businesses to grow, prosper and create jobs.

SPEAKING UP FOR BUSINESS

www.businesshunter.com | 02 9466 4665 | info@businesshunter.com

designanthology

Designing & Manufacturing the New & Next

From concept to creation, we partner with you to turn big ideas into real products people love - built to perform, made to last and designed to make business sense. Our clear, collaborative process helps you navigate complexity, uncover opportunity and bring your vision to life - creating products that are efficient, profitable, exciting and easy to make, use and maintain.

Setting you up for the win from day one.

Learn more at designanthology.com

Newcastle Carbon Plant opens the door to new green industries

Homes across Australia could soon be built using materials made from captured climate pollution, with production now underway at a new demonstration plant in Newcastle. The MCI Carbon plant takes carbon dioxide captured from ammonia production and turns it into materials used in concrete, plasterboard, glass and paper.

MCI Carbon aims to capture 2,500 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year and produce 10,000 tonnes of compounds including magnesium carbonate, calcium carbonate and amorphous silica. These compounds are in demand across various industries, including construction, manufacturing and agriculture. That means new opportunities for Australian industry while cutting emissions.

At peak operation, Myrtle will support up to 50 highly skilled local jobs, including engineers and operators, many transitioning from fossil fuel and heavy industry roles.

Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen said the project showed how regions like the Hunter can be at the centre of Australia's clean industrial future.

"We're backing Australian innovation to cut emissions and create the next generation of clean industries," Minister Bowen said.

"This demonstration plant is a glimpse of what could become a major new industry for places like Newcastle and the Hunter.

"Taking carbon dioxide from industrial production and turning it into materials for homes, buildings and manufacturing is exactly the kind of practical, Australian-made technology we should be backing.

"This is about cutting emissions, creating new products, and building new clean industries, literally brick by brick."

In 2024, MCI Carbon received \$14.5 million through the Australian Government's Carbon Capture Technologies Program to help produce building materials from captured carbon dioxide.

Through Round 1 of the program, the Albanese Government is investing \$65 million across seven projects that will decarbonise hard-to-abate industrial processes and support emerging technologies including mineral carbonisation and direct air capture.

Round 2 of the Carbon Capture Technologies Program closed to applications on 6 May 2026. \$32.6 million is available for the grant opportunity.

Walking assistive device developed locally

The Movement Belt developed by Valkin Biosystems is a locally-developed wearable assistive device designed to improve walking in individuals with gait impairments, including those with Parkinson's disease, stroke, and age-related mobility decline. The device is worn around the waist and delivers rhythmic tactile (vibration) and optional auditory cues to support more consistent, stable, and confident walking.

The belt is worn over clothing in a standard belt position. Once activated, it provides real-time cueing or prompting during walking to help guide step timing, rhythm, and movement symmetry. The tactile cues are targeted over the hip extensors to assist with step initiation and foot clearance.

Unlike many existing solutions that are clinic-based, expensive, or visually intrusive, the Movement Belt is:

- Discreet and designed for everyday use in real-world environments
- Focused on simple, evidence-based cueing strategies
- Designed to be accessible and scalable for both clinical and home use
- Targeted specifically at key muscle groups involved in gait to enhance effectiveness



For over 70 years, we've been the official body of the home building industry, representing and uniting builders across Australia.

Get the support you need, when you need it.

Join HIA today

Call 02 4014 2000 or visit hia.com.au



Alex Hardy takes double at Australia's top Accounting Awards

Prosperity Advisers Group has announced that Director Alex Hardy has been named Auditor of the Year at the Australian Accounting Awards, held on 12 June at The Star Casino in Sydney in front of around 500 of the profession's leading practitioners.

In addition to taking out his category, Alex was also presented with the night's top honour, the Excellence Award, recognising him as the standout individual across all award categories for the evening.

The Auditor of the Year award recognises technical excellence, client impact, leadership and innovation in the audit profession, while the Excellence Award is presented to the individual judged to have made the most outstanding contribution across all categories on the night.

Alex has built his career at Prosperity from the ground up, joining the firm straight from high school as a trainee. Since then, he has lived and worked across each of Prosperity's three office locations in Newcastle, Sydney and Brisbane, completed a secondment with the firm's Dutch LEA member firm in the Netherlands, and represented Prosperity as a Young Professional delegate at several international conferences.

Earlier this year, Alex was appointed Principal of Prosperity's Newcastle office, where he leads a growing team delivering audit and assurance services to a portfolio of mid-market businesses, family groups, government entities and not-for-profit organisations across Australia.

Reflecting on the win, Alex said the recognition belonged to the wider team and the clients he works alongside.

"I'm genuinely humbled by this recognition. Audit is a team sport, and none of this happens without the people I work with every day or the trust our clients place in us," Mr Hardy said.

"Prosperity has given me the opportunity to grow, take on new challenges and work across the country and overseas. I'm proud to lead our Newcastle office and excited about where we can take our audit practice from here."

Prosperity CEO Allan McKeown said the recognition was a fitting endorsement of Alex's contribution to the profession and to the firm.

"Alex's passion and energy are contagious, and his thinking around technology and business development are hallmarks of his success," Mr McKeown said. "To be recognised as Auditor of the Year by his peers, and then to receive the Excellence Award as the standout individual on the night, is an extraordinary achievement. It's a credit to Alex and a reflection of the kind of careers that can be forged at Prosperity."

The Australian Accounting Awards, run by Accountants Daily, are among the most prestigious recognition programs in the Australian accounting profession, celebrating excellence across individual, team and firm-wide categories.

HBR

Hunter Business Review

Contact **HBR** for further information regarding Advertising.

INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF YOUR BUSINESS

Looking to grow your team and future-proof your workforce? Hire a Zeal Futures apprentice or trainee and build the skills and expertise you need from the ground up.

- 🔧 **Tailored approach** - we make the process easy with customised support for your business
- 👤 **Life-changing opportunities** - connect with motivated apprentices and trainees
- 🚀 **Ready for tomorrow** - build future capability through training and development

Let's create your success story.

zealfutures.com.au
1800 247 864

BREWING UP SOCIAL IMPACT: WHY CARRIE'S COFFEE IS THE ULTIMATE CSR ADDITION TO YOUR WORKPLACE

In today's corporate landscape, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is no longer just a buzzword; it is a core component of a successful business strategy. Local businesses are increasingly looking for tangible, meaningful ways to give back to the community while simultaneously engaging their staff. Enter Carrie's Coffee, a local social enterprise that is transforming the traditional workplace coffee break into a powerful vehicle for change.

The intersection of business and social responsibility

To understand the value of Carrie's Coffee, we must first recognise the broader community challenges that inevitably spill over into the workplace. Domestic, family, and sexual violence (DFS) is a pervasive issue, affecting 1 in 6 working Australians.

The impacts are not isolated to private life; they flow directly into businesses through absenteeism, lost productivity, and risks to safety. In fact, in Australia, almost 50% of women who disclosed that they had experienced domestic and family violence reported that it affected their capacity to get to work.

Addressing this requires a proactive, community-wide approach, and businesses are uniquely positioned to lead the charge.

Coffee that changes lives

Operated by Carrie's Place, an organisation dedicated to providing culturally appropriate services for those experiencing domestic violence and homelessness, Carrie's Coffee is a fully mobile coffee van with a profound mission.

