

@THE COAL FACE

Vol 1 No 10: July - August 2017



LOUD & PROUD

NEARLY 20,000 PEOPLE VOICED THEIR SUPPORT FOR MINING AT HUNTER STADIUM IN WHAT HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT AND WELCOME FIXTURE ON BOTH THE INDUSTRY AND RUGBY LEAGUE CALENDAR.

If anyone was ever in doubt as to how important mining is to the Hunter community, they need not have looked further than Hunter Stadium earlier this month when the annual Voice for Mining Family Day was held.

In a partnership that has now become a tradition, miners and their families donned the hi-vis and flew the flag for the regions most important industry. It was a near perfect, if a little fresh, day that saw our beloved Knights go down to the tigers 33 - 12.

Despite the loss it was a winning message to all about just how important mining is to the Hunter and a great chance to celebrate our industry's improved fortunes this year. Better luck next year Knights and may our industry's current winning streak continue into the future.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT... FINALLY

THE RECENT BIDDING WAR BETWEEN YANCOAL AND GLENCORE FOR RIO TINTO'S COAL & ALLIED HAS COME TO AN END WITH YANCOAL TAKING HOME THE PRIZE.

In early June Glencore came in with a last-minute bid of \$AU3.39 billion, trumping Yancoal's January bid of \$AU3.25 billion. Days later Yancoal topped Glencore's bid and Rio Tinto gave it the green light.

BUT IT WASN'T OVER FOR GLENCORE YET AND THEY CAME BACK IN WITH AN OFFER FOR \$AU3.5 BILLION, BUT AGAIN YANCOAL TRUMPED THEM WITH A FINAL OFFER \$AU3.55 BILLION.

Rio Tinto's shareholders were quick to endorse the deal with chairman Jan du Plessis highlighting a number of factors for why the Rio board preferred to sell to Yancoal. "The board has now considered the latest offers received from Glencore and Yancoal in recent days and has recommended Yancoal's improved offer to shareholders based on greater transaction certainty and a higher net present value," he said.

But it may not be the end of the road for Glencore with much speculation that they may look for a way to work with Yancoal to extract synergies between their operations and the Coal & Allied business.

Yancoal will now need to raise equity to fund its acquisition with the support of its Chinese state-owned parent company, Yankuang Group.



RIO TINTO CHAIRMAN JAN DU PLESSIS HAS 3.55 BILLION REASONS TO SMILE.

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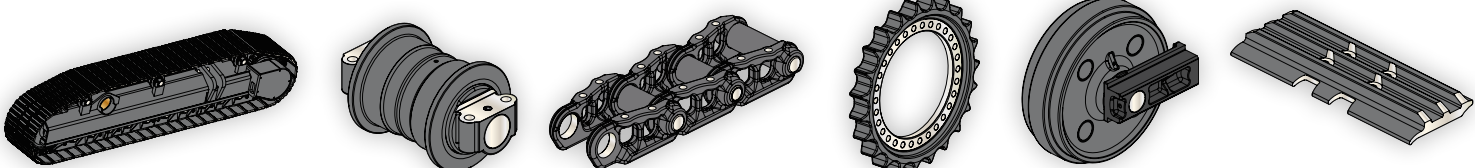
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GEEZ IT'S COLD!

AS TEMPTING AS IT IS TO STAY WARM INDOORS THIS WINTER, THERE'S PLENTY OF REASONS TO GET OUT OVER THE COMING MONTHS.

Thousands of miners and their families braved the cold to show their support for the Voice 4 Mining Day and there's plenty more great events like it on the horizon.

The Holes 4 Hospital Charity Golf Day is on July 16, AIMEX on August 29 – 31, the Mining Charity Rugby League Knockout Competition on October 7 and Bengalla Open Day on October 14 just to name a few.

This month in our travel pages you can embrace the cold by heading to the Blue Mountains or escape it by following in our footsteps to Vietnam.

Make sure you read our feature this month on Rae O'Brien, the face of the Minerals Council coal campaign. You won't find many people as passionate about mining and working as hard advocating for our industry.

We've showcased some great suppliers this month and the new innovations they are bringing to our industry, and we've also recognised some of the ways in which they give back to our community.

Grab a cuppa and crank up the heater in the crib room while you enjoy this month's edition!

VOICE 4 MINING DAY A SUCCESS

AROUND 20,000 FANS AND MINING FAMILIES TURNED OUT IN A SEA OF BRIGHT HI-VIS TO SUPPORT TWO GREAT HUNTER TEAMS, THE NEWCASTLE KNIGHTS AND THE REGION'S MINERS ON THE WEEKEND.

Fans, mining families, suppliers and industry supporters numbered around 20,000 at the 5th annual Voice for



Mining Family Day at McDonald Jones Stadium, showing that Newcastle and the Hunter are as proud as ever of the Hunter mining industry.

Once again the Knights took to the field in their special 'bright orange' hi-vis miner's jersey to show their support for the region's miners, and the mining industry.

Thank you to the all the thousands of fans who wore hi-vis at McDonald Jones Stadium today



Stephen Galilee
CEO, NSW Minerals Council

to show their support for the Newcastle Knights and the miners of the Hunter.

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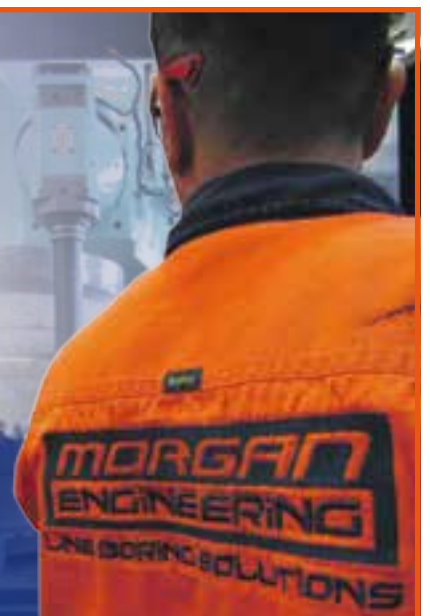
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THE HON. DON HARWIN,
MINISTER FOR RESOURCES.

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LAUGH WITH



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A man got hit in the head with a can of coke. But he was okay because it was a soft drink.

NSW –
A SUCCESS STORY

THE NSW BUDGET HAS BEEN VERY WELL RECEIVED ACROSS THE COMMUNITY.

It has delivered vital infrastructure for key sectors of the economy while also ensuring that we are fiscally responsible and maintain our triple AAA credit rating. The release of the State Budget on June 20 has also shown the importance of the mining industry to the State’s economy. We’ve ensured the mechanisms

are in place to guarantee the industry can continue to power not only the State – but power the State’s economy. **IT’S TRUE THE NSW ECONOMY IS BOOMING. WE’RE THE ENVY OF EVERY OTHER STATE; AND MINING IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THIS BOOM.**

NSW has around 18 billion tonnes of recoverable coal reserves. Coal production represents over 80 per cent of the value of the State’s mineral production and it’s the largest mining activity in NSW. The Hunter coalfield is the largest producing region at around 60 per cent of coal mined each year. We understand that continued development of our coal resources has the potential to deliver significant economic benefits to the NSW community. A strong mining industry creates new jobs in regional NSW, drives investment in regional communities and increases export growth. Today, the coal industry directly employs around 23,000 and supports around a further 90,000 in mine and non-mine related jobs. In NSW, around three quarters of the electricity we use comes from coal. Even as we look to diversify our sources of electricity, coal continues to be a major contributor to energy security for NSW. But coal’s most significant contribution to the economy

comes from exports. The NSW Government is committed to ensuring the export market for Hunter Coal remains strong. And the royalties we collect from coal miners are key to ensuring our economy grows, and we deliver key services. Royalties provide revenue to fund essential services like hospitals, schools and roads that are used by people across NSW. The coal industry pays to the State \$1.2 billion in royalties per annum. That’s the equivalent of some 11 rural hospitals or over 10,000 nurses. Additionally, a strong mining sector has allowed this Government to make once-in-a-generation investment in infrastructure – ensuring our state can meet the demands of the future head on. **NSW IS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL STATE IN AUSTRALIA AND MINING IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF ITS SUCCESS AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE SO INTO THE FUTURE.**



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FINKEL'S REVIEW

AUSTRALIA'S CHIEF SCIENTIST DR. ALAN FINKEL PRESENTED THE FINAL REPORT OF THE *INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO THE FUTURE SECURITY OF THE NATIONAL ELECTRICITY MARKET* ON JUNE 9.

The report presents a strategic plan for our electricity future with 50 recommendations for Federal, State and Territory Governments.

Mr Finkel said the review takes the position that reliability, security, lowest cost, and reduced atmospheric emissions are the critically important outcomes and that what the mix of power generation is does not matter.

The report concluded that a

Clean Energy Target (CET) is the most effective mechanism to reduce emissions while supporting security and reliability. Under the CET, government would set an emissions intensity target, which could be reduced over time to meet Australia's international climate change obligations.

THE SCHEME WOULD BE TECHNOLOGY NEUTRAL — THAT IS, ALL FORMS OF ELECTRICITY

DR. ALAN FINKEL




GENERATION WOULD BE ELIGIBLE, INCLUDING COAL WITH CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE OR GAS — PROVIDED THEY ARE BELOW THE EMISSIONS INTENSITY THRESHOLD.

The Minerals Council of Australia were pleased with the reports support for a technology neutral approach to energy markets which they say is a welcome shift from federal and state government energy policy settings which have exclusively favoured intermittent


energy sources with adverse consequences for reliability and price. However, they were less than impressed on the reports' view that High Efficiency Low Emissions (HELE) coal generation is not considered as low emissions or clean energy.

The Coalition has so far approved 49 of the 50 recommendations but is yet to agree on the CET, a recommendation that Finkel said was key to lowering energy prices and increasing security.



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LET'S RIDE!



'AVE A LAUGH WITH



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The government had a scrap yard out in the countryside.

Parliament said, "Someone may steal from it at night." So they created a night watchman position and hired a person.

Then Parliament said, "How does the watchman do his job without instruction?" So they created a planning department and hired a person to write the instructions and a person to do time studies.

Then Parliament said, "How will we know the night watchman is doing his tasks correctly?" So they created the Quality Control department and hired a person to do studies and a person to write the reports.

Then Parliament said, "How are these people going to get paid?" So they created a time keeper and a payroll officer position and hired two people.

Then Parliament said, "Who will be accountable for all of these people?" So they created an administrative section and hired an Administrative Officer, Assistant Administrative Officer and a Legal Secretary.

Then Parliament said, "We have had this project in operation for one year and we are \$18,000 over budget, we must cutback overall cost."

So they laid off the night watchman.



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221 THUMBS UP

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WORKERS UNITE

OVER 1,000 MEMBERS OF THE CFMEU EMPLOYED AT GLENCORE'S HUNTER VALLEY MINES GATHERED TOGETHER IN SINGLETON ON WEDNESDAY JUNE 14 TO PROTEST FOR NEW WORKPLACE AGREEMENTS.

In a show of worker solidarity, miners from various Glencore open cut mining operations gathered together where they unanimously endorsed further industrial actions if required in their campaign for new Enterprise Agreements.

