

@THE COAL FACE

Vol 2 No 8: May - June 2018

THAT'S GOLDEN

DAN REPACHOLI BRINGS
HOME HIS THIRD
COMMONWEALTH
GAMES GOLD MEDAL.

PAGE 30



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INSPIRING PEOPLE

THIS MONTH @ THE COALFACE MET WITH SOME GREAT PEOPLE IN OUR INDUSTRY AND IT BROUGHT HOME THE FACT THAT IT DIDN'T MATTER WHETHER YOU'RE A CEO OR AN OPERATOR, ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING.

Make sure you don't miss our stories this month about some truly inspiring people. From Bloomfield's Mick Eagleton who is as passionate about a day working on the dozer as when he first started 50 years ago to Gus Maher from Pirtek Muswellbrook who is one of those guys who never stops giving back to the community.

And then there's the Outstanding Woman in Mining winner Nicole Brook. Despite not liking the limelight, Nicole graciously agreed to share her story to help encourage other women in the industry and to highlight the opportunities available.

Not to mention our sporting legend

Dan Repacholi. Dan graces our cover for the third time, which is the same number as Commonwealth Games gold medals he now has.

Make sure you check out our story on downhill mountain biker Graeme Mudd as he gets ready to head off and compete on the international circuit. We reckon this is going to be his year. Get onto to his Instagram page and take a look at this extreme sport. It will blow your mind.

This month the entire Coalface staff got their flu shots. It's not just about protecting yourself during flu season (which is predicted to be especially nasty this year) it's about protecting

your family, friends and workmates.

Community and sport are the theme this month. If there's two things our industry likes, it's sport and giving back to the community, so it just makes sense to put these together as you can see by all the stories on our community pages this month. And don't forget the Voice For Mining day on June 9. We'll see you all there in your HIVIS as we cheer on the Knights and support our mining community!



A KNIGHT TO REMEMBER

THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE NEWCASTLE KNIGHTS AND THE NSW MINING INDUSTRY WILL BE CELEBRATED AGAIN THIS YEAR AT VOICE FOR MINING FAMILY DAY IN NEWCASTLE ON 9 JUNE.

It's a major community event that celebrates all the good things that mining, and League bring to the Hunter and to our State.

Just like mining, Rugby League has a long and proud history in the Hunter Valley. Way back in 1908 the Newcastle Rebels were a foundation team in the original NSW Rugby League competition.

Newcastle Knights winger Nathan Ross virtually walked out of an underground coal mine and straight into a Knights jersey. Nathan is one of many current and former Knights players who have worked in our industry or have a family connection to mining.

Nathan recently told local media, "I worked as an underground miner, so I understand that mining is the beating heart of the Hunter and really important to thousands of families across the region. This

partnership with NSW Mining is not only important to the Knights but to the thousands of miners and their families across the Hunter that contribute so much to the region."

THIS YEAR'S VOICE FOR MINING FAMILY DAY MATCH ON 9 JUNE WILL SEE THE KNIGHTS PLAY AT HOME AGAINST THE SYDNEY ROOSTERS. THOUSANDS OF MINERS AND THEIR FAMILIES ALONG WITH THOUSANDS MORE THAT WORK IN MINING-RELATED BUSINESSES ARE EXPECTED TO PACK MCDONALD JONES STADIUM FOR THE GAME. IT PROMISES TO BE A GREAT CONTEST, WITH THE KNIGHTS PULLING OFF SOME GUTSY VICTORIES IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEASON.

The Hunter has always been the beating heart of our state's mining industry, which is why we're



Stephen Galilee
CEO, NSW Minerals Council

looking for a big turnout from our Hunter mining community at this year's event. A big crowd in high-vis cheering the Knights and our miners will send a message of support for a strong mining industry and strong mining communities.

So, on 9 June, put on your high-vis and get to McDonald Jones Stadium to cheer on the Knights and of our hard-working miners who contribute so much to the Hunter community and NSW.

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THE HON. DON HARWIN,
MINISTER FOR RESOURCES

MAPPING TOOLS

THE NSW GOVERNMENT IS CONTINUING ITS WORK TOWARDS A MORE ROBUST AND TRANSPARENT PROCESS FOR ALL MINING AND EXPLORATION LICENCES.