It serves as a dynamic training ground for women impacted by DFS, providing them with:

- **Nationally Recognised Qualifications:** Participants receive barista training alongside essential job-readiness skills.

- **Paid Work Experience:** The van offers hands-on, paid work in a supportive, trauma-informed environment.

- **Sustainable Employment Pathways:** The program acts as a crucial stepping stone, connecting vulnerable women to long-term job opportunities and independence.

Hosting the Carrie's Coffee van at your next corporate event, team-building day, or regular office morning tea offers multifaceted benefits for your organisation:

- **Action-Oriented CSR:** It provides a highly visible, immediate way to demonstrate your organisation's commitment to social equity and community support.

- **Enhanced Team Morale:** Employees increasingly want to work for organisations that align with their values. Providing top-tier, locally roasted coffee that also supports a vital cause is a powerful morale booster.

- **Starting the Conversation:** The presence of the van serves as a natural, approachable catalyst for broader conversations about workplace culture, respect, and safety.

For businesses looking to formalise their approach to these issues, Carrie's Place also offers half-day DFS Awareness & Prevention training workshops. These sessions equip leaders, managers, HR, and WHS teams with the tools to recognise warning signs, respond safely to disclosures, and meet legislative obligations.

Make your next event count

Every business can make a difference. By choosing to partner with Carrie's Coffee, you are doing more than just caffeinating your team; you are directly investing in the empowerment of local women and helping to break the cycle of disadvantage.

To learn more about booking Carrie's Coffee for your workplace, or to explore corporate partnership opportunities, visit <http://carriesplace.org.au/carries-coffee>



HMA
HUNTER MANUFACTURING AWARDS

WE.MAKE.IT.HERE
26

REGISTRATION & APPLICATIONS ARE
NOW OPEN

This year's Hunter Manufacturing Awards theme, "We Make It Here", celebrates excellence in manufacturing across our region.

If your business is actively engaged in the manufacturing sector within our region, this is your time to shine.

Participating in these awards showcases organisations small and large, opening doors to valuable business opportunities and boosting your company's reputation and visibility.

Take the opportunity to be part of the 2026 Hunter Manufacturing Awards.

Visit HMA.ORG.AU to learn more and enter.



TICKETS ON SALE NOW
GALA AWARDS NIGHT

VISIT HMA WEBSITE OR SCAN THE QR CODE TO PURCHASE TICKETS



ENTRIES
CLOSE **20**
AUG

FINALISTS
ANNOUNCED **1**
OCT

GALA AWARDS
NIGHT **30**
OCT

MAJOR SPONSOR

Downer

WITH THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

AuditCo agl BAE SYSTEMS BISCIT HEDWELD GROUP OF COMPANIES HUNTER

OMNIA ORICA QUARRY MINING VARLEY WesTrac CAT Whiteley Corporation

GOLD SPONSORS

NTP

AND PARTNERS

BUSINESS HUNTER CENTRAL COAST INDUSTRY CONNECT HBR helloworld BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWCASTLE HERALD newcastleherald.com.au Hunter iF

KPMG

HUNTERNET The power of many Industry Update McEWAN and PARTNERS THE MELT NHN GROUP

Singleton Business Awards 2026

Business Singleton celebrated the achievements of the local business community at the 2026 Singleton Business Awards Gala on 4 July, recognising the businesses, individuals and organisations making an outstanding contribution to the region.

Business Singleton President Anita White said the awards continue to showcase the innovation, resilience and community spirit that make Singleton's business sector so strong.

"Congratulations to every finalist and winner. These awards recognise the dedication, passion and hard work of the people and businesses that help our community thrive. Every entrant should be incredibly proud of their achievements."

The night's highest honour, Business of the Year, was awarded to Mai-Wel Limited, with Singleton Tidy Towns receiving the President's Award for its outstanding contribution to the community.



Mai-Wel Limited – winners of Outstanding Not-for-Profit and Business of the Year

2026 Award Winners

- **Excellence in Micro Business** – Renue Wellness
- **Excellence in Small Business** – Peter Dunn Real Estate Pty Ltd
- **Excellence in Large Business** – Morgan Engineering
- **Excellence in Hospitality & Tourism** – Worn Out Wares
- **Excellence in Business Collaboration** – Novaskill & Singleton Greyhounds Rugby League Club
- **Excellence in Marketing & Digital Engagement** – Witmore Ltd
- **Excellence in Retail** – Meyn Street Meats
- **Excellence in Health, Wellbeing & Lifestyle** – Ourcare Services Limited
- **Excellence in Professional Services** – Ourcare Services Limited
- **Outstanding New Business** – Thriving Minds Clinic
- **Outstanding Not-for-Profit Organisation** – Mai-Wel Limited
- **Outstanding Community Organisation** – Singleton Neighbourhood Centre Inc.
- **Young Employee of the Year** – Tiahna Ball
- **Employee of the Year** – Kylie Hatch
- **Young Business Leader of the Year** – Melissa Spinks
- **Business Leader of the Year** – Kelly Cooper
- **Apprentice of the Year** – Adam Baker
- **People's Choice Award** – The Grove Hunter Valley
- **Outstanding Community Contribution** – Kevin Lomax
- **Highly Commended** – Wine Country Lavender
- **President's Award** – Singleton Tidy Towns
- **Business of the Year** – Mai-Wel Limited

Business Singleton extended its thanks to the sponsors whose support made the awards possible: Glencore, AGL, Yancoal Mount Thorley Warkworth, NSW Mining, Peter Drayton Wines, McCaffrey's Estate, Local Buying Foundation, Hunter Valley Operations, Singleton Council, CPR Pest Management, ETC - Employment and Training, Commonwealth Bank, Rotary Club of Singleton and Singleton Square.

A special thank you also went to the event vendors and suppliers including Hunter Valley Catering, The Hunter Bartender,

Fordtronic AV, Pretty Bangin' Balloons, Scene That, Avid Entertainment, photographers Steph and John, and MC Paul Lobb for helping deliver an exceptional evening celebrating local business excellence.

Daracon group takes out fourth consecutive civil construction award

Daracon Group has taken out the win in the \$30 - \$75 million project category, sponsored by Coates, at the 2026 Civil Contractors Federation NSW (CCF NSW) Earth Awards, recognised for the rehabilitation of Coulson's Creek Road Merriwa (MR358).

The result marks a fourth consecutive win for Daracon Group at the state's premier civil construction event, following wins for the Hydro Aluminium Kurri Kurri Site Remediation project in 2025, the Newcastle Ocean Baths in 2024, and the Kooragang Island Waste Emplacement Facility in 2023.

This year's winning project, the Coulsons Creek Road upgrade, was delivered for Upper Hunter Shire Council with the backing of the Australian and NSW Governments. The project restored a critical regional freight route following catastrophic damage sustained during heavy rainfall and landslides in 2021.

"Civil contractors are the ones called for important maintenance like reopening roads in regional communities or replacing bridges to increase a community's flood resilience, just as two of our winners did," said CCF NSW CEO, Kylie Yates.

Working across steep, geologically challenging terrain in the Upper Hunter, Daracon's scope on the Coulsons Creek project was extensive, encompassing retaining structures, road pavement, drainage, rockfall protection, and the full replacement of the Merriwa-end causeway. The project has since been widely recognised by Council and Government representatives as a benchmark for regional infrastructure rebuilds.