The meeting followed a 48-hour strike by miners from Mangoola, Liddell, Bulga, Glendell and Ravensworth CHPP, a protected industrial action which was endorsed by the CFMEU after negotiations over new employment agreements came to a standstill.

The action was just one in the ongoing dispute which has also seen rolling two hour stoppages occurring over the last few weeks, and still more expected to come until negotiations are complete.

THE CFMEU ARE IN BARGAINING WITH SEVEN OF GLENCORE'S OPERATIONS TO REPLACE EXPIRED ENTERPRISE AGREEMENTS. SOME OF THE PREVIOUS EBAS EXPIRED AS FAR BACK AS JULY 2012, MEANING SOME WORKERS HAVE NOT HAD A WAGE INCREASE IN FIVE YEARS.

CFMEU district president Peter Jordan said high on the list for the miners is Glencore's increasing use of casual contract labour.

"We have contracting members that have been working at some of their jobs for as long as five to six years and they are still in casual positions. This is simply not good enough", Mr. Jordan said.

They are also asking to bring redundancy arrangements into line with those at other Hunter Valley mines. While Glencore miners can work 44 hours or more per week, redundancy payouts are calculated on a standard 35-hour week.

Glencore said it was confident agreements that continued to provide favourable working conditions would be approved at each site. It said while it recognised the Fair Work Act provided employees with the option of taking lawful industrial action during negotiations, it was disappointed the action was being taken, despite the offers of wage increases.

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“EVERYTHING ABOUT MODERN SOCIETY REQUIRES
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MINING, WE DON’T HAVE ANY OF THAT.”

— KARI ARMITAGE, MANAGING DIRECTOR QUARRY MINING.

Quarry Mining once made a hundred parts for mining companies in a week. Now, they make a hundred in just one morning. For Kari Armitage, the key to growing was continually reinventing the way they worked. When they needed new skills they invested in retraining and discovered that old hands could learn new tricks in CAD design and computer programming.

When the market was in a downturn, they put on more apprentices and graduates, continuing to provide employment and support the local economy.

What began with Kari’s father, then became one of the world’s premier manufacturers of drilling consumables.

As Kari explains, “There will always be great opportunities for us because the world will always need what Australian mining produces. Our homes, our mobile devices, everything about modern society requires elements we get from the ground. Without mining, we don’t have any of that.”

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MEGA MACHINE

A PASSION TO BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF ENGINEERING IN THE HUNTER MINING INDUSTRY IS DRIVING J & S ENGINEERING DOWN A ROAD OF CONSTANT INVESTMENT IN MACHINES, PEOPLE AND INNOVATION. THAT ROAD HAS LED TO THEIR LATEST INVESTMENT IN THE 'SORALUCE', A TRAVELLING COLUMN CNC MILLER BORER.



Let's be clear, Greg Searles and Richard Lake of J & S Engineering are two blokes who get as excited about engineering and machines as a footy fan at State of Origin time. They know how to talk the talk and walk the walk which they demonstrated when they proudly gave me the royal tour of their latest addition.

SO WHAT THE HELL IS THE SORALUCE AND WHY IS THIS MACHINE SO BLOODY GOOD?

Basically, this huge floor type CNC machine is a Gold-Medal Olympic gymnast, diver, sprinter and weightlifter in one.

A very sophisticated 11 axis control unit integrates rotary head drives on the Soraluce and allows J & S to efficiently machine complex large jobs with minimal set up. These efficiency gains are considerable and let them get all around any job without the need to reset continually. It also combines the functions of turning and milling to allow large threads or round surfaces to be machined efficiently.

IT'S GOT THIS THING CALLED INTERPOLATION TURNING, MEANING IT CAN DO JUST ABOUT ANY JOB THROWN AT IT WITH EASE.

On top of all this, the spindle drive motor develops the full 43 kw at 1rpm allowing a single point tool to turn tapers, threads or elliptical shapes. One of the secrets to this machine is its advanced simplicity when using program cycles allowing it to utilise its inbuilt intelligence giving operators a more efficient way of programming. This also means much less down time for clients when it

matters during shutdowns.

Just commissioned, they are already deploying the Soraluce on excavators, face shovel components, track frames, booms and blades, pretty much any of those mission critical components that keep our industry running.

The Soraluce was imported from Spain and took many months to install with a few air miles racked up between the two countries. The investment has been considerable including a 300 cubic metre concrete foundation that goes to a depth of 3.5 metres.

J & S see investment in this type of equipment as an integral part of their growth and development adding to the extensive skill base already onsite. After dealing with the government red tape no funding was available but at end of the day supporting their existing customers was paramount so they just went for it.

J & S'S BELIEF IN MINING IS UNWAVERING AND ITS CLEAR TO THEM THAT THE FUTURE OF OUR INDUSTRY, DESPITE UPS AND DOWNS, IS ROBUST AND THEY WANT TO BE KNOWN AS A COMPANY THAT NOT ONLY BELIEVES IN THE FUTURE BUT INVESTS IN IT AND TAKES IT FORWARD AS WELL.

J & S now has around 90 employees, including 5 apprentices (two being mature age) and an undergraduate engineer. They pride themselves on their people, their innovation and their future thinking. Our thinking @ The Coalface is that these guys aren't only ones to watch, but the ones to work with if you demand the best.



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ELECTRICITY PRICES SKYROCKET

PUBLISHERS OPINION

THE NEWS REPORTED THIS MONTH THAT ELECTRICITY PRICES ARE ABOUT TO RISE BY 20% IN ONE HIT, BUT HEY DON'T WORRY, ONCE RENEWABLES FULLY KICK IN THEY WILL DROP AGAIN – WHO DO THEY THINK THEY ARE KIDDING!

With the release of the Finkel report we are being sold what I think is a pack of lies around the ability of future energy costs to come down. It might just be me but as soon as I heard this I cried 'bullshit'. The report outlined a plan to reduce emissions, improve reliability and lower power bills.

In all my time on this planet, prices for things like electricity and just about everything else only go in one direction. Up. In my humble experience they rise a lot faster with bad management and government decisions, increased demand and societies relentless need for whatever is being sold. In the case of energy or electricity, well it's right up there with food and water as an essential for the life we lead.

Our energy retailers are private businesses and once they are able gain a higher price for what they



sell they will never out of the goodness of their hearts pass any savings back down the line to the good people of Australia - You. To be fair, I own a business and I will sell what I sell for the best price I can get – that's business. The thing is though, if this whole mess were managed better those inevitable price rises could at the very least be slowed to reasonable and sustainable levels.

BAD POLITICS AND UNREALISTIC RADICAL ENERGY EXTREMISM HAS GOT US TO THIS POINT. SO HAS GOVERNMENT SCHEMES SUCH AS THE RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGET. WHAT WE NEED IS WELL MANAGED ENERGY SECURITY AND WE CAN ONLY ACHIEVE THAT THROUGH

BALANCED TRANSITION IN DEALING WITH MATTERS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

NSW Energy and Utilities Minister Don Harwin said he was "disappointed" by the increases, which are the result of a "broken national energy market."

"As the Prime Minister and Federal Energy Minister have said in the past week, this is a national problem and we need a sensible solution out of the Finkel Review," he said.

So what is a sensible solution? I certainly don't have all the answers, but from all I have read and heard it is as simple as a medium to long-term transition, and that transition should, does and will include coal at the end of the day as it will renewables.

Lets stop stuffing around and commit to enough new HELE coal plants to see us through the transition phase to full renewable over the next few generations. I think it's also a great opportunity here in the Hunter. So much existing infrastructure could be used that would save billions. But at the end of the day more surety for our economy, industry and those less fortunate then me could also potentially be guaranteed.



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THE INVESTMENT IN THE NEW STC WILL RESULT IN FASTER TURN AROUND OF THESE COMPONENTS AND THAT MEANS ASSETS BACK IN PRODUCTION EARLIER.

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WATERWORKS

THE UPPER HUNTER MINING DIALOGUE IS PUTTING HUNTER RIVER WATER QUALITY UNDER THE MICROSCOPE.

In a new, major project for the Dialogue, river and mine storage water in the Upper Hunter will be tested in multiple locations.

The study will be undertaken by the University of Newcastle's International Centre for Balanced Land Use and is endorsed by the Environmental Protection Authority.

Through analysis of water and sediment samples from mine water storage sites used in the Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme as well as from the Hunter River, the project aims to assess the potential for contamination of water quality from coal mines and power utility facilities operating in the Upper Hunter.

The Dialogue's Chairman, David O'Brien, said the water quality study project fit perfectly into the Dialogue's brief to work towards reducing mining impacts on the community.

"Water quality is a concern for the community and this study will allow us to collect data on the current quality of the river water as well as assess potential risks, if any, for the future," Mr. O'Brien said.

"THIS PROJECT AGAIN DEMONSTRATES THE VALUE OF THE DIALOGUE. IT BRINGS TOGETHER COMMUNITY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY CONCERNS REGARDING THE IMPACTS OF MINING AND BECAUSE ALL MINING OPERATORS ARE INVOLVED IN THE DIALOGUE, THE PROJECT WILL SEE A WIDE SAMPLING OF WATER QUALITY ACROSS THE UPPER HUNTER."

The Dialogue expects to have results from the study by November in time for presentation at the Upper Hunter Dialogue annual forum.



AUSSIE TO THE MAX!

AUSSIE PUMPS IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE APPOINTMENT OF RUTHERFORD BASED MAXIMUS AS ITS MASTER DISTRIBUTOR FOR TSURUMI SUBMERSIBLES.

Wally Davey, founding partner of Maximus said, "Our new Hunter Valley based company is set up to service the local irrigation and farming markets as well as mining and marine based industries. The range is suitable for pumping aggressive liquids in mining and industrial applications. This partnership expands our offer a one-stop shop for irrigation, hydraulic and industrial products."

"We're delighted to announce this new partnership," said Aussie Pumps Industrial Division product manager, Bob Massiah, "The team at Maximus bring together hose and fitting expertise with our extensive range of Tsurumi submersibles and Aussie QP engine drive pumps. With our training, the team are really getting up to speed quickly on pump selection and we of course are ready to back them up with further technical support as required," he said.

Things would be a bit dark without coal.

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READY, AIMEX, FIRE

AIMEX IS BACK AGAIN AT SYDNEY SHOWGROUND ON AUGUST 29 – 31.

Packed to the brim with all things mining, this year's Asia-Pacific International Mining Exhibition promises to be bigger and better than ever.

The free to attend conference program, 'The Future of Mining' will see industry leaders and mining experts talk about key issues in the industry. Among the speakers will be NSW Mining Council CEO Stephen Galilee, Bloomfield Group Chairman John Richards, World Coal Association Chairman Mark Buffier, General Electric Strategic Account Development Manager Ian Larsen and Coal Services CEO Lucy Flemming.

FOR THOSE WHO LIKE THINGS MORE HANDS ON DON'T FORGET THE 300 PLUS EXHIBITORS THAT ALLOW VISITORS THE CHANCE TO NETWORK, INTERACT AND DISCOVER THE LATEST PRODUCTS FROM LEADING SUPPLIERS.

AIMEX will also feature 'The Breakthrough', a new platform showcasing emerging technologies that can provide significant benefit to the mining sector.

AIMEX Non-Executive Chairman David Moulton has spearheaded this year's event and explained the importance of AIMEX for our industry.