This is reflected in the addition of an Environmental Mapping for Miners and Explorers tool to the SEED portal. While this development will

improve transparency for the community it will also benefit industry. The tool allows users to locate areas of environmental sensitivity so

these areas can be avoided when planning exploration and mining projects. The portal's built-in map lets users overlay several types of data to gain a

more complete picture of environmental conditions in a particular location. **THIS WILL HELP THE MINING INDUSTRY IDENTIFY AREAS OF SENSITIVITY BEFORE MAKING EXPLORATION APPLICATIONS.** If sensitive areas are avoided and impact restrictions followed, explorers will be able to apply for the Complying Exploration Activity (CEA) pathway. CEA has a 10-day assessment timeframe, compared to

30 days for non-complying exploration activity. Currently the SEED portal has 120 sets of data from 12 NSW Government agencies. The Environmental Mapping for Minerals and Explorers tool will utilise 30 datasets, many of which have multiple spatial layers, from seven different agencies. To view the Environmental Mapping for Miners and Explorers tool visit www.seed.nsw.gov.au. **The Hon. Don Harwin, Minister for Resources**

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GET ON THE WAGON

32 NEWLY BUILT COAL WAGONS HAVE ARRIVED AT PORT OF NEWCASTLE FOR RAIL OPERATOR AURIZON.

Catherine Baxter, Aurizon's NSW General Manager said the 32 wagons in the consignment were only one part of a 284-wagon order, with each wagon having capacity to carry up to 97.8 tonnes of coal.

"These wagons will enter service for our newest customers, AGL Macquarie and MACH Energy, demonstrating the strong growth we have seen in our New South Wales Coal haulage operations since we

started in 2005. Our coal haulage has increased from 180,000t in 2005 to 48Mt in 2017." Catherine said.

The arrival of the new Aurizon coal wagons is a clear indication of the continuing growth in coal exports and demonstrates the strong global demand for Hunter Valley coal. Last financial year saw 162 million tonnes of coal exported through the Port of Newcastle and this strong demand is expected to continue.



AUSSIE ARK RECEIVES \$450,000



GLENCORE KEEPS ON GIVING

WHEN IT COMES TO INVESTING IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES, YOU'D BE HARD PRESSED TO FIND A MINING COMPANY THAT GIVES MORE THAN GLENCORE.

In the last few weeks they have made two very significant donations that have to be acknowledged.

For Hunter farmers the \$200,000 donation to the Rural Aid support program will be a huge help after the difficult times they have been suffering. What many people don't realise is that 80% of Glencore's land is used for agriculture, so they understand all too well what farmers are going through.

Glencore have also just announced a three-year, \$450,000 sponsorship of Aussie Ark, a not-for-profit which is dedicated to protecting threatened native mammal species. Aussie Ark are working to establish insurance populations of vulnerable or endangered Australian species in

the large, predator proof fenced sites in the Barrington Tops, for eventual reintroduction to the wild.

These are just two of countless donations, grants and sponsorships that Glencore is responsible for and we commend them for the millions of dollars that they invest back into the local communities every year.

HUNTER FARMERS RECEIVE \$200,000



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The crowds came out in force and the coal industry came together to celebrate our amazing industry. The 2018 festival was a huge success for organisers and attendees alike, showcasing everything our coal industry and communities have to offer. Bring on the next one we say.



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THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS UNVEILED A NEW TASKFORCE AIMED AT HELPING ENSURE THE LONGEVITY OF THE LOCAL MINING INDUSTRY, WITH FOCUS ON DEVELOPING MORE JOBS AND GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Resources Minister Matt Canavan said the Resources 2030 Taskforce would be charged with identifying reforms that would help secure the resources sector’s future.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT WILL USE A REPORT FROM THE TASKFORCE TO DEVELOP A RESOURCES STATEMENT IN THE SECOND HALF OF 2018.

“This will be the first time since the late 1990s that the Australian Government has mapped out a policy statement for the sector,” Canavan said. “A successful resources policy will mean more jobs; more opportunities for Australian businesses to succeed on the global stage; and more flow-on benefits to other businesses and industries in regional Australia. Canavan said the mining industry had never been as important to the

global economy as it was now. “The mining boom is not over. Mining is as important as it has ever been and its importance to the Australian economy is only likely to increase.”

‘AVE A LAUGH WITH



PH 02 6572 1230

A camel meets an elephant. The elephant asks jokingly: “Why do you have two breasts on your back?”

The camel replies: “With a face like yours, I’d just shut up.”