"This was a complex job in a challenging, regional location, but the team produced an excellent outcome," said Jon Mingay, Managing Director at Daracon Group.

"This road is critical for the communities that depend on it, and we are proud to have delivered something that the region can rely on for years to come," he said.

As a category winner at the CCF NSW Earth Awards, Daracon Group now progresses to the national stage, with the CCF National Earth Awards to be held on Friday, 27 November 2026 in Canberra, coinciding with the CCF Australian Infrastructure Summit.



Red Insight wins at the 2026 Australian Trades Small Business Champion Awards

Red Insight, based in Rutherford, has been named Champion in the Trade Consultants category at the 2026 Australian Trades Small Business Champion Awards, recognising the business as one of the nation's top performers in its field.

The team was presented with their Champions trophy and winner's certificate at a prestigious red-carpet ceremony held at Sydney's Sofitel Wentworth on Saturday, 27 June. Hosted by Scott Irwin, the gala event - widely regarded as the "Logies of Australia's trade sector", attracted trades business leaders from across Australia for an evening celebrating outstanding achievement and industry excellence.

Now in its fourth year, the Australian Trades Small Business Champion Awards celebrate and inspire the most dynamic, innovative, and high-performing trades businesses across metropolitan, regional, and rural Australia. In 2026, more than 587 trade small businesses across retail, services, and manufacturing were celebrated.

Red Insight stood out in the Trade Consultants category, impressing an independent panel of expert judges. Evaluation criteria included business strategy, growth, financial performance, sustainability, innovation, customer service excellence, and community contribution.

"To be recognised as a Champion among businesses from across the country is an outstanding achievement and highlights the hard work, determination and leadership of Red Insight," said Steve Loe, Awards Founder and Managing Director of Precedent Productions, which manages the program.

"Tradies form the backbone of Australia's small business economy. With long hours, tough labour, and the pressures of



ownership, it's vital we acknowledge the businesses that perform at the highest standard, and Red Insight is one of them."

The 2026 Australian Trades Small Business Champion Awards are sponsored by Westpac, Lifestyle Tradie, NOVA Employment, Xclusive Business Sales, Buy4Tradies, TradieSpec, VJB Group, Castaway Forecasting, Big Clean and MyHR.

HIGHEST SCORE
Trade Consultants
Category
17 FINALISTS

NATIONALLY RECOGNISED PROUDLY HUNTER

Red Insight was named the **2026 Australian Trades Small Business Champion** in the **Trade Consultant Category**, after more than 12 years of helping businesses build safer workplaces through practical advice and genuine partnerships.

“Awards recognise our work. Our clients are the reason for it.”
Monica Toews Brown, Director

WE HELP BUSINESSES WITH:

- Audits, Inspections & Investigations
- Management Systems & ISO Support
- WHS Advice & Support

redinsight.com.au

COMING EVENTS

21 July 2026, 4:00pm – 6:00pm

The University of Newcastle

The Pivot Showcase

Venue: I2N Hub Honeysuckle

Cost: Free

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/the-pivot-showcase-tickets-1990609477533?aff=ebdssbcategorybrowse>

23 July 2026, 8.30am - 11.30am

Yellow Coaching

Business Goal Setting Workshop: Design your business success this financial year

Venue: East Maitland Golf Club

Cost: \$199

<https://www.trybooking.com/DNHAY>

27 July 2026, 1:30pm – 6:15pm

The University of Newcastle

Newcastle Industry Open Day

Venue: Brennan Room, Callaghan

Cost: Free

<https://events.humanitix.com/newcastle-industry-open-day>

28 July 2026, 10:00pm – 11:30pm

REACH Business Community

REACH Business Community Event

Venue: Pier Ninety Seven

Cost: Free

<https://events.humanitix.com/reach-business-community-event-newcastle>

14 August 2026, 12:00pm – 4:00pm

HunterNet

HunterNet Future Leaders Roundtable Luncheon

Venue: Merewether Surfhouse

<https://hunternet.com.au/event/2026-hunternet-future-leaders-roundtable-luncheon/>

26 - 27 August 2026

Hunter Defence

2026 Hunter Defence Conference

Venue: Rydges Hunter Valley

<https://www.hunterdefence.org.au/hdc2026/>

04 September 2026, 8:00am – 9:30am

HunterNet

Business Practice Forum – AI Workshop with Myrtec

Venue: HunterNet

<https://hunternet.com.au/event/business-practice-forum-ai-workshop-with-myrtec-3/>

30 October 2026

HMA

2026 Hunter Manufacturing Awards

Applications Close 20 August

Venue: NEX Newcastle

<https://www.hma.org.au/>

12 November 2026

HunterNet

HunterNet Industry Excellence Awards

Venue: Newcastle City Hall

<https://hunternet.com.au/event/hunternet-industry-excellence-awards-2/>

**ARE YOU
ORGANISING A
COMING BUSINESS
EVENT?**



We would be pleased to receive basic information as above for consideration for inclusion in a coming issue of **HBR**.

Advertising opportunities in **HBR** and the **HBR** email newsletter are also available.

Please email garry@HBRmag.com.au

2NURFM 103.7 WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE 186,000 LISTENERS *who tune in each month!**



**2NURFM is Newcastle and
The Hunter Valley's favourite
community radio station that
packs a big punch!**

Proudly locally owned and operated
by a top-notch bunch of radio professionals

Reaching 186,000 listeners each month*
we boast a track record of achieving outstanding cost
effective results for clients with our broad and affluent
40+ years demographic*

Promote and market your business brand
to our engaged and loyal audience

*Partner with the station
that is making waves*

Our professional sales team listens
to what your business needs and prepares
creative solutions, helping you connect with
our audience.

Contact | sales@2nurfm.com

2NUR FM103.7
GOOD TIMES & GREAT MUSIC
2NURFM.COM.AU

*[National Listener Survey – conducted by McNair Yellow Squares – Greater Newcastle 2024 Survey Wave 2].

HOW TO AVOID BUSINESS
INSURANCE COVERAGE GAPS

For many small business owners, insurance is something you put in place early and revisit from time to time. But as your business evolves, so do the risks you face — and taking the time to review how your cover fits together can help ensure it still supports your business when you need it most.

Many small business owners say they take a 'jigsaw' approach to insurance — arranging some cover themselves and relying on advice for other parts. The challenge with this approach is that even one missing piece can leave your business exposed to significant losses, often only becoming clear at the point of a claim.

Here are some practical ways working with an insurance broker can help ensure all the pieces of your business insurance are in the right place.

1. Step back and look at the full picture

Every business has its own risk profile, shaped by how it operates, its structure and its industry.

An insurance broker takes this risk profile and turns it into a comprehensive view of your business — identifying potential exposures across areas such as operations, regulatory requirements, legal liabilities and downtime.

Their expertise helps you understand all the pieces shaping your business, so that you can focus on building your business.

2. Check that your cover still fits as things change

Even if your insurance program once fit together well, that doesn't mean it still does.



Policy terms and insurer appetite can change over time — sometimes at renewal — meaning certain risks may no longer be covered in the same way. Without regular review, small gaps can start to appear which can quickly widen into significant losses.

In some instances, insurers may become reluctant to cover some risk due to a large number of claims for losses — for disaster related damage, for example. Taking the time to reassess your cover helps ensure your insurance keeps pace with your business.