"The ability to connect face-to-face is still so vital to business development and events like AIMEX enable you to do this in a time efficient manner. Being able to connect and interact with companies and their products is invaluable," said Mr Moulton.

Register now at
www.aimex.com.au



PREMIER GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN VISITS SINGLETON.

WELCOME TO SINGO!

THE NSW GOVERNMENT CAME TO NSW'S MINING HEARTLAND THIS MONTH WITH PREMIER GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN MAKING HER DEBUT APPEARANCE.

The visit was an excellent opportunity to highlight the resilience of the mining industry and the ongoing infrastructure needs of the Upper Hunter.

"Full credit to local MP Michael

Johnsen for convincing the Premier, Deputy Premier and Cabinet Ministers to meet in Singleton. With the state budget delivered a week later, the visit was a great chance

for Cabinet to further understand of the important role mining plays in the Upper Hunter and in the future growth of our State,"

NSW Minerals Council CEO, Stephen Galilee said.

"Singleton, Muswellbrook and other towns in the Upper Hunter contribute so much to the NSW economy. We've been calling for

more funding from the NSW Government for the Resources for Region's program to ensure these regional centres receive the infrastructure investment they need," Mr Galilee said.

"FOLLOWING THE VISIT, WE WELCOMED THE BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE \$1 BILLION REGIONAL GROWTH FUND, AND THE CONFIRMATION OF THE DEPUTY PREMIER'S RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN ADDITIONAL \$50 MILLION CONTRIBUTION TO THE RESOURCES FOR REGIONS PROGRAM."

@ The Coalface think it was long overdue and hope that we can maintain focus on just how important we are to this state.



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grow up. That Rae herself was going to be an engineer was a no brainer, the only decision was in what field. Initially, chemical engineering was considered (mainly because she knew a chemical engineer that worked in the Mars factory), but an interest in geology and minerals soon had her focusing on mining.

Rae set her sights on getting a University of NSW mining scholarship and this first step put her on a career path that would see her take on many roles and achieve many firsts.

From her early days learning the ropes working underground, to being the first female production superintendent and the first female to gain a 2nd Class Mine Managers Certificate, to her current role as Glencore's NSW Group Technical Service Manager, it's been quite the career trajectory.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A 'WOMAN IN MINING.'

Rae said that sometimes it was an advantage being a female and sometimes not, but overall, she believes the right attitude is more important than gender.

"In the early days, I had mixed feelings about 'women in mining'. I wanted to be thought of only as a person and to achieve things based on my skills and not my gender." Rae said.

A RAE OF LIGHT

MEET RAE O'BRIEN, THE FIRST FEMALE MINING PRODUCTION SUPERINTENDENT, WINNER OF THE 2016 EXCEPTIONAL WOMAN IN MINING AWARD, AND THE FACE OF THE MINERALS COUNCIL 'MAKING THE FUTURE POSSIBLE' CAMPAIGN.

With all these accolades to her name, you might be intimidated on meeting Rae, but don't be. Her warm manner and ever present smile will put you at ease and you will be chatting like old

friends in no time, especially if the conversation has anything to do with mining. Because from the onset it's clear that Rae is passionate about all things mining.

Where does a story like Rae's begin? Rae was born into a family of engineers and then went on to marry an engineer - even her two daughters want to be engineers when they

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“But the more I thought about it the more I began to understand how important it is to bring more recognition to women in an industry that is predominately male. In my department, about 40% are female and this is so far above the industry average. When I consider what all these talented women bring to the table I want to be a part of helping it become the norm and not an aberration.”

It was for these reasons that Rae decided to accept a nomination for the 2016 Exceptional Woman in Mining award. When she won she realised that she could use it to help further the causes she was passionate about - like the future of coal.

“WHEN IT COMES TO COAL THERE’S NO BLACK OR WHITE ANSWER.”

Rae is a firm believer in being environmentally responsible and that she can play a bigger role in doing so by working within the industry. “It’s easy for people to stand on the side lines and demonize coal. For me it makes much more sense to know the facts and work towards a solution.”

“The mining industry is not anti-renewables at all, but there will be both renewables and coal in the power mix. It’s a simple fact that we need base load power that will meet the forecasted demand. But there’s nothing stopping us from mining and utilising the coal we need to meet these demands more efficiently. The

advances in metallurgy allow power plants to be more efficient, and put that with burning higher energy coal which the Hunter has in abundance and it makes sense this should be part of our energy future.”

This year Rae cemented that belief in the future of coal by being a part of the Minerals Council of Australia’s “Making the Future Possible” campaign. She travelled to Tokyo to the Isogo Thermal Power Station, a HELE station that is a world leader in low emissions.

“Walking on its polished floors, I could not believe just how clean and how quiet the station was. When I saw the monitors in their control centre for pollution levels and how unbelievably low they were, I knew it was something we should be doing here at home.”

WHEN SHE’S NOT WORKING, SHE’S PROMOTING.

So, what does someone like Rae do in their downtime? Passionately advocate for our industry of course. Rae volunteers on ACARP steering committees and task groups and works closely with the Mine Managers Association. She’s also undertaking a huge project with the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue. The ambitious project is to get school kids onto mine sites and show them all the aspects of mining.

“We’ve had a couple of pilot tours so far - high school students out to Mt

Owen and primary school students to Mangoola, but the goal is to have all Upper Hunter students from Year 5 and Year 9 undergo a mining tour every year. Our aim is to make it a positive experience and show them how mining is part of everyday life.”

More than anything Rae hopes to raise awareness. “Most people don’t understand that everything comes from mining. The raw materials, the

energy needed for manufacturing and transportation and not just the production and use of energy. People should appreciate mining and everything that it provides for modern life.”

It’s clear to @ the Coalface that people like Rae are the future of our industry, and in safe hands like these it looks like being a productive and progressive future indeed.



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JUSTIN DUNNCLIFF (BACK)
AND MITCHELL WOLL (FRONT)



IT'S ALL APPENING

WHILST CONCRETING THE SAC-BASE FOR A TRIPPER DRIVE, ASHTON COAL OPERATORS JUSTIN DUNNCLIFF AND MITCHELL WOLL HAD AN EPIPHANY THAT BECAME AFFYNITY.

Like many miners who go wherever the work is, in early 2016 Justin and Mitch found themselves working far from home and wondering what they would do when they knocked off shift.

Having never been to the town before they didn't know anyone and they had no way of knowing what was going on in the town while they were there.

"We thought to ourselves, if only there was a website or somewhere we could go that could tell us if there was anything happening around us." Justin said.

FOR MOST OF US THAT WOULD BE IT. A GOOD IDEA BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR MATE THAT WOULD SOON BE FORGOTTEN. BUT FOR THESE TWO GUYS IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A LIFE CHANGING PROJECT.


"We did some research afterwards and realised there really wasn't any type of App that provided this information, so we got to work building one and then finally a few months ago we launched our Affynity App."

"All you need to do is download the App, tick the boxes for your interests and the App will tell you what's happening around you; events, fitness classes, festivals, movies, restaurants, parties, sporting events, concerts, anything at all! The App is free for users and you can even create your own event." Justin said.

Although the user base is still small, it's easy to see the App's potential. It's great seeing a couple of mates toss an idea around on the job and then follow through and turn that idea into a reality.

Download the App from the App store or check out affynityhq.com

'AVE A LAUGH WITH



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Little Johnny's Chemistry teacher wanted to teach his class a lesson about the evils of liquor, so he set up an experiment that involved a glass of water, a glass of whiskey and two worms.

"Now, class. Observe what happens to the worms," said the teacher putting the first worm in the glass of water. The worm in the water moved about, twisting and seemingly unharmed. He then dropped the second worm in the whiskey glass. It writhed in pain for a moment, then quickly sank to the bottom and died.

"Now kids, what lesson can we derive from this experiment?" he asked. Little Johnny raised his hand and wisely responded, "Drink whiskey and you won't get worms!"

JORDAN HERRMAN



THE TECH IN MAPTEK

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monitoring system deployed in a custom trailer, Sentry is capable of measuring changes resulting from both rapid and gradual movement. Monitoring frequency and notification thresholds are fully customisable, providing accurate, useful results for mine design and planning.

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The transportable system is easily mobilised. An operator can unpack the system and start monitoring in 15 minutes. When Sentry is set up repeatedly over the same fixed location a continuous monitoring

history is maintained. Movement can be detected down to 1mm per hour. Animations of time changes can be used to effectively show morphology of terrain changes over time. Timelapse capability allows users to see changes and use this information to predict movement in other areas. Heatmaps coloured by displacement or velocity provide an overview of movement. Alerts and notifications are easily defined, allowing critical information to be sent direct to geotechnical staff or mine managers so they can decide on action that minimises safety risks.



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In the late 1990s, New South Wales' Port Stephens region became the first in Australia to develop a unique co-composting waste management facility.

At the facility, organic waste was separated and broken down for re-purposing.

Almost 20 years later, in one of the state's busiest tourist destinations, the site continues to process thousands of tonnes of waste each year, which is then re-distributed to some of the Hunter Valley's large mine sites for rehabilitative purposes.

So how does household garbage waste turn into a soil-like organic substance 24 hours after leaving a kerbside bin?

An Australian-first in waste management

The facility at Raymond Terrace was developed by Port Stephens Council and sub-contracted to waste management company Suez.

"This was the first of these facilities anywhere in the world outside North America," site manager Neil Olsson said.

"It was innovative, and it was seen as the most relevant, ongoing approach to separation of waste available at the time."



The co-composting facility at Raymond Terrace processes thousands of tonnes of waste each year. (Image - ABC Newcastle: Robert Virtue)

"The basic design of the composting facility was initially called the Bedminster system, and it's an in-vessel co-composting [system]."

"What that means is co-mingled waste — the waste that is typically thrown out by households — is put through a rotary kiln. The process itself is extremely robust."

While Raymond Terrace was the first in Australia, a number of other locations around the country, including Cairns, have since developed similar co-composting facilities.



Neil Olsson says the facility is looking at fresh ways to continue improving its percentage of reusable organic waste. (Image - ABC Newcastle: Robert Virtue)



Once dumped, a front-end loader scoops the waste onto a bouncing conveyor belt system. (Image - ABC Newcastle: Robert Virtue)

From house to tip

The first step in the process is Port Stephens households putting their garbage, excluding recycling, into their red-lidded kerbside bin.

That bin's contents are then collected by large garbage trucks and brought to the waste management facility at Raymond Terrace.

On a busy day, up to 30 garbage trucks come and go from the site, dumping up to 220 tonnes of waste.



Bulky or dangerous items are bounced off the conveyor belts. (Image - ABC Newcastle: Robert Virtue)



The 60-metre long digesters rotate slowly, tumbling the waste inside and breaking it down. (Image - ABC Newcastle: Robert Virtue)

The garbage trucks dump their contents in piles on the floor of a large, metal building, the foul odour of garbage pungent in the air.

A front-end loader then scoops up the waste and tips it into a metal funnel.

The waste is gradually sifted down onto a bouncing conveyor belt system.

"[It] bounces out things that are dangerous for the process... large, bulky items, long rope items, things like domestic hoses that people throw away," Mr Olsson said.

"More importantly, things that might be a source of adding unwanted materials into the compost — car and boat batteries are the classic example."