TRUST IS A MUST

A NEW NATIONAL SURVEY BY THE CSIRO ON ATTITUDES TOWARD MINING SHOWS THAT MOST AUSTRALIANS ACCEPT MINING AND HOLD POSITIVE VIEWS ABOUT ITS ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE NATION’S ECONOMY.

The CSIRO surveyed 8020 Australians. The top perceived benefits of mining were job creation and employment opportunities, which outweighed the top perceived negative impacts to the environment and water quality. This balance of benefits over negative impacts is considered a strong driver of Australians’ general acceptance of the mining industry.

HOWEVER, THE STUDY DID REVEAL THAT MANY AUSTRALIANS HOLD LOW LEVELS OF TRUST IN THE INDUSTRY, DON’T FEEL THEY HAVE A VOICE IN SHAPING THE INDUSTRY’S PRACTICES OR FAITH IN THE GOVERNANCE SURROUNDING MINING.

CSIRO social scientist Dr Kieren

Moffat said the results aim to give mining companies, government and communities a deeper understanding of the factors that lead to acceptance of the industry and the critical elements that develop trust between the community and industry.

“What remains consistent throughout all our social research is that trust is central to building strong relationships between industry and the communities they work alongside. The challenge is that trust is low across the board. Our work at the national and local scales in mining communities demonstrates that there are very tangible, practical ways that mining companies and industry can address this trust deficit.”

IMPORTANCE OF MINING IN AUSTRALIA



PHOTOS COURTESY OF
FOREST FAUNA SURVEYS



COMFORTABLE CRITTERS

THE ENVIRONMENTAL TEAM AT RIX'S CREEK MINE IS TAKING A BOW FOR A POSITIVE TREND IN NATIVE ANIMAL POPULATION DETECTIONS ACROSS BIODIVERSITY OFF-SET SITES PURCHASED FOR HABITAT AND NATIVE VEGETATION ENHANCEMENT.

As part of the Rix's Creek Mine Biodiversity Management Plan, more than 600 hectares across five sites mainly around Singleton have been isolated as off-set zones, to create protected sanctuaries where threatened species can thrive.

A unique aspect of the plan is the placement of 76 Nest Boxes that provide shelter and protection for Possums, Bats, Phascogales, Gliders and Birds.

Determining whether native animals are adapting in the areas comes down to twice-yearly fauna monitoring, which includes inspections of the Nest Boxes, remote infra-red camera monitoring and diurnal and nocturnal survey work.

THE MONITORING RESULTS FROM 2017 SHOW A HEALTHY PRESENCE OF MANY SUCH NATIVE ANIMALS ACROSS THE SITES, WITH THE BRUSH-TAILED PHASCOGALE TURNING OUT TO BE THE STARS - IF NOT THE EXTROVERTS - OF THE SHOW WITH MANY HAPPY AND HEALTHY PHASCOGALE COLONIES DISCOVERED.

The news is particularly encouraging given that there was no evidence of the marsupials across the same areas from 2007 - 2014. Phascogales are known to have patchy distributions

across much of the east coast of New South Wales.

"There's a strong sense of satisfaction that goes with putting so much work into environmental offset plans and seeing vulnerable populations such as these come back," The Bloomfield Group Environmental Manager Chris Knight said.

"CAMERAS NEVER LIE AS THE SAYING GOES. WHAT THESE PICTURES TELL US IS THAT SO MUCH OF WHAT WE'RE DOING TO HELP NATIVE ANIMALS THRIVE IS WORKING. WELL MANAGED OFFSET AND BUFFER LANDS ARE BECOMING WILDLIFE REFUGES FOR THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES."

Comprehensive surveys for all fauna groups will be conducted again in 2018 and 2020, then every 3 years.



BRING ON BUNNINGS
FOR MANY OF US HEADING TO BUNNINGS ON THE WEEKEND IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK.



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ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

PUBLISHERS OPINION

LET'S FACE IT, A LOT OF US WOULD RATHER BE GOING ANYWHERE ELSE OTHER THAN WORK. BUT BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT'S AT WORK WHERE WE CAN LEARN HOW TO GO PLACES IN LIFE WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE AND OUTLOOK.



I know you've heard it all before and no, this month's opinion isn't meant to sound like an Anthony Robbins self help book. Life is rarely one big ongoing fairytale. Nor is it about everyday being perfect. I for one, if I'm honest, can be one of the most negative and complaining buggers out there on a bad day.