3. Make sure the pieces work together

Holding multiple policies — sometimes with different insurers — is common, but it can lead to overlaps in some areas and gaps in others.

A broker can help bring everything together into a more cohesive insurance program, aligning different covers so they complement each other and provide more complete protection.

4. Understand how each piece fits

When you're busy building and running your own business, reading the detailed terms, conditions and exclusions in insurance policies is not typically the top priority.

Working with a broker gives you access to an expert who understands how each policy contributes to your overall cover, including where limitations may apply and how your insurance is likely to respond in the event of a claim.

5. Avoid gaps that only show up when it matters most

Insurance gaps often don't become obvious until a claim is made — when it can be too late to address them.

For many small businesses, absorbing significant losses can be difficult, making it even more important to ensure your cover is structured properly. Taking a more considered approach helps reduce the risk of missing pieces.

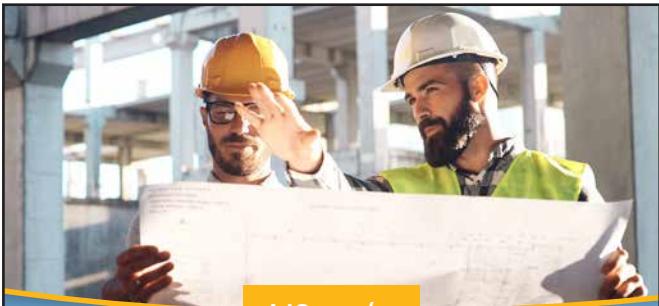
Leverage Gallagher expertise

Ensuring your business is adequately covered doesn't need to be complicated. With the right advice and a clear understanding of your risks, we partner with you to build a program that supports your business as it grows.

Connect with Gallagher at <https://locations.ajg.com/au/nsw/charlestown/sky-central-ground-level-east-tower-123-pacific-highway>

Disclaimer:

To the extent that any material in this document may be considered advice, it does not take into account your objectives, needs or financial situation. You should consider whether the advice is appropriate for you and review any relevant Product Disclosure Statement and policy wording before taking out an insurance policy.



AJG.com/au

Get insurance coverage from
the local broker who
knows your business.

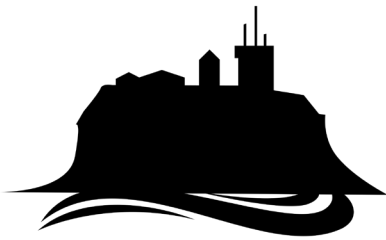
We cater for all your business insurance needs including property, motor, liability, professional indemnity, cyber, director and employment risks.

Connect with us
Newcastle Office
Sky Central,
Ground Level
East Tower
123 Pacific Highway
Charlestown
02 4979 3333



Insurance | Risk Management | Consulting

Arthur J. Gallagher & Co (Aus) Limited, AFSL 239812. Cover is subject to the Policy terms and conditions. You should consider if the insurance is suitable for you and read the relevant PDS, Policy Wording and our FSD before making your decision to acquire insurance. These are available on request or at ajg.com/au. GGB0202_233



NEWCASTLE
INSURANCE GROUP

IS YOUR BUSINESS REALLY PROTECTED?
TWO RISKS YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO IGNORE

Every business owner insures what matters most, yet two of the most damaging risks often slip through the cracks. They are underinsurance and cyber threats. Left unchecked, either one can undo years of hard work in a single moment.

UNDERINSURANCE:
THE GAP YOU DON'T SEE UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE.

As your business grows, so does its value. Stock, equipment, premises and income all increase over time, but many policies stay frozen at figures that were set years ago. When you add rising rebuilding costs and inflation, the gap between what you are insured for and what you need can widen without warning.

What many owners don't realise is that being underinsured can cost you twice. Under a co-insurance clause, also known as an average clause, your insurer may penalise you at claim time by reducing your payout in proportion to how underinsured you are. So even for a partial loss, you could receive far less than expected and be left to cover the shortfall yourself. That can run into tens of thousands of dollars, at the very moment your business can least afford it.

CYBER THREATS:
THE RISK YOU CAN'T SEE COMING.

Cyber-crime is no longer a concern reserved for big corporations. Australian small and medium businesses are increasingly targeted by data breaches, ransomware, email scams, and system outages. A single incident can halt your operations, compromise customer data, trigger regulatory obligations and cause lasting reputational harm. Cyber insurance helps you respond and recover by covering data restoration, business interruption, legal costs, and customer notification, so one attack does not become a catastrophe.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT BOTH RISKS ARE
MANAGEABLE WITH THE RIGHT ADVICE.

At **Newcastle Insurance Group**, we take the time to understand your business and make sure your cover keeps pace with it. We will review where you stand, uncover the gaps you may not know exist, and tailor protection that gives you genuine peace of mind.

Talk to **Newcastle Insurance Group** today and make sure your business is protected for what it is worth now, and whatever comes next.



Gavin Walker
Managing Director

2026 HUNTER DEFENCE CONFERENCE

The Hunter Defence Conference returns to the Hunter Valley on 26 - 27 August 2026, bringing together Defence, industry and government leaders from across Australia for two days of strategic insight, practical engagement and meaningful connections. Now in its 16th year, the conference has become one of Australia's leading regional defence industry events, creating direct pathways between regional capability, Defence decision-makers, major Primes and emerging opportunities across the national security landscape.

This year's theme, Building Your Defence Strategy, reflects the growing need for organisations of all sizes to develop clear, practical and sustainable approaches to engaging with Defence. As Australia navigates an increasingly complex strategic environment, businesses are seeking greater clarity around Defence priorities, procurement pathways, sovereign capability requirements and how they can position themselves for long-term success within the sector.

The Hunter region continues to strengthen its role within Australia's defence industry ecosystem. Home to advanced manufacturing, aerospace, maritime, cybersecurity and guided weapons capabilities, the region is increasingly recognised as a key contributor to national defence outcomes. Significant investment across the Hunter is creating new opportunities for local businesses to participate in major Defence programs, national capability projects and global supply chains.

Against this backdrop, Hunter Defence Conference 2026 has been designed to move beyond discussion and deliver practical insights that help businesses understand where they fit within the Defence landscape and how to build a strategy that supports future growth.



Across two packed days at Rydges Resort Hunter Valley, delegates will hear from leading Defence and industry experts on the strategic, operational and commercial factors shaping the sector. The program will feature presentations and discussions from respected strategic commentators including Mick Ryan AM and Michael Shoebridge, alongside Defence capability representatives, major contractors and industry leaders.

Key program highlights include:

- National and global defence perspectives
- ADF Capability Roundtable and Q&A
- Two Defence Prime panels featuring regional and national perspectives from Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems, KONGSBERG Australia and more
- Practical guidance on developing a Defence business strategy
- Sessions exploring Artificial Intelligence and modern Defence capability
- New Zealand industry engagement and Austrade perspectives
- Governance, leadership and Defence-connected networks

A defining feature of the conference is its focus on meaningful engagement. More than simply a speaker program, the event provides structured opportunities for delegates to connect directly with Defence representatives, government stakeholders, major contractors and fellow industry leaders. For many attendees, these conversations become the foundation for future partnerships, collaborations and business opportunities.

