

SE Business
HD **Hotel** starts things moving
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hunterbusiness

NEWCASTLE Airport takes another step towards maturity today when construction starts on an \$18 million Mercure **hotel**.

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The four-storey **hotel**, being built by Hunter **firm** GWH Build, is going up on the corner of Nelson Bay Road and Williamtown Drive and should be finished a year from now.

GWH Build partner Hilton Grugeon has long been bullish about development opportunities at Williamtown, believing privately held land around the airport will be steadily transformed from farmland to **commercial** space.

Newcastle Airport **Hotel** consortium chairman Geoff Barnett says "the vision of Hilton Grugeon and Port Stephens Council on rezoning this land for this **hotel** highlights their commitment to making this airport a huge success".

Accor Pacific chief operating officer Simon McGrath says it will be the 40th Mercure **hotel** in Australia.

HARDWARE STORE OPENING

THE march of the big hardware stores continues with Bunnings soon to open its Wallsend outlet.

Complex manager Alan Harvey says 190 people have already been signed on as employees at Wallsend.

Hunter Business has been told an official opening is scheduled for this week, with the store set to open next week.

HUNTLEE APPOINTMENT

LWP has hired University of Newcastle civil engineering graduate Glenn Swan as its inaugural development manager for Huntlee.

Swan has more than 15 years' experience under his belt with Newcastle engineering firms including Worley Parsons.

DAY OFF FOR MINERS

THE second Voice for Mining Family Day is at Hunter Stadium next Sunday with the Newcastle Knights taking on the Wests Tigers.

Last year's event generated a lot of publicity for its sponsor, the NSW Minerals Council, and the council's chief executive, Stephen Galilee, expects 5000 miners, family and friends to take part again this year.

For the first time, the Knights will turn out in a special one-off jersey inspired by the mine workers' high-visibility vests.

The Mining Family Day is dedicated to "the 15,000 mine workers and their families who live in the Hunter and love their footy".

HOSPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

NEWCASTLE Private Hospital, in the grounds of the John Hunter Hospital campus at New Lambton Heights, is part way through a \$6.5 million program of renovations.

Hospital general manager Michael Mitchell says the improvements include a new operating theatre, a new five-bed coronary unit, a larger surgical admission unit and seven new patient rooms.

CHINESE INTEREST PIQUED

PRDnationwide Newcastle and Lake Macquarie managing director Mark Kentwell says the University of Newcastle's new \$95 million inner-city campus will push up inner-city **apartment** prices.

It will also "galvanise **Chinese** investment in the city".

Mr Kentwell says **Chinese** investment in Newcastle real **estate** is negligible but "they are obviously aware of the city".

"Typically, the **Chinese** like to **buy** close to tertiary institutions and project marketing offices on the Gold Coast are reporting up to 70 per cent of new **apartment** sales are to **Chinese** buyers who are purchasing close to local universities or in areas that are readily accessible to them."

FIGHT FOR RECOGNITION

HUNTER Business Chamber president Richard Anicich says Maitland and Cessnock should benefit from inclusion in the Resources for Regions program but there was still "work to do" to have Lake Macquarie recognised for its "significant connection" to the industry.

Mr Anicich says the chamber formed the Hunter Coal Industry Alliance last year and through it has fought for a "clear public statement of clarity regarding the industry" from the state government.

The Minerals Industry Action Plan should help, he says.

DID YOU KNOW

COAL exports from Newcastle are likely to level out in the coming year as the final wave of new and expanded mines in the Upper Hunter and Gunnedah come on line.

Source: HVRF economic indicators.

From the Hunter Valley Research Foundation www.hvrf.com.au

DIARY

DATES

Wednesday, June 4: Start your own business, the Business Centre, King Street, Newcastle, 5.30pm

Friday, June 6: HVRF economic breakfast, Wests New Lambton, 7am.

Tuesday, June 10: Hunternet Defence Forum, 251 Wharf Road, Newcastle, from 8am. Singleton Chamber of Commerce, chamber meeting, 12.30pm.

THEBIZ

"We have not seen the likes of **China** and never seen the emergence of civilisational power in such a compressed period of time with a value system so different to the West with an open market oriented economy and central command socialist political structure." Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop

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