Those unsuitable items are invariably processed elsewhere or go to landfill.

Waste re-purposed to help rehabilitate land

Organic specialist at Suez, Duncan Le Good, said 50 to 55 per cent of all waste coming to the site was reusable after going through the breakdown process.

"That is pretty well standard across the industry right now to be recovering that percentage," he said.

"Under current NSW waste legislation, we have a responsibility to reuse that material for other beneficial outcomes."

The soil-like waste is left to mature before being separated again. (Image - ABC Newcastle: Robert Virtue)



A large portion of the waste is taken to mine sites across the Hunter Valley, which have legal responsibilities to rehabilitate the land they use.

The waste does not fill the voids left by mines, but is used as a pseudo top soil.

The composted waste product is used in mine site rehabilitation across the Hunter Valley. (Image - ABC Newcastle: Robert Virtue)



But Mr Le Good said the organic waste did not replace topsoil.

"What we find is the application of compost at the very early stages of rejuvenating those landscapes gives that organic matter, and subsequently that soil carbon, that is required to help bring those vegetative communities back," he said.

Mr Le Good said the organic waste was regularly tested to ensure it was safe to be re-used.

"Even though it seems like there's lots of different waste coming through [the facility], it's actually very consistent as well, so you tend to find the resulting organic materials that come out of those waste streams are very consistent," he said.

"I think you'll find that as we move into the next era of these types of facilities, we'll find other ways to recover more [waste]."

From conveyor belt to 'kiln'

Once the bulky, unsuitable items have bounced off the conveyor belt, the remaining waste is ferried into two large metal cylinders called digesters.

The 60-metre long digesters are at a slight incline, and rotate slowly. Inside, the temperature is up to 60 degrees Celsius.

"They're effectively rotating kilns," Mr Olsson said.

"You effectively have a wedge-shape mass of material tumbling on itself. It's that tumbling action that initially breaks the bags and breaks things down."

"Then you'll actually find the biological action of the bacteria that are in the process break it down further."

"It drives off volatile materials as well. It also releases a lot of moisture."

"The volatiles being driven off is why we have to have such an effective [bio-filter] odour control system that pulls the air out of the tip floor."

After spending 24 hours inside the digesters, the waste exits via a filtration process to remove metal and plastic. (Image - ABC Newcastle: Robert Virtue)



Odour control is strictly governed by the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

The waste spends on average 24 hours inside the digesters, which is enough time to break the waste down into a soil-like substance.

After being discharged from the digesters, the waste goes through a further two-phase separation process to remove any metal or plastic.

The organic waste is then piled in long rows inside another large building, where it is left for three weeks, being turned periodically.

After the second phase of the separation process, the waste is moved to another site for continued maturation.

PARALLEL ECONOMICS

THE HUNTER LOGISTICS HUB

THE HUNTER IS ALREADY AN UNDISPUTED ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE OF NSW AND IT COULD ALSO PLAY A GREATER ROLE AS A CENTRE FOR ROAD, RAIL AND AIR FREIGHT LOGISTICS.

With Sydney being squeezed for space and congestion making travelling to and fro a nightmare, a very real opportunity exists to create a world class East Coast logistics hub on a Hunter mine site. Mines have spent hundreds if not billions of dollars creating infrastructure of the highest standard including rail and many other high value improvements and landform studies. Let's use a bit of it. It doesn't take the greatest mind to see that when you consider their proximity and linkages to the east

coast road, rail and air corridors and Newcastle port, that mine buffer land could be repurposed and these underutilised assets reimagined into a nationally significant hub.

The Federal Government even kindly built a dual lane freeway right to the mines doorstep recently. Add to that that we are at a major intersection of

the two major northern road transport routes in the New England and Pacific Highways along with the Golden Highway heading west and it starts to add up. Existing underutilised rail loops could cost effectively feed into the national network. And given the heavy equipment muscle on site, the base civil works and costs for a significant freight airport runway would be greatly reduced. Putting this somewhere in the MTW, HVO, Bulga precinct even takes care of much

of the approach and take off noise disruption as they would get plenty of height before even leaving existing mine land areas.

Add to all of this the associated industries that would support a hub like this and the businesses that would be drawn in by lower operating and establishment costs and it's worth a thought. The Sydney airports could free up major additional passenger capacity and the big city roads would get a breather as well.

On top of all this, the economic prosperity that would literally flow into the Upper Hunter could secure its future for generations to come.

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The local businessmen organising it are dedicated to raising vital extra funds for the purchase of much needed equipment for Singleton Hospital.

Singleton Hospital is instrumental in providing medical support and services for the town & region. In times of when funding cuts and bureaucracy drastically affect their medical services there is a proven need for direct support from our Singleton community.

David Flynn of Hunter Valley Glass said, "It's an opportunity to give back to the community that has supported our businesses over many years. It's always heartwarming to see the support from the community and the

difference it makes to the hospital and the services they can provide."

The guys from Holes 4 Hospitals step in where the system stops to provide vital equipment and support. In a few short years, they have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund critical medical equipment required for the hospital.

Dave continued, "We could not raise the funds without the continued support of all the sponsors and especially our major sponsor Glencore. Their support over many years has been unwavering."

The event happens on the 16th of July and @ *The Coalface* hopes to see you there!

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THE A-PLUS CONTRACTING HUNTER VALLEY MINING CHARITY RUGBY LEAGUE KNOCKOUT COMPETITION IS KICKING OFF AGAIN AND SO ARE THE GIRLS!

This year they've introduced a women of mining series within the competition with two women's teams making up part of the 350 coal mining employees playing for

the coveted Charity Shield.

The day is more than just a good time with family and friends though. Money raised goes to Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, to ensure that this vital service is always there when needed.

So make sure join us at Singleton's Pirtek Park on October 7 to be a part of a fantastic day for a fantastic cause.

For further information visit www.charityrugbyleagueday.com.au



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'AVE A LAUGH WITH

The FBI, the CIA and the LAPD all think they are the most efficient law enforcers, so they decide to have a contest. They release a squirrel into a forest and they all get a chance to catch it.

The CIA bugs the entire forest and gets animal informants. They then question all of the plants and mineral witnesses. But after four months, they conclude that the rabbit never existed.



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Next the FBI comes in. After a couple of weeks they still have no leads so they burn the entire forest down killing everything, supposedly including the rabbit.

Finally, the LAPD comes in and comes out a week later with a bear. The bear is yelling, "Okay! I'm a rabbit! I'm a rabbit!"

BELLBIRD DISASTER FUNERAL
(BARRY HOWARD COLLECTION)



DAYS OF DISASTER

THE HUNTER MINING COMMUNITY HAS SEEN ITS FAIR SHARE OF DISASTERS OVER THE YEARS AND NO MORE SO THAN IN THE EARLY DAYS OF MINING.

It was a hazardous environment to work in with little light, poor ventilation and mine subsidence often an issue for the both miners and their pit horses.

The result was roof collapses, explosions, fires and the release of poisonous gas. There were very few emergency or safety procedures in place to deal with disasters when they occurred.

What these disasters did do however was draw attentions to the need for more industrial regulations and safety measures to keep miners safe. This resulted in the development of safer mining techniques, upgrades in equipment and the introductions of procedures.

These terrible tragedies also showed the indomitable spirit of miners as despite everything they still picked up the tools and

went back to work to support not only their families but often the families of the fallen miners.

Because often when miners died or were injured they left behind family with no source of income. The community would rally together to raise money to support the families and this same strong community spirit still exists today.

MORE THAN 1800 MINERS HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THE HUNTER VALLEY COAL MINES SINCE MINING BEGAN AND WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET THESE BRAVE SOULS WHO HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN CHANGING OUR INDUSTRY TO THE SAFETY FIRST CULTURE OF TODAY.

Hamilton Pit – 1889 A hundred men were working when the roof collapsed. Rescue attempts over the following months were unsuccessful and 11 men died from

either crush injuries or starvation. A regulation that larger pillars be installed in all mine tunnels was enacted as a result.

Stockton Colliery - 1896 A gas leak killed 2 men and a couple days after a team went down to investigate causing the deaths of another 9 men. The disaster highlighted the need for special breathing equipment for rescue operations.

Dudley Pit -1898 When ventilation fans were shut off for the weekend a buildup of gases caused an explosion and fire when gas lamps were lit at the start of the shift. 15 lives were lost. Continuous ventilation and safety lamps were adopted afterwards and it also raised awareness of the need for a relief fund for families.

Stanford Merthyr Colliery - 1905 When a fire of unknown origins set off several explosions 6 men were killed and 9 injured and the mine was shut down for months having enormous economic repercussions for the community.

Bellbird Colliery – 1923 An explosion resulted in many lives lost as miners choked to death on gas. Rescuers recovering bodies from site also lost their lives from gas as additional explosions occurred. With 21 dead, inquests were unable to explain the exact cause however unsafe work practices were believed to be to blame which led to a greater public awareness of mining safety and the need for emergency equipment and trained emergency officers.

The Mines Rescue Act – 1925 The introduction of the act was a cumulative effect of the all these disasters and the terrible loss of lives suffered by the industry. A growing public awareness helped ensure the act was passed. The act placed safety regulations on the coal industry and established purpose-built rescue organisations and stations to protect miners lives and mining property.



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HOMEWORK HELPERS JANELLE (RIGHT) AND LEANNE (LEFT).

COMMUNITY GIFT

THIS MONTH THE RECIPIENT FOR OUR \$500 COMMUNITY GIFT IS FOR THE UPPER HUNTER COMMUNITY SERVICES HOMEWORK HELP HOUR PROGRAM.

Homework Help Hour takes place at Hunter Park Family Centre on Wollombi Road, Muswellbrook thanks to the tireless work of HPFC Coordinator Janelle and Aboriginal Family Worker, Leanne. With the assistance of a Teachers Aid, Janelle and Leanne are there to support primary school children to complete their homework. Parents stay with the children and are encouraged to engage in the process.

THE GIFT WILL GO TOWARDS MUCH NEEDED EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND STATIONARY, AND TO MAKE SURE THERE IS A COUPLE OF BIKKIES FOR AFTERNOON TEA TO FUEL THOSE BUSY BRAINS!

The Homework Help Hour is just one of the many programs offered by Upper Hunter Community Services Inc. To find out more contact Hunter Park Family Centre on 6543 3566 or Upper Hunter Community Services on 6542 3555.



HEART WARMING EFFORT

CHRIS MARCH, JASON BROOKS AND ANDREA BURNS.

EMPLOYEES AT MANGOOLA’S COAL HANDLING AND PREPARATION PLANT (CHPP) HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT WHERE THERE’S A WILL TO HELP A WORTHY CAUSE, THERE’S ALWAYS A WAY.

The Mangoola CHPP team has presented Upper Hunter based support group, Where There’s A Will, with a cheque for \$6500, the proceeds of a “fire sale” with a difference.

Used centrifuge baskets and conveyor belting from the CHPP were up for sale to employees and contractors with baskets highly sought-after as a backyard fireplace.

“These are items that would normally be scrapped, but the CHPP team came up with the idea of recycling the materials to raise funds for a good cause,” Mangoola Operations Manager Tony Israel said.

“AS PART OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, WE WERE WELL AWARE OF THE GREAT WORK WHERE THERE’S A WILL IS DOING AND WE’RE VERY PROUD TO BE ABLE TO DO

SOMETHING THAT WILL HELP WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR PROGRAMS.”