The Mick Eagleton from Bloomfield story this month along with a few personal experiences and words from friends and colleagues reminded me of the right approach.

THE SINGLE BIGGEST WEAPON WE ALL HAVE AT OUR DISPOSAL TO DEAL WITH IT ALL IS A GOOD ATTITUDE.

All too easily we start letting challenges and setbacks become failures, and failures become the narrative of our daily lives. Work, health, family, confidence, and heck even our sex lives, all suffer as a result.

So back to work. Real miners work harder jobs and harder hours than I do. When I look around it's the ones who understand the realities of life on the job that do better all round. They are the ones who understand that there is a complex job to be done and getting into it with a 'can do' rather than a 'can not' attitude makes theirs and everyone else's lives better. Understanding that it often never goes to plan will set you free.

This advice is about small changes. Striving to take pride in every job at hand and replacing 'it's not my problem' with 'let's tackle this' automatically turns you from loser to leader. It also makes the time go faster and the personal and shared satisfaction at the end of the job makes the beers taste better.

IT ALL FLOWS OVER TO GENERAL LIFE AS WELL AND PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT.

If we improve our attitude just a little bit on the days we feel we can, it becomes easier and easier. Yeah there will always be days when you just want to punch the world in the face, but the idea is to have a heap more of the good than bad and go from there. Things start looking better, the job feels easier, rewards come naturally and life, family, relationships and maybe even the bank balance all look that much better. More good times seem to roll in general.

Don't quit. Understand the power of attitude, reframe it and take control of your life. Practice a bit of self-awareness and find your purpose and passion to discover how to motivate yourself. I've spent a lot of time sweating over what's wrong and completely missing all that is going right. Some days I'll never see it, but the harder I look the better I see.

It's your book...write it! Leave a lasting legacy you'll be happy for people to read.

'AVE A LAUGH WITH



PH 02 6572 1230

A Coopers brewery worker travels to the home of his co-worker with bad news.

'I'm sorry Mary, but Keith died at the brewery today'.

'Oh my god!' replied Mary, 'What happened?!'

'He drowned in a vat of Coopers Pale Ale said the worker, sadly.

'That's terrible! Was it a quick death at least?' asked Mary.

'I'm afraid not,' the worker replied, 'He got out twice to take a piss'.



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'AVE A LAUGH WITH



PH 02 6572 1230

A first-grade teacher tells her class that she is American and asks them to raise their hands if they are American.

All their hands explode into the air, except for one girl named Kristen. The teacher asks her why she has decided to be different.

"Because I am not an American," the girl responds.

"Then," asks the teacher, "What are you?"

"I'm a proud Australian,"

boasts the little girl.

The teacher is a little annoyed now, her face slightly red. She asks Kristen why she is an Australian.

"Well, my mom and dad are Australian's, so I'm an Australian too."

The teacher is now angry. "That's no reason. What if your mom was a moron, and your dad was a moron. What would you be then?"

"Well," says Kristen, "I'd be an American."

RECOGNISING REHAB

THE UPPER HUNTER MINING DIALOGUE AND ITS MINING INDUSTRY PARTNERS "WENT TO REHAB" FOR THE HUNTER COAL FESTIVAL.

Backed by its mining industry partners, the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue put the subject of rehabilitation of mined land on the educational program of April's Hunter Coal Festival. The Dialogue expanded its community engagement display which visits local shows and events to include a strong focus on rehabilitation for the festival's Singleton Community Day on April 7.

THE DIALOGUE'S DISPLAY AND REPRESENTATIVES MANNING IT, EXPLAINED REHABILITATION AND HOW IT IS AN INTEGRAL PART

OF THE MINING PROCESS FROM BEFORE LAND IS DISTURBED AT A MINE SITE TO PAST THE END OF A MINE'S LIFE AND AT ALL POINTS IN BETWEEN.

The Dialogue display was complemented by displays from mining industry partners including Glencore, Yancoal, Bengalla Mining Company, Mach Energy, Bloomfield Group/Rix's Creek Mine, BHP and Peabody Energy as well as a host of displays by industry supporters.

Many of the mining company displays also focused on rehabilitation

with examples of their own "rehab success stories", rehabilitation experts on hand to explain the process and giveaways of native seedlings used locally to return mined land back to its natural form.