With more than 280 delegates and presenters expected from across Australia, and having sold out for the past five consecutive years, the conference continues to attract organisations seeking to strengthen their Defence networks, better understand Defence priorities and position themselves for future growth. The event remains focused on supporting regional businesses, creating direct connections between SMEs, Defence and Primes while showcasing the depth of capability that exists within the Hunter and across Australia.

Conference Dates: 26 - 27 August 2026

Location: Rydges Resort Hunter Valley

Tickets: Now available. Early interest is encouraged due to limited capacity. Member Delegate \$1,190; Non-Member Delegate \$1,290

For registrations and conference information, visit hunterdefence.org.au/hdc2026.

For sponsorship and exhibition enquiries, contact Merran Wiggins at merran@hunternet.com.au.

TICKETS SELLING FAST!

HUNTER
DEFENCE
CONFERENCE
2026

26-27 AUGUST

“ THE HUNTER'S FLAGSHIP DEFENCE INDUSTRY EVENT,
CONNECTING REGIONAL CAPABILITY WITH NATIONAL DECISION-MAKERS,
MAJOR PRIMES AND THE FUTURE NEEDS OF DEFENCE. ”

Returning to the Hunter Valley in August, Hunter Defence Conference 2026 will focus on **Building Your Defence Strategy**, with two days of insight, practical sessions and targeted networking designed to help businesses navigate defence priorities, strengthen their positioning and turn industry connections into real opportunities.

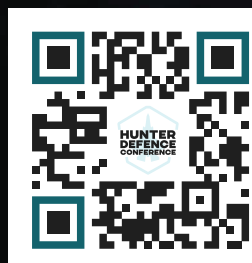
280+ delegates and
presenters from
across Australia

In its 16th year and
sold out event for the
past five years

Creating direct pathways
for regional SMEs to
connect with major
primes

Fresh agenda, high-
calibre speakers and
targeted networking
opportunities

A percentage of event
proceeds will support
charities working with
local veterans



RYDGES RESORT - HUNTER VALLEY

hunterdefence.org.au/hdc2026



Proudly sponsored by



BAE SYSTEMS

EXP
CAPITAL

LOCKHEED MARTIN

VARLEY
EXCELLENCE SINCE 1986



Innovating
together



2026 DEFENCE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Federal Government has released the 2026 Defence Industry Development Strategy, outlining how we will strengthen Australia's sovereign defence industrial base and boost self-reliance.

Building on the record defence spending outlined in the 2026 National Defence Strategy and Integrated Investment Program, the Defence Industry Development Strategy outlines the Government's plan to build the industrial base needed to keep Australia safe.

The Strategy places industry at the centre of national defence and economic security, driving a new era of partnership with government.

The 2026 Defence Industry Development Strategy builds on the Government's plan to support a defence future made in Australia by:

- Setting targets for large defence primes to grow the defence industrial workforce, with a focus on apprentices.
- Enhancing broader workforce initiatives to grow the required skills, encourage the uptake of STEM learning, and strengthen partnerships between Defence, industry and the education sector. This includes: extending the Defence Industry Internship Program (DIIP) with more than \$17 million in funding, ensuring more university students gain practical experience in Australia's growing defence industry; and investing nearly \$30 million to expand the Schools Pathway Program, encouraging school students to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics studies and explore careers in defence industry.
- Adding the Ghost Shark extra large autonomous underwater vehicle as a priority export capability for the Australian Defence Strategic Sales Office.
- Reforming and relaunching the USD \$3 billion Defence Export Facility, which has been underutilised since its establishment in 2018, making it easier for Defence industry to access this pool of funds.
- Investing an additional \$80 million in Defence Industry Development Grants to build self-reliance and support Australian defence businesses.
- Streamlining procurement to enable faster, more agile delivery of capability to Defence, including by implementing a 'Continuous Capability Development and Delivery' and 'Minimum Viable Contracting' approach.

AUSTRALIA AND US STRENGTHEN AIR POWER

The Aircraft Research and Development Unit (ARDU) hosted the United States Air Force (USAF) Test Pilot School in Australia at RAAF Base Williamtown, NSW, for the first time in many years.

For decades, the Royal Australian Air Force has sent pilots, mission aircrew and engineers to undertake the rigorous, year-long Test Pilot School program in the United States.

The program equips graduates with the advanced skills required to operate in complex test and evaluation environments, and plays a critical role in shaping and assuring Air Force capability.

By hosting the USAF Test Pilot School team, ARDU reinforces its commitment to collaboration and combined learning.

The visit provided a unique opportunity to exchange knowledge, explore different testing methodologies and operate across varied aircraft and environments.

E-7 test pilot Flight Lieutenant Mitchell Jensen highlighted the value of these connections, noting their impact on daily operations.

"The relationships built during training provide immediate, real-world benefits," Flight Lieutenant Jensen said.

"Recently, I resolved a complex issue in a single day by quickly

collaborating with a USAF Test Pilot School colleague whom I met during my training."

While Australian personnel have long benefited from training in the US, hosting USAF Test Pilot School members in Australia deepened the partnership through shared, real-world experience in a different operational environment. It demonstrated the maturity and mutual trust underpinning the relationship.

"The relationships formed during this visit will enable us to work even more closely with the USAF in the test and evaluation environment, strengthening our ability to deliver outcomes as an integrated team," Flight Lieutenant Jensen said.

Ultimately, the visit highlighted the importance of close cooperation between Australia and the US in delivering effective air power.

Through shared training, mutual support and enduring professional relationships, both nations are strengthening their ability to operate together, solve complex challenges and deliver capabilities that are greater than either could achieve alone.

REBUILDING DEFENCE CAPABILITY

The Australian Government's Rebuilding Defence Capability report released on 2 July is designed to set out structured and practical reforms which will ensure that every dollar of defence investment is focused on value for money and greater speed to capability.

Defence personnel are central to implementing the 2026 National Defence Strategy and securing the nation, and these reforms seek to enable them working to deliver capability for the ADF.

These reforms have three central components:

- The establishment of the Defence Delivery Agency, a dedicated delivery organisation, headed by a new National Armaments Director, consolidating Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group, Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group, and Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group.
- The consolidation of capability development functions across all domains – land, air, maritime, space and cyber – under the Vice Chief of the Defence Force, to ensure we continue to deliver an integrated, focused force.
- A re-designed capability system which clarifies accountabilities and re-establishes decision discipline. This system will be underpinned by stronger contestability and improved cost estimation and assurance across the Defence Delivery Agency, Department of Defence and the Department of Finance.

The report sets out a clear implementation pathway for the next 12 months to transition the Defence Delivery Group to the Defence Delivery Agency, which will be established on 1 July 2027, to ensure it has the resources, accountabilities and autonomy needed to operate as an independent agency.

To support this transition, the Government has appointed Ms Nadine Williams as the interim National Armaments Director.

These reforms are being undertaken in a deliberate, staged and structured approach to ensure that there is continuity in project delivery, and the uplift in the capability system can be realised quickly.

This will reset the relationship between Defence and industry. Led by the National Armaments Director, engagement with industry will be more collaborative, transparent, and performance-based, providing clearer demand signals and stronger commercial discipline. For industry, this means clearer visibility of Defence's likely demand, priorities and direction of travel.

The Government said it recognises the longstanding systemic challenges that have resulted in major Defence projects being delivered late, over budget and below expectations. This created a widening gap between strategic need and realised capability.