Where There’s A Will Chairman, Jason Brooks, said, “We’re very touched and honoured that Mangoola employees would think of us as a recipient of their fundraising. This money will be put to good use through education programs on mental health and we look forward to continuing to work with Glencore and its employees as we take our programs forward.”

The Mangoola donation continues a significant partnership that Glencore’s coal business has established with Where There’s A Will with Glencore providing \$100,000 for the WTAW organisation to undertake mental health first aid training across the Upper Hunter.



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L-R: CAM HALFPENNY, CHAD GRIFFITH AND CHRISTOPHER SHANNEN



A BUCKET OF CASH

BENGALLA MINE'S MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT HAVE FOUND A NEW WAY TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE WESTPAC RESCUE HELICOPTER SERVICE... AND TO ADD A LITTLE COLOUR TO THEIR DAY.

Westpac Rescue and CQMS Razer, a design was finalised and the

fundraising commenced. Bengalla Superintendent and fundraising organiser Christopher Shannen said, "When news went out that Bengalla was organising a fundraiser, many of our suppliers wanted to get involved by donating prizes and making this possible. I would like to thank them, and the Bengalla workers and the wider community who bought tickets to raise the funds."

THE FUNDRAISER WAS A GREAT SUCCESS WITH A CHEQUE BEING HANDED OVER TO THE WESTPAC RESCUE HELICOPTER SERVICE FOR \$8,970.

Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service Regional Marketing Manager, Chad Griffith said "Bengalla and their

employees, contractors and suppliers are to be commended for their commitment in supporting the 'communities own' aeromedical service. All funds raised will ensure no one ever has to pay when in their time of need. The dragline bucket is a first for the Rescue Helicopter and one that I am sure has created a huge amount of interest within the community. Thank you to Bengalla for their vision to support our lifesaving service."

Bengalla CEO Cam Halfpenny said, "There is nothing that captures your attention more than a dragline bucket coming through town painted bright yellow and red with a big set of teeth."

When the maintenance department recently placed an order for a new bucket for the Bengalla

dragline, they came up with the idea of painting the bucket to raise funds. After consultation with

ATTENTION!

A \$26,000 DONATION FROM THE RIO TINTO HUNTER VALLEY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND IS SET TO IMPROVE FIRE SAFETY AWARENESS FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

The donation of an electronic message board will assist the NSW Rural Fire Service Hunter Valley District Office located in Bulga to communicate reliable advice and safety information to the public in real-time.

The NSW Rural Fire Service Hunter Valley project was funded by Rio Tinto after it was identified that fewer local residents now use community newspapers and radio to access fire danger rating information and emergency updates.

The electronic message board is fitted on a mobile trailer and will be transported around the Singleton and Muswellbrook shires overseen by the District Office.

Rio Tinto Mount Thorley Warkworth General Manager Colin Mackey said "On behalf of the Rio Tinto CDF Board, it is our pleasure to support the Rural Fire Service Hunter Valley District with this essential piece of equipment. We are very pleased that the

donation will directly improve the speed and reliability of important fire safety communications for Hunter Valley residents who may find themselves in affected areas."

The electronic message

board has already been used to advise motorists of hazard reduction work on Putty Road -reducing the number of Triple Zero (000) calls placed by passing motorists.

NSW Rural Fire Service Hunter Valley Group Officer

Warren Welsh said "We are most appreciative of Rio Tinto's contribution in supporting us with this initiative. The message board is an important resource in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the residents within our shires."



L-R: NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE'S WARREN WELSH WITH RIO TINTO'S COLIN MACKAY AND SIMON COLEMAN.

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MINERS TO THE RESCUE

THIS MONTH WE WENT ONSITE AND UNDERGROUND TO SEE JUST HOW WELL EQUIPPED AND TRAINED OUR NSW MINES RESCUE PEOPLE ARE AT THE ANNUAL NEWCASTLE MINES RESCUE COMPETITION HELD AT THE ARGENTON BASE.

From the moment we arrived it was very clear how much goes into ensuring our miners are prepared in case of an emergency. First up on arrival we witnessed dedicated retired miners work the BBQ with the kind of skill reserved for the best tongs men on the planet. Keeping the troops fed was

clearly an important part of the day and they took the job very seriously.

The kind of camaraderie that exists amongst these people is a special thing to see and with a delicious steak burger in hand I observed the hive of competition preparation activity, discussion and planning going on

around me.

Treated to the royal tour, we followed a team as they went through their paces and boy do they take these competitions seriously. The briefing and safety check showed just how much this is a team endeavor. Nothing was left to chance as teams checked and double checked

their equipment before launching into action and we headed into the abyss of the purpose built underground mine training area. Amid the chaos and barking of commands these guys worked as one navigating impossible situations and obstacles in true to life rescue scenarios.

I WAS FLAT OUT NOT TRIPPING OVER MYSELF IN THE DARK CRAMPED CONDITIONS BUT THESE GUYS WORKED ON INSTINCT LIKE A PERFECTLY OILED MACHINE.

How it worked I don't know, but it all worked extremely well before we headed upstairs to the chaos of a simulated oxygen canister explosion with life-like casualties and wounds all

over the place which had teams running through their paces. It was high adrenalin stuff.

Later that evening the annual presentation dinner saw the winning team announced who will now go on to compete in the Australian Mines Rescue Competition and included;

Darrell Squires - Captain (Mandalong), Dean Taylor (Mandalong), Andrew Pearce (Mandalong), Mick Cowan (Mandalong), Greg Lundy (Myuna), Shaun Ashburner (Chain Valley).

It was all impressive to say the least and left @ *The Coalface* under no illusions as to just how well prepared our people are in case of a mines rescue emergency.



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SOBER UP SON

@ THE COALFACE ENJOYS A BEER MORE THAN MOST AND THE THOUGHT OF A SELF IMPOSED DETOX IS ABOUT AS ATTRACTIVE AS BECOMING A VEGAN YOGA TEACHER. SO DITCHING THE BEERS FOR THE LAST MONTH HAS BEEN HELL.

Okay so there's a good chance that like most Australians, you find the idea of banning the booze intolerable. In fact, considering the social meaning of alcohol here in Australia it could be considered bloody unAustralian to say no to a longneck while watching the game. In the interests of Dry July I went early and started in the middle of June after opening my big mouth and suggesting a little break would do me no harm.

As I have learnt, a month is a bloody long time! But you know what? I got through it and I was bloody stunned to find out it wasn't all bad.

Over its long history alcohol has been everything from a sacrament to a sedative, a fortifier to a thirst-quencher and it has inserted itself into everyday Australian culture through sport, entertainment and lifestyle.

With consumption per person at about 10 litres per year of pure alcohol, perhaps it's time to take a step back and consider the impacts alcohol is having and if you are going to drink, ensure you always drink responsibly.

THE GUIDELINES CONSIDER PEOPLE WHO CONSUME MORE

THAN 2 STANDARD DRINKS PER DAY LIFETIME RISKY DRINKERS.

I usually enjoy at least 2 more than that. The health risks that accumulate over a lifetime from alcohol increase progressively – this means that the more you drink, the greater the risk. Drinking alcohol can affect your liver or cause brain damage, heart disease, high blood pressure and increases your risk of many cancers. And don't forget the affect it's having on your waistline – they don't call it a beer belly for no reason.

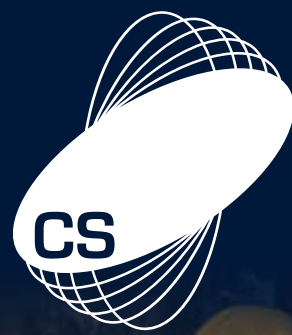
Anyway, at the time of going to print I actually feel a million bucks. My energy levels are the best I can remember and I have got more done at work than I have in a long time. It's even helped me kick the durries so far. I can't believe I'm saying this, but as hard as it was, it was worth doing and I may just do it again next year. It's a good reset not to mention detox before the upcoming drinking season that is summer and Christmas. I'll try and have at least two days a week off as well from now on. Anyway, enough preaching and rest assured I'll be smashing a few cans as a reward for enduring the most boring social month I have had in years.

'AVE A LAUGH WITH

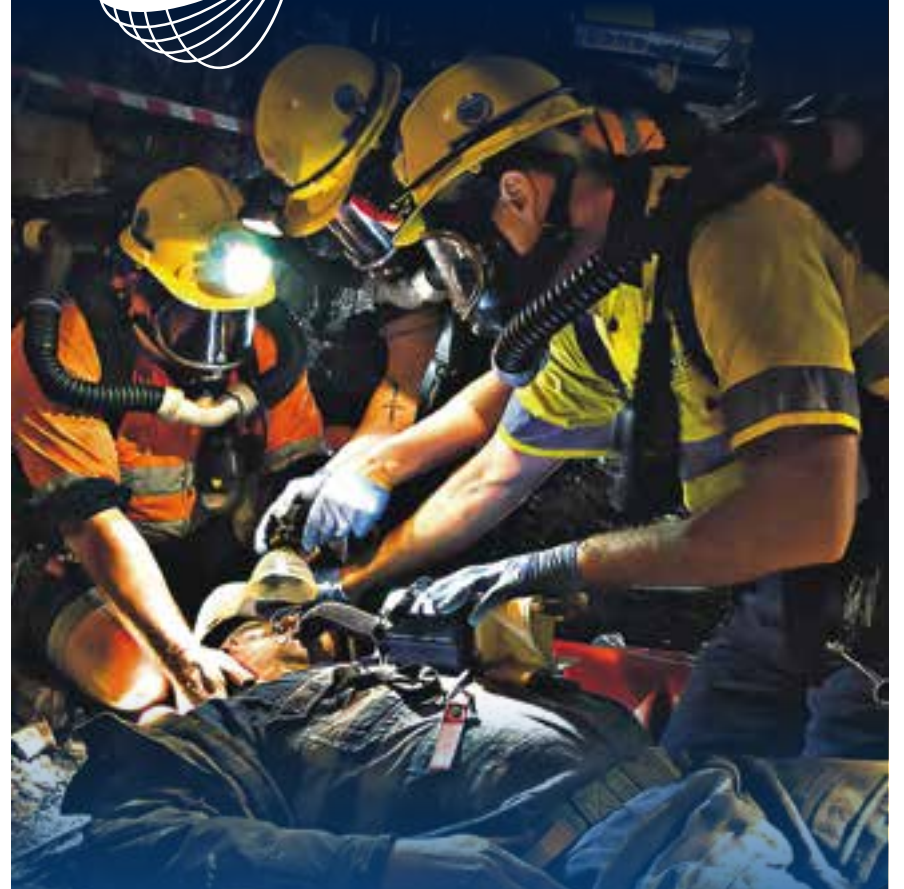


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The other day my friend and I laughed about how competitive we are. But I laughed the most.



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PEEPING DOG

THE PETPEEK FENCE WINDOW LETS YOUR MUTT KEEP ABREAST OF ALL THE ACTION HAPPENING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE.

This porthole for your fence has great reviews on Amazon by dog owners who say their dogs enjoy being able to see the world outside their fence and that it helps them socialise more.