The estimated 6000-strong crowd attending the Singleton Community Day at the Singleton Showground allowed the Dialogue and the industry to discuss rehabilitation face to face with interested community members.

THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY AS THE DIALOGUE'S RESEARCH

SHOWS REHABILITATION OF MINED LAND IS THE SINGLE BIGGEST ISSUE IN THE MINDS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO FILL OUT THE DIALOGUE'S COMMUNITY SURVEYS.

The 10-day Hunter Coal Festival also gave the Dialogue other prime opportunities to engage with the Upper Hunter community; the Dialogue's Chairman Dave O'Brien presented an update on the Dialogue's activities to

the more than 200 people attending the Mining Leaders Lunch on April 6 and about 40 community members attended an update on the Upper Hunter Synoptic Plan review on April 13.

The synoptic plan review is the result of a call for action at the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue 2016 Annual Forum and Dialogue members are participating in the working group as part of the review.

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POWER PLAY

THE CLOSURE OF THE LIDDELL COAL-FIRED POWER STATION IS STILL A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PRESSURING AGL TO EITHER KEEP THE PLANT GOING OR SELL TO SOMEBODY WHO WILL.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull says it is “manifestly in the public’s interest” for the energy giant to keep the Liddell generator running beyond its planned 2022 closure and that AGL has a duty to shareholders to consider selling.

AGL has received an initial offer from Alinta Energy to acquire the Liddell Power Station for \$250 million. Alinta wants to keep running Liddell for five to seven years past AGL’s current closure date of 2022.

There’s also been calls from Coalition MP’s for the government to forcibly acquire Liddell, however Energy Minister Josh Frydenberg has dismissed the idea insisting the government will not start nationalising assets.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission are also supporting the sale of the power station saying it would be a win for consumers and prevent any damage to the market when the it closes in 2022.

AGL remain not keen on selling, though they have stated they will consider all offers. They plan to replace Liddell’s output with a mixture of gas, wind and solar power, and upgrades to the neighbouring Bayswater coal generator and will require Liddell’s infrastructure for their future replacement plans.



REOPENING REDBANK

TECH COMPANY IOT GROUP HAS SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH HUNTER ENERGY TO UTILISE THE REDBANK POWER STATION TO PROVIDE CHEAP POWER FOR CRYPTOCURRENCY MINERS.

The coal-fired facility has been unused since 2014, but Hunter Energy is proposing to recommission the station over the next 12 months if the landmark deal goes ahead.

IOT Group will develop two hectares of Redbank’s 32ha site to establish Australia’s first Blockchain Application Centre. Blockchain technology collects data into encrypted blocks and uses alot of computing power and energy. It’s used by many different businesses but is best known for crypto mining companies such as Bitcoin.

Utilising Redbank’s power, IOT Group which will supply blockchain operators with electricity at wholesale prices. With supply coming straight from the grid this will open the potential for crypto mining businesses where previously it has been too expensive.

Sean Neylon, the executive director of the IOT Group, is optimistic about the possibilities, stating, “IOT has created the biggest and only opportunity for global crypto miners to come to Australia. It offers the potential to create a new Silicon Valley in Australia.”

A WIN FOR NORTHWEST MINING

MUSWELLBROOK MINE SUPPORT BUSINESS NORTHWEST MINING TOOK HOME THE WIN FOR TRADES & INDUSTRY (SMALL BUSINESS) AT THE MUSWELLBROOK BUSINESS CHAMBERS AWARDS.

Since they set up shop in Muswellbrook in 2010, Northwest Mining have been hard at work establishing themselves as a leading supplier for our local mines.

They are also committed to supporting the local community and sponsor local netball and junior rugby groups. Last year alone they donated over \$10,000 to the local community.

HR Manager, Cassandra Walker said this was the first time Northwest Mining have participated in the awards. “We saw the awards as a good way to get more involved locally, and we hadn’t even really thought about winning. But when we did the entire workshop was ecstatic. It definitely validates that we are doing something right.”



(L) SARAH SOUTHCOMBE (R) CASSANDRA WALKER



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www.seek.com.au/job/36071550

both roles have pretty big shoes to fill!

So take the first step to creating a better future and check the SEEK links for more details about the roles and www.bloomcoll.com.au to discover more about the Bloomfield Group.



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The Bloomfield Group is committed to equal employment opportunity and diversity, priding itself on an inclusive workplace. All applicants must be able to evidence their Right To Work in Australia.