Alongside the 2026 Defence Industry Development Strategy, these reforms will help deliver a more integrated and resilient Defence enterprise that enables Australia to accelerate capability delivery and respond more effectively to emerging threats in support of Australia's national interest.



For refurbishment and fit out

Known nationally as

noi

T. 02 4942 5109

E. sales@newcastleofficeinteriors.com.au

W. newcastleofficeinteriors.com.au



Defence Specialists

Classified Space Experts

General Commercial Fit-Outs

Newcastle Office Interiors (NOI) delivers commercial fit-outs, refurbishments and furniture solutions across corporate, industrial, healthcare, education and government sectors. From office upgrades to complete workplace transformations, we provide end-to-end solutions delivered on time, on budget and to the highest standard.

What many businesses don't realise is that classified environments are a core area of expertise for NOI. As a DISP-accredited contractor with more than a decade of Defence fit-out experience, we understand the unique requirements of secure facilities, including physical, electronic, RF and acoustic security measures.

Whether you're creating a new classified workspace, upgrading an existing secure facility, or undertaking a general commercial refurbishment, NOI has the expertise to deliver compliant, functional and high-quality outcomes.



WHY SECURITY READINESS IS NOW A LEADERSHIP ISSUE

Ben Dewson
NHN Group

For many organisations, the first signs of disruption no longer appear at the front gate. They emerge online, through commentary, coordinated messaging, stakeholder pressure, activist networks and growing public scrutiny. By the time activity becomes visible on the ground, the narrative surrounding an organisation, project, event or industry may already be well established.

That shift matters for the Hunter.

As defence investment, advanced manufacturing, energy transition projects, port activity and nationally significant infrastructure continue to grow across the region, so too does the visibility of the organisations involved. Businesses that may not have previously considered themselves high-profile are increasingly operating in environments where community expectations, political attention, workforce safety, supply chain continuity and operational resilience intersect.

For companies connected to defence, critical infrastructure, or major industry, security readiness is no longer just about guards, gates and incident response. It is about understanding where pressure may come from, how quickly it can escalate, and whether the organisation has the structures in place to respond with confidence.

Activism and protest activity are one part of this picture. Australia has a long history of lawful protest and public debate, and most activism remains peaceful and legitimate. The challenge for organisations is not to treat activism itself as the threat. The challenge is to understand how activism-related pressure can move from online narratives to site activity, operational disruption, reputational risk, workforce concern and leadership scrutiny.

Other risks are also part of the readiness conversation. Trespass, theft, insider risk, hostile surveillance, unauthorised access, disruption to supply chains and heightened public attention can all place pressure on businesses that are unprepared. For SMEs, the issue can be even more acute. Many are now part of defence, infrastructure or critical industry supply chains, but may not yet have the same level of security planning, governance or response capability as larger organisations.

In our work with organisations across defence industry and critical infrastructure operating environments, we often see a common assumption: that preparedness is binary. An organisation is either ready, or it is not.

In practice, security readiness is more nuanced.

Some organisations are aware of potential exposure but have not formalised planning. Others have response capability in place but remain largely reactive when pressure emerges. More mature organisations have clear escalation pathways, defined decision-making responsibilities, integrated communications, site-level planning, workforce guidance and a shared understanding of how they will respond under scrutiny.

That distinction is important because disruption rarely affects only one part of a business. A safety concern can quickly become an operational decision. An operational interruption can become a reputational issue. External scrutiny can increase stakeholder pressure. In those moments, leadership teams need more than a security plan. They need alignment across governance, operations, communications, people, risk and business continuity.

For the Hunter, this is a timely conversation. The region's role in Australia's defence, industrial and infrastructure future is growing. With that growth comes opportunity, but also greater exposure.

The organisations best positioned to navigate future disruption will be those that understand their risk environment, identify gaps early and invest in preparedness before pressure emerges.

The question for leaders is no longer whether scrutiny, activism or disruption are possible. It is whether their organisation is ready to respond when they arrive.

For further information contact NHN Group on 1300 509 947, email info@nhngroup.com.au or visit www.nhngroup.com.au



Ben Dewson is CEO at NHN Group. NHN Group is a Hunter-based security, risk and facilities services company supporting organisations across defence, government, critical infrastructure, and high-visibility operating environments.

LOCKHEED MARTIN INVESTS \$85.9 MILLION IN AIR POWER PRECINCT

Lockheed Martin Australia has marked the commencement of a new \$85.9 million Air Power Precinct in the Hunter region, together with The Honourable Pat Conroy MP, Minister for Defence Industry, at a sod-turning ceremony in Williamstown on 3 July.

The purpose-built National Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) Ecosystem will support next-generation IAMD systems, strengthening the nation's sovereign defence capability while recognising industry's significant role across the domain and thereby complementing the broader Defence ecosystem. The precinct will also provide critical sustainment capabilities for Australia's F-35 fleet and support regional sustainment arrangements for other F-35 operators.

Australian-owned contractor, Built, is set to commence construction immediately, with the precinct due to be operational by 2028.

The purpose-built facilities will house dedicated zones for hardware assembly and installation, integration-and-validation, end-to-end testing of system-of-systems, sustainment of sovereign software, and advanced training for IAMD capability, including Australia's Joint Air Battle Management System.

The precinct will provide program management support to Lockheed Martin Australia's F-35 sustainment team, the company's largest international F-35 sustainment operation. It is a critical enabler for Australia to host a dedicated canopy-repair capability. The state-of-the-art diagnostic, repair and test infrastructure will reduce reliance on overseas assistance, enhance the Royal Australian Air Force's operational resilience, and reinforce F-35 operations across the Indo-Pacific and the global supply chain.

Lockheed Martin Australia and New Zealand's Chief Executive, Jeremy King, said, "As Defence's strategic partner on AIR6500 and F-35, we recognise our duty to uplift Australia's defence industry from the ground up, turning skilled talent into critical capability."

"This investment demonstrates our enduring commitment to Australia's military readiness and sovereignty. By building a secure, world-class Air Power Precinct we enhance coalition interoperability, and safeguard our nation's way of life through self-reliance and advanced technology."



"For the Hunter region, the Lockheed Martin Australia precinct generates important economic benefits. It creates opportunity for jobs growth, small-to-medium enterprise innovation, reinforces supply chain resilience, and positions the Hunter defence community as a strategic hub in the Indo-Pacific F-35 and IAMD ecosystem."

The precinct will generate over 200+ jobs during construction, create over 60 new aerospace jobs, and sustain over 230 ongoing highly skilled engineering and technical roles once operational. It will also create opportunities for local suppliers and small-to-medium enterprises to participate in the defence supply chain.

Subscribe NOW
HBRmag.com.au

*HBR is essential reading for anyone wanting to stay informed on local **business news** and **issues** that affect business.*



DEFENCE AND CRITICAL INDUSTRY LEADERS: HOW READY IS YOUR SECURITY PROFILE?

If you operate in defence, major industry or high-profile environments, your security profile matters.

Activism, disruption, trespass, theft, insider risk and public scrutiny can place pressure on your people, sites and operations.

Download NHN Group's Security Readiness Whitepaper for practical tools, readiness pathways and a framework to help leaders identify gaps before pressure emerges.