We couldn't find any reviews by dogs however to verify whether they spent all the time enjoying the view or were in fact trying to get the attention of someone to be rescued from a crazy pet owner.

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BEANIES OFF FOR THE BOYS

KURRI KURRI BULLDOGS BROKE THE WORLD RECORD FOR MOST BEANIES WORN IN ONE PLACE DURING THEIR FIRST-GRADE CLASH BETWEEN THE DOGGIES AND LAKE'S UNITED.

While the team ultimately went down 32-22 in a tightly fought match up, the spirits of the Bulldogs and their fans were not dampened. Over 500 people turned out to support the Mark Hughes Foundation for brain cancer research with an official count of 429 beanies worn by fans and followers of the Kurri Kurri Bulldogs.

A KURRI BOY HIMSELF, HUGHES HAS NOT FORGOTTEN HIS ROOTS AND THE RESIDENTS TURNED OUT IN FORCE TO SUPPORT ONE OF THEIR OWN. HUGHES WAS DIAGNOSED WITH BRAIN CANCER IN 2013, AND WENT ON TO

ESTABLISH THE FOUNDATION WITH HIS WIFE KIRRALEE.



"It was a real emotional day," said Kurri junior and Knight's legend, Mark Hughes. "It was just so great to see how well the Kurri community came together and throw their support behind the foundation."

Regardless of whether they broke the record or not, the Bulldogs footy community deserve a rousing round of applause for raising \$6000 through the sale of MHF beanies, plus the club received an additional \$2,588 of donations to pass on to Hughesy's Foundation.

The whole club and everyone involved around the Coalfields should be feeling mighty proud. It's good to see the Hunter community spirit alive and well.



Show your support to the Mark Hughes Foundation by buying a MHF beanie at markhughesfoundation.com.au

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HUNTER GRIDIRON LEAGUE MINING SUCCESS

THE HUNTER GRIDIRON LEAGUE (HGL) IS GEARING UP FOR ITS THIRD SEASON AND THEY'RE ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR NEW RECRUITS.

The HGL features four foundation teams – Lake Macquarie Marauders, Port Stephens Bombers, Newcastle City Cannons, and Hunter Valley Miners. Each team competes at sports grounds around the Hunter.

"Some mates and I thought the Hunter needed its own gridiron league because of the rich history of athletes that come from our region, and because there's people out in the community who are interested in learning more about the sport," says HGL's Corey Harrigan.

Gridiron is American football. Although, you might know it by its professional code; NFL. The purpose of the game is to move the ball towards, and ultimately, into the opposition's 'end zone'. Players achieve this by either running with the ball until tackled, or throwing the ball downfield to a team-mate.

"We play a nine-a-side version with full gear, including pads and helmets," explains Corey. "It's a much faster game than regular eleven-a-side games. Our four foundation clubs are named after some aspect of our region's history, like landmarks or cultures, which connects us to the Hunter in a real sense."

The Hunter Valley Miners are a team that we should all get behind. Not only did they go undefeated in the inaugural season, back in 2016, they also won the converted Hunter Bowl in the same season. Unfortunately, the boys lost some key players the following season and finished last. There's no bad news, though. The Miners will have first draft pick for season 2018.

"WE HAVE A NUMBER OF GUYS THROUGHOUT THE LEAGUE THAT WORK IN THE MINING INDUSTRY," SAYS COREY. "IT'S A BIG

PART OF OUR REGION AND THERE'S SOME GREAT TALENT COMING OUT OF THE PITS."

Next season is shaping up to be a huge season for the HGL. As more people around the Valley find out about the sport, the league can only grow and get bigger and better. There are already plans to launch a junior and female league over the next few years.

"The Hunter Gridiron League is definitely turning a lot of heads in the short time we've been established," says Corey. "We couldn't be prouder of what we've achieved, so far, and we're excited to see the league get even better in the years to come."

If you think you've got what it takes to be an American football superstar and want to be involved, contact the HGL via email: huntergridiron@gmail.com

Up the Miners!



'AVE A LAUGH WITH

A wealthy lawyer is driving down the road in his limo when he sees a man with his family eating grass on the side of the road. He pulls over to investigate.

He asks him, "Why are you eating this disgusting grass?"

The man replies, "I'm so poor, it's all we have."

The lawyer replies, "You can come home with me and I'll feed you."



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The man replies, "But sir, what about my family."

The lawyer replies, "Bring them all!" So they all pile into the car.

The man's wife turns to the lawyer and tells him, "Thank you so much sir, we really needed this."

The lawyer responds, "No problem, the grass is almost a foot tall, you'll love it!"

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THE TITANIC NISSAN TITAN RULES THE ROAD...

If Jack and Rose, from the movie Titanic, had of made it to New York together, you can bet they would now be picking up the kids from school in the all new Nissan Titan XD V8 4WD.

Gympie based US muscle truck enthusiasts, Performax International recently announced they were

adding the Cummins derived 5.0 litre V8 Nissan Titan to their jacked up stable of Ford F-Trucks, Chevy Silverado's, Toyota Tundra's, and Dodge RAM heavy haulers

adding the Cummins derived 5.0

in Australia.

Nissan has equipped this new 4WD pickup with a Cummins V8 turbo-diesel delivering 230kW/750Nm, which pumps through a dual-range Aisin six-speed automatic transmission.

The 5.0L V8 Turbo Diesel brings together a compacted graphite iron (CGI) cylinder block, forged steel crankshaft, high-strength aluminium alloy heads, and composite valve covers to offer maximum durability in a lightweight package.

blokes at Performax say that the Titan offers a towing capacity of 5.2 tonnes.

The 'bed' or tray measures 1.62 metres wide and 2.0 metres long and comes with lights plus accessories including an electric locking and damped tailgate, a special tie-down system and Titan-branded storage boxes. Payload is 900kg and has the ability to tow up to 5.2 tonnes, depending on your license.

Obviously, the ability to drive a big rig on our Aussie roads will cost a bit. \$139,000 (plus on-roads) for the dual cab option, which is pretty deluxe on the inside. Leather, electric, heated captain's chairs, Bluetooth hands-free, DVD player with screen, sun-roof, traction control, lockable bedside storage box, rear sonar warning system and heaps of other mod cons.

Give our mates at Singleton Nissan a bell, and see if they can get one in and take the Titan out for a test drive in the pit...

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WINTER MULLOWAY MADNESS

JEWIES ARE THICK AS WITH FISH BEING ENCOUNTERED JUST ABOUT EVERYWHERE ON ANYTHING FROM LURES TO LIVE BAITS AS JED HAS PROVED WITH HIS BEAST AT 24KG AND 135CM.

He tells us his special "pants" hold all the luck to a successful Jewie mission.

The biggest problem is deciding where to head as Port Stephens, Lake Mac, Newcastle Harbour and all the local beaches are proving to be hot spots for the elusive silver ghosts.

Big green eye squid are still super active this month and well worth targeting around any coastal weed-kelp beds.

THE LAKE

Lake Mac is on fire with all the bread and butter species really turning it on.

We managed a morning out on the lake recently aiming at getting a mate started on soft plastics with flathead being the target with plastics and vibes. Well didn't he turn one on by landing a few cracker Flatties and some Donkey Bream and Squire.

Salmon are showing up around Salts Bay for those wanting have a bit of fun and test out the light gear.

DEEP OFFSHORE

The kings are starting to school up out on the deep reefs as the current backs off Texas off Norah Head. Allmark Mountain off the bay is proving popular if you're ready for the deep water challenge with them. Snapper, Nannygui and Bar Cod will also be a welcomed by catch.

Be sure to send a few lures out wide as a few Yellow Fin Tuna have been encountered also.

JED FROM MTW WITH A TRUE SLAB OF A JEWIE



UP THE BAY

A similar story to the lake with plenty of options, especially with the Black fish holding in huge numbers along the break walls for those wanting to pick up a few of the tasty weed eaters. Be sure to have plenty of patience as its been standing room only.

The bream numbers are also very healthy and proving plenty of fun in and around the oyster racks.

The ocean rocks have been fishing well with Drummer and Grouper being the key targets with the odd Snapper also being caught.

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'LOVE HAS NO COLOUR'

TODAY I INTEND TO TOUCH UPON A RAW NERVE, AN UNDERCURRENT OF BELIEFS THAT BAFFLE THE MOST ARDENT OF SPECIALISTS. IT'S RIFE IN OUR INDUSTRY AND IS DISCRIMINATION OF THE HIGHEST ORDER, WE'RE TALKING *MACHINE RACISM*.

That's right, let's call it for what it is, discrimination of a machine based upon its colour and origin. Fleets of the same colour machines running around with not another coloured machine in site, someone call a royal commission, you must...! A little overkill perhaps, though I'm sure you get my drift; be it orange, white or a shade of yellow, the best players aren't always on the field.

So today, with colour in mind, I look at Hitachi's EX1200 Excavator. As distinctive for its colour orange, as it is for its track record. A digger that continues to impress and some might say, lead its

class. Marketed in the 120t category and pitched in the 'large' excavator range, this machine's competitors include Komatsu's PC1250, Liebherr's R 9150 and most recently, Caterpillar's supersized 6015B with an operating weight of 140t.

Introduced in 2001 and now in its second evolution, the Series 6 machine can be found operating in a range of mining applications, quarries and civil-engineering projects. Unlike some of its competitors, Hitachi have opted for a simple and effective Cummins QSK23 engine, a highly regarded and reliable

engine, with parts readily available. Sporting an increased weight, this digger works effortlessly with a range of buckets from 5.2 to 6.7m3.

Like so many of Japan's multinationals, Hitachi is well-respected. As a manufacturer, they produce

quality equipment and have a respected pedigree in producing a full suite of excavators, from 1.88t mini excavators, through to their 800t EX8000.

Perhaps most telling, is the feedback provided by owners and operators of these diggers, an opinion that is generally consistent

and positive in relation serviceability, reliability, productivity and resale value. And while I admit I'm as guilty as most when it comes to machine racism, this orange machine holds its own and warrants attention; even if mixes up your colour palette. To find out more, go to www.hitachicm.com.au



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WINE ESCAPADES

WHEN WE HEARD THAT SUTTON ESTATE HAD AN ESCAPE ROOM WITH A WINE THEME WE HAD TO HAVE A TASTE.

Escape Rooms are popular all over the world with more and more popping up all the time. If you've not heard of them before the basic premise is you get locked in a room and have a time limit to figure out how to escape by solving clues and puzzles.

THE COMMON THEMES FOR ESCAPE ROOMS ARE NORMALLY MURDER MYSTERIES, PRISON BREAKS OR ZOMBIE APOCALYPSES WHICH MAY

NOT BE EVERYONE'S IDEA OF A FUN EXPERIENCE, BUT BEING LOCKED IN A ROOM WITH SOME OF THE BEST HUNTER VALLEY WINES SOUNDED LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE TO ME.

We arrived at Sutton Estate as dusk was beginning to fall, setting an appropriately spooky atmosphere. Anticipation was building and taste buds were tingling as our host Phillippa warmly greeted us and then with no further ado our

journey to find the treasure and escape began.

AND THAT'S ALL I CAN TELL YOU.

I can't give too much away because what makes the experience so fun is the not knowing what to expect.

I can guarantee you there will be lots of laughs and maybe even a few screams...

I'm not very clever at puzzles and as much as I like wine I'm certainly no connoisseur but I still managed to bumble my way from one clue to the next and enjoy every minute of it.

The wine tasting incorporated some great local wines which was a bonus as it would have taken up an entire of day wine tasting to visit each winery in person.

The wine themed escape room is entirely Phillippa's creation and she's put a huge amount of passion, creativity and hard work in creating a unique experience right in the heart of the Hunter wine country.

It's a fun group activity,

take some friends, your family or workmates. It's something your granny will enjoy as much as your brother will. The only age group it's not suitable for are those under 18 because then all that delicious wine would go to waste.



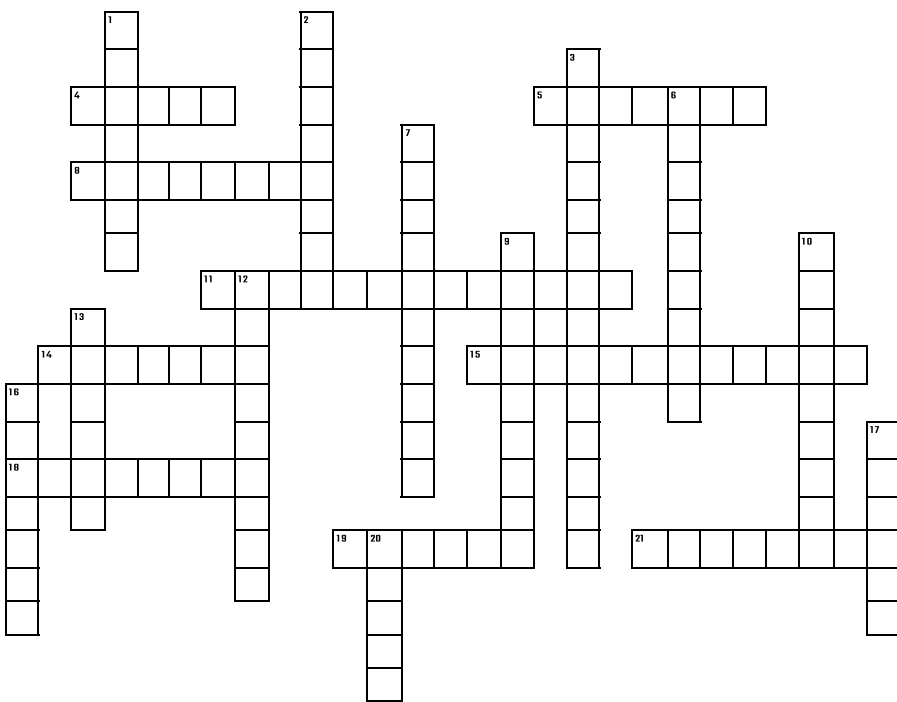
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ACROSS

- 4 National language of India (5)
- 5 Known as the Windy City (7)
- 8 Which ocean surrounds Antarctica (8)
- 11 Which mountain range separates Europe from Asia (4,9)
- 14 The Black Forest is found here (7)
- 15 Largest lake in Africa (4,8)
- 18 World's largest active volcano (5,3)
- 19 In which US state is Area 51 (6)
- 21 Mount Kilimanjaro is found here (8)

DOWN

- 1 The Grand Canyon is located in this state (7)
- 2 A city located in both Asia and Europe (8)
- 3 Deepest known location in Earth's oceans (10,4)
- 6 Continent with the largest desert (9)
- 7 Language spoken in Brazil (10)
- 9 A region of Spain (9)
- 10 Cuba is the largest island in this sea (9)
- 12 Capital of Iceland (9)
- 13 Capital of Lebanon (6)
- 16 Yerevan is the capital of this country (7)
- 17 Largest country in North America (6)
- 20 The Giza Plateau is found here (5)



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FIRED UP!

LIKE OUR PREVIOUS PRIME MINISTER AND RFS VOLUNTEER TONY 'BUDGIE SMUGGLER' ABBOTT, I HAVE DONE MY FIRE STATION PUBLIC SERVICE OVER THE YEARS.

I've been known to fire up plenty of people over the course of my illustrious life. As a youngster I once campaigned for better education in local schools by setting three different bins on fire at the same time in my last year of school in year nine. The principal was so impressed he summoned me to his office for a face to face before deciding my knowledge was so advanced I didn't need to attend school anymore. His face was as red as a fire truck as he personally walked me to the school gate and cried tears of joy for my future as I mounted my Malvern Star bike and headed off into the sunset. When I got home and told Mum and Dad they too were so excited they couldn't speak. Tears of pride streamed down Mums face and Dad's face also turned fire engine red before he went to hug me but tripped before accidentally knocking me and a few of my teeth out.

FROM THAT MOMENT ON WE ALL KNEW I WAS DESTINED FOR SOMETHING SPECIAL IN LIFE WITH THE GIFTS THAT HAD BEEN BESTOWED ON ME.

I decided then and there to serve our great nation and went down Newcastle way on a religious like

pilgrimage to see how I could serve the world and my people. I got off the train at Civic and witnessed the big city for the very first time. Borrowing a bike from out the front of the station I decided to find my calling. I headed west up Hunter Street before noticing a group of thugs chasing me from the station yelling and screaming. Thinking quickly I hung a left and legged it up Union Street Newcastle West and ducked into a shop at the top of the hill exhausted and scared. As the thugs chased me into the shop the kindly man behind the counter saved me and the thugs stole my bike and left.

It turned out I had found refuge in the warm confines of Newy's iconic Fire Station Pie Shop. There I stayed calming my nerves with half a dozen of the most authentic pies known to man. To this day they still serve them and me and them pies have rescued many a starving man. Old school pies saved me from death and if you need some salvation I suggest you pedal down to Newy and put out that fire in your belly with one of their beauties.

Your man in an emergency - Sol

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ANDALÉ! ARRIBA! YEEHAW!



IN THE WORDS OF SPEEDY GONZALES, THIS IS MY ADVICE TO YOU IF YOU ARE THINKING OF HEADING TO MAITLAND'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT, SOUTH OF THE BORDER.

South of the Border has a long and proud history in Maitland since it opened in 1984, though it underwent a hiatus before reopening its doors late last year much

to the delight of locals and visitors alike.

The minute you walk in the doors the bright and colourful décor packs a punch, just like

the menu. It's contemporary and fresh look creates a warm and inviting atmosphere, making it a perfect place for a fiesta with friends and family.

As soon as we sat down the attentive staff had drinks sent our way and had loaded us up on corn chips and salsa, allowing us to relax and take our time with the menus which we definitely needed.

The menu has got it all, taquitos, tacos, tostadas, quesadillas, nachos, burritos, albondigas and chimachanga and best of all if you're like me and find it hard to select only one, they offer combination dishes.

GO AS HOT OR AS MILD AS YOU LIKE. A FROZEN MARGARITA OR ICY COLD CORONA WILL HELP COOL DOWN THOSE FIRED UP TASTEBUDS.

I had chicken enchilada with beans and rice which were delectable, but the star of the night was the beef burrito, right up there with the best I've had with its subtle yet

robust flavour and succulent beef practically melting in my mouth. My only complaint, the serving sizes were so big it made it very difficult to find room for Mexican churros for dessert. But there was no way I was missing out so I popped the button on the jeans and went for it. Delicioso.

So if Mexican is your thing, or if you just want to try something a little different, South of the Border is worth a visit. You need to book, this place is popular with locals and visitors and books out quickly. Open for dinner Wednesday to Sunday call 02 4933 7334.



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5-star ANCAP safety rating on all MU-X models and 4x4 D-MAX Crew Cab models built from November 2013 onwards and 4x2 D-MAX Crew Cab High Ride models built from November 2014 onwards. *5 years/130,000km whichever occurs first, for eligible customers. Excludes trays and accessories. >The Capped Price Servicing Program ("CPS Program") applies to Eligible Vehicles with a Warranty Start Date on or after 1/1/15 at Participating Isuzu UTE Dealers only. The 5 years Capped Price Servicing covers the first 5 Scheduled Services for 16.5MY and later vehicle models for up to 5 years/50,000km (whichever occurs first). CPS Program is subject to change. For full terms & conditions and current pricing visit isuzuute.com.au/service-plus. *3.5 tonne braked towing capacity on D-MAX 4x4 and 4x2 High Ride models and 3.0 tonne braked towing capacity on all MU-X models when fitted with an optional genuine Isuzu UTE tow bar kit. *Includes economy alloy tray fitted at motorpool. *Fuel consumption and emissions figures based on ADR 81/02 (combined cycle test) and are to be used for vehicle comparison purposes only. Actual fuel consumption and emissions will vary depending on many factors including, but not limited to, traffic conditions, individual driving style and vehicle condition. *Seats have leather touches or accents (excluding third row), but are not wholly leather. *Private and ABN holders only. Excludes government, fleet, rental & non-profit buyers. Includes one year business vehicle registration, CTP insurance, dealer delivery and statutory charges. Metallic/mica/pearl paint \$450 extra. Only at Participating Isuzu UTE Dealers from 1/7/17 until 30/9/17 unless extended, varied or while stocks last. Excludes demonstrators. *Offer is limited to 17MY 4x4 D-MAX & 4x4 MU-X models sold & delivered between 1/7/17 and 30/9/17 to private & ABN holders only. Excludes demonstrators. The Scheduled Servicing offer covers standard items (normal operating conditions) as listed in IUA Warranty and Service Booklet for the first 2 years Scheduled Servicing (covering the first 2 Scheduled Services up to 24 months/20,000km - whichever occurs first). The free Driving Report must be requested and conducted at the same time as the first 2 Scheduled Services. For full Terms and Conditions of the Service Plus Driving Report Program, visit isuzuute.com.au/driving-report. Offer does not cover any other Scheduled Service, Make-up Scheduled Service or any additional service items or requirements, which are at the owner's expense. Only at Participating Isuzu UTE Dealers. Not available with any other offer.



OUT! BLOODY! STANDING!

221 @ THE ROYAL OAK HOTEL IN CESSNOCK IS KNOWN AS ONE OF THE BEST PUB BISTROS IN THE COUNTRY. AND IT HAS JUST STEPPED IT UP ANOTHER GEAR WITH CHEF JOHN HEATH'S INCREDIBLE NEW MENU.

The Royal Oak is well known as one of the Hunters best pubs, a traditional but very well kept front bar sits out front serving the best in traditional and fancy beers and great wines. It's a place where local tradies are as comfortable downing a few beers as are couples on a date or friends catching up for a day or night out. Wander through the back though and things seamlessly step up a gear as it flows to a proper but very relaxed restaurant dining room with white tablecloths and set tables.