SCAN TO
DOWNLOAD

nhngroup.com.au

SECURITY | INVESTIGATIONS | CLEANING

NHN Group Master Licence No. 000106493

OFFICIAL SECURITY PARTNER



- Motojet 50 Intensifier 60,000psi pump
- 2D Cutting area size 4000 x 2000mm
- 3D Cutting area size 3050 x 1600mm
- 5-axis Pivot Plus cutting head with 60 degree bevel cutting functionality
- Smartmap height touchdown probe for automatic height control
- Can cut materials up to 180mm thick
- Cutting capabilities include; Sheet Rubber; Mild Steel Plate & Shim; Stainless Steel Plate & Shim; Brass; Copper; Rubber/Steel composite material; Aluminium; Polyurethane, Engineered Plastics; Laminated Steel Shim
- Water only cutting and Water/Garnet cutting capabilities

Our Vision – to ensure all of our clients receive the most innovative and high quality Australian-made products.

FLOW MACH 200C WATERJET SYSTEM - 5-AXIS CUTTER



www.indgas.net | sales@indgas.com.au | 02 4987 2899

44 Heather Street, Heatherbrae NSW

FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED FOR 25 YEARS

KONGSBERG Missile Factory on track for manufacturing in 2027

Construction of KONGSBERG Australia's new missile factory at Williamstown is progressing well and is due for completion in early 2027, with manufacturing commencing shortly afterwards and ramping up to full production in 2028.

The facility is being constructed at Astra Aerolab, next to Newcastle Airport and RAAF Base Williamstown. It further strengthens Williamstown as a national defence-industry hub.

Construction began in 2025 following the Commonwealth of Australia's decision to invest in the new factory to manufacture and maintain the KONGSBERG Naval Strike Missile (NSM) and Joint Strike Missile (JSM) for the Australian Defence Force and international partners.

The commitment for the local missile manufacture and maintenance of the missiles, is creating over 500 jobs during the construction and establishment phase of the program, injecting more than \$100 million into the Hunter's local economy.

John Fry, Managing Director of Kongsberg Defence Australia said "This is a huge milestone for KONGSBERG in Australia, with the Kongsberg Missile Factory (KMF) expected to employ around 100 people in Newcastle.

"KONGSBERG will be the first company to build a missile factory in Australia, and that is something that we are all very proud of.

"The facility will be based on the new missile factory in Norway, the most advanced missile manufacturing facility in the world. We will be building and maintaining some of the ADF's most important strike weapons; a huge privilege that comes with great responsibility."

The factory will be the first missile factory outside of KONGSBERG, Norway, to manufacture both NSM and JSM, and it will be followed by a similar facility in the United States.

The NSM is an anti-ship missile with superior operational performance and high survivability against all enemy defence systems. The missile was developed by KONGSBERG and first deployed in 2012 by the Norwegian Navy. The air-launched JSM is currently being integrated onto the F-35A, where it can be carried in the internal weapons bay of the aircraft.

"KONGSBERG will be the first company to build a missile factory in Australia, and that is something that we are all very proud of.

"The facility will be based on the new missile factory in Norway, the most advanced missile manufacturing facility in the world. We will be building and maintaining some of the ADF's most important strike weapons; a huge privilege that comes with great responsibility."

John Fry Managing Director for KONGSBERG Australia



KONGSBERG


Innovation for a safer future

At KONGSBERG, we harness over 200 years of innovation to develop cutting-edge defence technologies that protect people and critical infrastructure – from the ocean floor to the edge of space.

As a global defence company, we are leaders in the design and development of advanced defence systems.

Now, we're proud to bring Australia's first missile manufacturing and maintenance factory to Williamstown, joining forces with the Hunter region to support national security and provide over 100 permanent jobs.

Together, we're building a safer future for Australia.

kongsberg.com



A ‘topping out’ ceremony was held onsite on 19 May, marking a major construction milestone for this complex manufacturing and maintenance facility.

The event brought together the Hon Pat Conroy MP, Minister for Defence Industry, Chief Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance, AIRMSHL Leon Philips OAM, Mr Erik Svedahl, Deputy Head of Mission at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Australia, project partners Multiplex and Newcastle Airport, members of the

Commonwealth of Australia, and the Hunter business Community to recognise the progress of the project and its significance.

The topping out ceremony – a long-standing construction tradition – symbolises the building’s construction reaching its highest point and was marked with the installation of a ceremonial tree, representing growth, resilience and the enduring legacy of the project.

The project is delivering strong local economic benefits, with 74% of project trade value awarded locally and \$36.3 million in local expenditure incurred to date in May. This reflects significant engagement of local subcontractors and suppliers, supporting jobs and economic activity.

John Fry, Managing Director KONGSBERG Australia said “The construction of the Kongsberg Missile Factory, the first Naval Strike Missile and Joint Strike Missile factory outside of Norway, is on track and well advanced.

“This milestone reflects the strength of collaboration with our delivery partners. Reaching the highest point of construction is a significant achievement and a testament to the teams on the ground driving this project forward.”

Linc Horton, CEO Newcastle Airport said: “Today’s Topping Out highlights the important role Astra Aerolab and the Hunter region plays in supporting Australia’s sovereign defence industry. With the support of our partner Multiplex, we are proud to be developing this facility to support KONGSBERG Australia and the Commonwealth with this nationally significant project.”

David Ghanoum, NSW Regional Managing Director Multiplex said “We are proud to be delivering this highly secure facility in support of Australia’s defence capabilities.

“The Kongsberg Missile Factory builds on Multiplex’s global track record in delivering complex, secure government infrastructure, and we look forward to completing the project early next year.”

MULTIPLEX

Delivering Certainty in Complex Defence Infrastructure

Multiplex is partnering with KONGSBERG Australia to deliver a high-technology industrial facility at the Greater Newcastle Airport in the Hunter Region, strengthening Australia’s sovereign defence capability. Recently topping out, the project highlights our ability to align government, client and specialist stakeholders through early contractor involvement to de-risk delivery and drive certainty.

Leveraging strong Hunter relationships, we are progressing this secure, mission-critical factory while also supporting defence projects at Keswick Barracks in Adelaide and the Royal Australian Air Force base in Curtin, expanding our national capability.

multiplex.global



Images clockwise from top left: KONGSBERG Australia High-Technology Industrial Facility, NSW; RAAF Curtin Redevelopment Project, WA; Keswick Barracks, SA.

2027 HUNTER INVESTMENT PROSPECTUS NOW SEEKING SUPPORT



We are currently seeking support for the 2027 edition of the Hunter Business Investment Prospectus, the annual hard copy and online publication that promotes the Hunter Region as a smart business, investment and lifestyle choice.

SUPPORT THE HUNTER WHILE ALSO PROMOTING YOUR ORGANISATION

For further information please contact Hunter Business Publications Pty Ltd on (02) 4062 8133 or email garry@HBRmag.com.au

Have you read the 2026 edition of the Hunter Investment Prospectus?

The 2026 edition can be read online at <http://www.hunterinvest.com.au>

Connect with us



BUILDING THE HUNTER'S MOST ADVANCED AEROSPACE PRECINCT TO POWER THE FUTURE OF DEFENCE

Strategically located at Newcastle Airport, adjacent to RAAF Base Williamtown – home to Australia's largest fleet of F-35s – **Astra Aerolab** offers unmatched access to airside operations, global transport links, and real-time defence collaboration. The precinct is master planned to support research, development and advanced manufacturing, with a strong focus on defence industry and aerospace supply chains.