WHILE THE JOINT CLEARLY SHOWS A BIT OF CLASS, THE ATMOSPHERE IS COMFORTABLE AND WELCOMING AND SO ARE THE STAFF. As we strolled in a relaxed Head Chef John was chatting to a few people out the front and he greeted us with a warm and friendly hello. As we sat down John told us a little of his journey from South Africa via London cooking for a who's who of the rich and famous in some of the worlds best restaurants, to landing in Australian about four years ago. He came here with

his wife and kids looking for the life of his dreams. He eventually landed at Margans and helped land it a coveted Chefs Hat before heading over to the Oak. Anyway...on to the food. Following introductions John jumped up and said with a wry grin, "Hope you are hungry!" We were to quickly learn he wasn't joking. First up landed a duck liver pate with botrytis jelly and pickles and a plate of oysters served natural, Vietnamese and mornay. Perfect, delicate and delicious. And on it rolled. Gooley, smokey,

hamey, cheesy croquets were as dangerous as they were delectable. Then we stepped up a level. Sticky pork belly with herbs and cucumber, nam jim, peanut and coconut plus a plate of scallops celeriac, truffle, bacon, apple and fennel dropped on the table. No words, just groans of utter joy. **I'VE EATEN AT SOME OF THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN AUSTRALIA AND THIS WAS EASILY THE BEST FOOD I HAVE EVER HAD AND THAT IS THE TRUTH!** Totally stuffed and happy, the mains started to arrive. We bravely soldiered on. Pan roasted duck breast, confit Maryland, sweet potato, mandarin and pak choi was inhaled as if our life

depended on it. The other dish of Black Onyx rump, braised short rib, mushroom, leek and potato gratin made with jus knocked our socks off and made us forget we were shamelessly full. Almost needing a food ambulance we switched to our reserve second stomach for dessert. Oh deary me!! Was about all we could say as an ice cream sandwich with bitter cocoa, peanut butter, salted caramel and chocolate along with another dish of Maple crème brulee, pumpkin donuts, pecan nuts and cinnamon completely finished us off. Take a bow guys...20/10... Honestly the best meal we have ever eaten. We will be back and often and so should you. Watch the awards roll.



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Which street in Denman was named after the first European settler?

In what year was the great Denman fire?

The Royal Hotel featured in what movie in the early 1950's?

Answers next month.

LAST MONTHS ANSWERS

1. Who are Maitland's traditional land owners? **Wonnarua**
2. How high did the water reach in Maitland's 1955 flood?
12.5 metres
3. When was the Maitland Mercury first published? **1843**



LET'S GO FISHING!

It's time to patch up the dinghy, get out your rods and head to the water and see what's lurking below the surface.

And to make your chances of catching a big one all the better we've got three \$50 BCF gift vouchers up for grabs so you can buy some new lures compliments of the Thrifty Boys, the @ The Coalface fishing legends.

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Limit of one entry per person.

LTPM/16/01100









WIN!

THE MYSTIC MINER'S JULY 2017 HOROSCOPES

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Leo
July 23 -
Aug 22 | A "Christmas in July" themed birthday party is a great way to double up on your present count Leo – start working on the guest list! |
|  Virgo
Aug 23 -
Sept 22 | A blast from the past will set your mind racing this month Virgo. Would it all have been different if you hadn't done what you did? Accept the fact that you'll never know and move on. |
|  Libra
Sept 23 -
Oct 22 | Before you embark on Dry July Libra, ask yourself – would it just be easier to give money to charity yourself than collect donations for staying sober during the most miserable month of the year? |
|  Scorpio
Oct 23 -
Nov 21 | When buying items in the EOFY sales Scorpio, take extra care to ensure you leave the tags on – there is a high risk that you'll miss out on further discounts by committing too early. |
|  Sagittarius
Nov 22 -
Dec 21 | Resist the urge to tell your colleague they look like a certain politician Sagittarius. You're in the firing line, even if everybody does call them Pauline. |
|  Capricorn
Dec 22 -
Jan 19 | If NSW's recent State of Origin performance has given you nightmares Capricorn, you should seek professional help well in advance of this month's decider. |

CHECK WHAT YOUR FUTURE HOLDS THIS MONTH WITH OUR ASTROLOGICAL FORECAST TAKEN STRAIGHT FROM THE STARS AND URANUS.

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Aquarius
Jan 20 -
Feb 18 | Avoid outbursts of rage by washing Tupperware by hand Aquarius. It will not dry in the dishwasher no matter what you do, and unless you can accept this, please use the sink for everyone's sake. |
|  Pisces
Feb 19 -
Mar 20 | The cold weather will inspire you to take a weekend drive to the snow Pisces. The prices might be higher than the mountains, but nothing beats a \$17 hot chocolate after a snowball fight. |
|  Aries
Mar 21 -
Apr 19 | Your partner may decide to experiment with a new look this month Aries. Be supportive – even if you do feel the need to walk 10 metres behind them at Coles because schoolkids are laughing. |
|  Taurus
Apr 20 -
May 20 | It's that time of year again Taurus – better check the glove box and biscuit tin for receipts so that the government can thank you for your year of hard work by making you lodge a tax return. |
|  Gemini
May 21 -
Jun 20 | A conversation with a couple teenagers this month will convince you that you don't understand what's going on with kids these days Gemini. Think yourself lucky. Old, but very lucky. |
|  Cancer
Jun 21 -
Jul 22 | The recent outbreak of cyber-attacks will cause you to change all of your passwords Cancer. Bear in mind that forgetting all your new passwords is just as painful as being hacked. |

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BAM BAM VIETNAM!

IF YOU ARE PLANNING A HOLIDAY GET YOU BUTT TO VIETNAM! IF YOU'RE NOT, STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND BOOK ONE RIGHT NOW!

Last month the missus ignored my pleas of being too busy, can't afford it, can't be arsed and booked us two tickets to join 7 friends for 9 days in the land of Pho and cheap beer. Right up to jumping on the plane I was hesitant for a few reasons including knowing nothing about the joint other than the Vietnam war and a belief it would be 9 days of second rate accommodation and food poisoning. As usual she was right and I was as wrong as I have ever been in my life.

NOT ONE SECOND OF THE TRIP COULD BE DESCRIBED AS ANYTHING OTHER THAN HEAPS OF FUN, BLOODY INTERESTING AND FIRST CLASS ALL THE WAY - WHILE SPENDING BUGGER ALL.

I'll start the journey from the beginning when I was down in Sydney one weekend having Yum Cha with friends. Friend Mikey, "We're heading to Vietnam in 7 weeks you

guys should come." Me, "Nah mate. Too busy and can't afford it." Mate Sam, "Flights are \$159 each way on Jetstar tight arse." Missus, "You need a holiday." Me, "Thanks but nah." Six hours later after heading back up to the Valley the missus called. Missus, "I just booked us tickets. You're going and that's that." Me, "Ah...Ok." From that point I warmed to the idea.

Fast forward a few weeks and the plane touches down in Ho Chi Min and we exit the airport to balmy weather at 1am and a kind of very friendly chaos.

The next 9 days saw every day filled with the kind of experiences that make you glad to be alive. The first few days we stayed at a great hotel that only cost \$40 a night and spent the days wandering through the city markets, taking awesome tours on the back of scooters with local students, visiting

landmarks like the palace, Chu Chi tunnels and eating the most incredible food washed down with plenty of beer. We even had dinner in a completely dark restaurant staffed by blind people one night.

THE FIRST FEW DAYS WERE A BLUR OF AMAZING EXPERIENCE AFTER AMAZING EXPERIENCE AND WE DIDN'T PRE-PLAN ANY OF IT. WE JUST WENT WITH THE FLOW AND I THINK THAT'S THE BEST WAY TO ENJOY IT.

After a few days we then decided to leg a plane to Da Nang before catching a bus down to the amazing little town of Hoi An on the coast. The hotel was an old French villa and was better than some 5 star places I have stayed and cost just \$40 a night again including breakfast. Hoi An is really set up for tourists with great bars and restaurants and shops for miles all housed in an ancient riverside town that oozes character and things to do. From beers in the pool we planned the next

five days exploring the town and buying everything from hand made suits to hand made shoes. We swam at beaches to rival Australia's, took a boat ride up river for a day of cooking with locals, ate with a local family one night and visited ancient sites that take your breath away. On the last night we rented a flash beachfront palace in Da Nang that a movie star would be happy with.

All in all, I couldn't crack spending \$1500 for the whole trip which included airfares and shopping while never once watching what I was spending. It was trip I can only describe as perfect and one to remember and I will back soon. The people are amazing. Vietnam really is unbelievable on every front. Do yourself a favour and just go!



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BEAT THE WINTER BLUES IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

SIMPLY BEAUTIFUL, THE BLUE MOUNTAINS REGION IS ONE OF THE MOST SPECTACULAR PARTS OF OUR COUNTRY. WORLD HERITAGE LISTED AND EASY TO GET TO FROM THE HUNTER VALLEY ON A QUICK WEEKEND BREAK.

Full of breath taking landscapes packed with natural wonders, the Blue Mountains is perfect for a short getaway with plenty of fine food, gorgeous villages to visit, festivals to enjoy, and adventures to be had.

A few hours by car from the Hunter Valley, via the Putty Road, the Blue Mountains has some of the country's most dazzling natural attractions. With dramatic views over the deep valley troughs gouged out over millions of years, the lookouts at Wentworth Falls, Govetts Leap and Echo Point are among the most popular, while the views from Sublime Point, Narrow Neck and Cahills Lookout are no less spectacular.

IT'S THE KIND OF PLACE THAT CAN GAT A MARRIED COUPLE BACK INTO THEIR GROOVE.

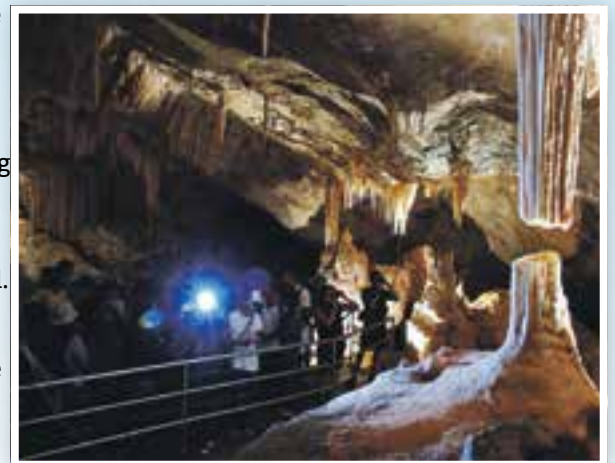
Experience the stunning views at Scenic World, where the glass-

topped carriages of the Scenic Railway take you on a heart-stopping ride into the depths of the Jamison Valley (where you won't find a drop of whisky). Or jump aboard the Scenic Skyline and journey high over the canyon for superb views of the Three Sisters and beyond.

Visit the spooky structures deep within the Jenolan Caves and find out what the difference is between a stalagmite and a stalactite. The Caves are an awe inspiring world-class wonderland consisting of a labyrinth of limestone caves sculpted by underground rivers. Afterwards, take a wander through the Glow Worm Tunnel near Lithgow. At one point in time it was a railway tunnel, now its walls are packed with larvae of the fungus gnat which cover the walls and ceiling with a bioluminescent glow that looks like stars twinkling underground.

If you're wanting a more physical adventure, raise the heart rate by getting high and wild on a Blue Mountains mountain adventure. Jump off a cliff – with a rope attached, of course – and take on an abseiling adventure down one of the ancient rock faces that looks out over the stunning valley beyond. Or, for a slower paced break, there's plenty of arts and crafts, antique shops and galleries to visit as well, plus loads of entertainment, festivals and other events on all year round. Check out the folk, roots and blues of Blue Mountains Music Festival and the delicious Summer Harvest Festival.

Beat the winter blues in the Blue Mountains this winter. For more information and to book log on to bluemts.com.au



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