With around 1.3 million passengers travelling through Newcastle Airport each year to 10 domestic destinations including Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth with over 250+ weekly flights and international flights to Bali and Singapore (via Bali). The precinct is just 30 minutes from Newcastle CBD and directly connected to the M1, offering fast and efficient road access to Sydney and key logistics corridors across New South Wales and Australia.

Development is well underway at **Astra Aerolab**. The precinct has already secured two state significant development approvals and four local DAs, with more under review. These approvals position the precinct to support major defence primes undertaking the Commonwealth's defence capability requirements. Project delivery works are underway on three key sites at **Astra Aerolab**, and further opportunities are available across flexible office, industrial, and bespoke development sites.

Astra Aerolab offers more than infrastructure – it provides a high-performance environment designed for people. The precinct delivers secure, high-quality facilities, direct links to airport and base operations, and a connected landscape with amenities that support wellbeing, productivity, and workforce retention.

Beyond the workplace, **Astra Aerolab** offers access to an unrivalled coastal lifestyle. With beaches, vineyards, national parks and thriving regional centres nearby, companies can attract and retain talent by offering cutting-edge careers without compromising on lifestyle.

Backed by all levels of government, **Astra Aerolab** has secured major investment to accelerate its growth and is fast emerging as a hub for global defence primes and ambitious SMEs alike.

This is more than a property offering – it's a launchpad for capability, innovation and skilled employment. **Astra Aerolab** is helping position NSW as a leader in defence and aerospace, driving long-term economic benefit for the Hunter Region.

With outstanding integration of technology and lifestyle, adjacent to RAAF Base Williamtown and Newcastle Airport, this is a unique opportunity to join a leading defence, aerospace and innovation precinct.



Building the Hunter's most
advanced defence precinct to
power the future of aerospace.



With outstanding integration of technology and lifestyle, adjacent to RAAF Base Williamtown and Newcastle Airport, this is a unique opportunity to join the world's leading defence, aerospace and innovation precinct.

Enquiries:
propertyadmin@newcastleairport.com.au
Astra Aerolab Precinct
Aerospace Avenue
Williamtown, NSW, Australia
astraerolab.com.au





A judge addresses the wobbly defendant standing in front of him.
"Sir, you've been brought before me for drinking."
"Fantastic," says the defendant. "Let's get started!"
All present in the court burst out laughing.
Annoyed, the judge bangs his gavel and says, "Order! Order!"
And the defendant says, "All right ... I'll have a whisky and soda."

What does a mortician and an electrician have in common?
They're both shocked when they touch a live one.

The phone bill was exceptionally high. Man called a family meeting to discuss the matter.
Dad: "This is unacceptable, I don't use the home phone, I use my work phone."
Mum: "Me too, I use my company phone. I hardly use the home phone."
Son: "I use my office mobile. I never use the home phone."
All of them shocked turned to look at the maid who was patiently listening to them all this time.
Maid: "What? So we all use our work phones, what is the big deal?"

A man who was in court for stealing a bag was sentenced in just 3 minutes
It was a briefcase.

My wife gave me an envelope with, "Not to be opened until 2027" on it.
Inside was list of reasons why I cannot be trusted to follow simple instructions.

Doctor: "Which do you want first, the good news or the bad news?"
Patient: "Give me the good news."
Doctor: "You're about to have a disease named after you."

My granddad always used to say, "As one door closes another one opens."
Lovely man.
Terrible cabinet maker.

A time traveller goes back to ancient Rome and immediately starts looking for local clothing.
He finds a tailor's shop and says "Hey, could I have a toga please?"
"Sure, what size?" says the shopkeeper.
"I don't know. Let's try an L."
The shopkeeper hands him a toga, the time traveller tries it on, then he says "It's a bit tight. Could I try an XL, please?"
And the shopkeeper says "What's the point of asking for a smaller one?"

Scientist: "My findings are meaningless if taken out of context."
Media: Scientist claims "Findings are meaningless."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The secret of change is focus all your energy not on fighting the old but on building the new" - Socrates

business services

ADAMSTOWN CLEANING SERVICE

- Strata Cleaning Services
- Medical Centre Cleaning
- Commercial Office Cleaning
- Over 25 years experience in Newcastle & Lake Macquarie



P: (02) 49610145 E: john@adamstowncleaning.com.au

CARRIE'S PLACE

Supporting individuals and families across the Hunter through crisis support, counselling, homelessness services and family support programs. To provide support and opportunities for our most vulnerable, businesses can partner on a number of initiatives including corporate Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Training, hosting the Carrie's Coffee social enterprise at your workplace or participating in our "It Takes a Team" program and through financial and business partnership - each of these create safer workplaces and informed teams, while supporting meaningful community outcomes.

02 4934 2585 info@carriesplace.org.au
3/12 Ken Tubman Dr, Maitland NSW 2320
carriesplace.org.au



BORRELLI-QUIRK NEWCASTLE REAL ESTATE
NEWCASTLE - HUNTER TOURISM & ACCOMMODATION

- Leading suppliers of quality, fully furnished and self contained accommodation for short or long stays in and around Newcastle.
- Beachfront, harbourfront, suburbs, 1 to 4 bedroom apartments and homes. Cleaning service available.
- A cost effective, more flexible and comfortable alternative for visitors and business colleagues.
- A phone call or email is all it takes to match your requirements promptly.



P: 49615566 E: joanne@bqnre.com.au W: bqnre.com.au 1/91 Hannell Street, Wickham @ NCYC

THE MOBILE SHREDDING COMPANY

- Security bins and one-off shredding
- Totally secure in-truck on-site shredding
- NAID AAA Certified
- Locally owned and operated
- Servicing Newcastle, Hunter Valley, Port Stephens & Central Coast



Phone: 4957 9903 www.mobileshredding.com.au

"SECURE DESTRUCTION - GUARANTEED"



WE KNOW PRINT.

At NCP, we provide a comprehensive suite of print and related services including:

- Award-winning Offset Printing
- Digital Printing
- Graphic Design
- Packaging
- Celloglazing and Coating
- Prepress Services
- Embossing and Foiling
- Die-cutting and Carton Making
- Wide Format
- Print Management
- On-line Ordering
- Transactional Mail/Intelligent Mailing
- Variable Data Printing
- Warehousing and Distribution
- Kitting and Packing
- Inventory Management
- PUR Binding

NEWCASTLE OFFICE

14 Channel Road, Steel River Industrial Estate, Mayfield West NSW 2304
P 02 4926 1300 E sales@ncp.com.au
ncp.com.au

SYDNEY OFFICE

8-10 Frank Street, Wetherill Park NSW 2164
P 02 9757 3000 E sales@brightprintgroup.com.au
brightprintgroup.com.au



BRIGHT PRINT GROUP
NCP is a division of the Bright Print Group.

Australian mining pays **more taxes and royalties** **than any other industry,** **enough to fund Medicare.**

Source: ATO Taxation Statistics 2023–24 (2026); EY Royalty and Company Tax Payments (2025).



**That's the difference
Australian mining makes**

thatsmining.com.au

Authorised by T. Constable, Minerals Council of Australia, Level 3, 44 Sydney Avenue, Forrest, ACT 2600.