GLENCORE'S NICOLE BROOK RECENTLY WON THE OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN NSW MINING AT THE 2018 NSW WOMEN IN MINING AWARDS. @ THE COALFACE SAT DOWN WITH NICOLE TO LEARN ABOUT HER JOURNEY IN THE COAL MINING INDUSTRY.

I met with Nicole at Glencore's Bulga site where she works in her role as General Manager of Business Development and Technical Services for the entire Glencore coal assets in Australia. Though she's busy managing 17 sites and leading a team of 50 personnel, Nicole agreed to share her story to show that gender is no barrier when it comes to having a successful career in the mining industry.

As we sat down in her office, I commented that the noisy haul trucks in the background must be annoying, but Nicole wouldn't have it any other way. "I love being here on site at Bulga rather than in a corporate office in Sydney. Being on site among the thick of it keeps me grounded and helps me focus on what really matters in the job. People."

Nicole grew up in Tasmania and leaving school she began studying general engineering, but when she was introduced to mining through her course she found her true passion. "I was given the opportunity to get out

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in the field where I got to see the real issues and meet the people doing the work. I was immediately drawn to the problem-solving aspect of mining engineering. I decided to move to Sydney as mining engineering was not available in Tasmania."

WHEN NICOLE GRADUATED IN 1994 FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NSW, WOMEN ENGINEERS WERE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN, ESPECIALLY IN THE COAL MINING INDUSTRY. NICOLE CONSIDERS HERSELF VERY FORTUNATE TO BE PICKED UP ON A GRADUATE PROGRAM WITH PORT KEMBLA COKE AND COAL.

"The first site I went to was Tahmoor where I went straight underground and worked on crew. While I was at Tahmoor, a couple of significant events occurred that really influenced how I looked at mining engineering. I realised it wasn't about just sitting in an office making up plans, but it had wide ranging implications on the safety of workers and the financial viability of the business. That's what really set me on path to where I am today. I no longer wanted to just understand the technical environment, but my interest was now sparked to learn about the business side of the industry."

Nicole worked in technical roles until an opportunity arose to work in business development. She took on new roles learning the ins and outs of both sides - technical and business, until her current role at Glencore was created especially for her combining both areas. Other

businesses normally have two people leading these areas separately, so it is a remarkable achievement that Nicole manages both.

ASKED ABOUT A TYPICAL DAY AT WORK, NICOLE SAYS THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A NORMAL DAY. "EVERY DAY THERE IS A NEW PROBLEM TO SOLVE. BUT THAT VARIETY, THAT CHALLENGE, IS WHAT I LOVE MOST ABOUT THE JOB."

With only 3% of management roles in the coal mining industry held by women, Nicole's success is an amazing achievement and proof she is a deserving winner of the Outstanding Woman in NSW Mining award. Although she's not the type of person who likes to be in the limelight, Nicole agreed to participate in the awards when she found out she was nominated.

"I believe that women in leadership roles in the industry have a responsibility to get out there and be role models and show that gender is no barrier when it comes to having a successful career in the mining industry. There are many male role models, but as you don't often see women in leadership roles, giving them recognition is very important. I also wanted to be a part of the awards to promote the work that technical professionals are doing in the industry."

NICOLE SAYS WE NEED EVENTS SUCH AS THE AWARDS TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY BECAUSE

ALTHOUGH SHE HAS SEEN MANY IMPROVEMENTS FOR WOMEN SINCE SHE STARTED HER CAREER, THERE IS STILL A LONG WAY TO GO.

"Early in my career there was no infrastructure to support women, no bathhouses, no underground toilets, and even clothing and safety wear were male orientated. Those types of things set you apart from the beginning and can make it hard to fit in. In any workplace, connections and networking come through common interest. When you work in an industry where females only make up 12%, then it can be difficult to make those connections. That's why it's so important to support women in our industry and the awards is a great example of that."

The awards are only one of the ways Nicole is promoting women in the industry. She has been involved in mentoring for the Women in Mining Network (WIMnet) program and has recently taken on the role of chair for the Hunter region branch for The Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (AusIMM).

When it comes to the future of the mining industry, Nicole says there has never been a better time than now for women. "More and more companies are realising that a diversified workforce has many benefits, especially in

innovation. With the current low participation rate for women in the coal mining industry and companies actively trying to increase it, this means for women the opportunities are quite significant. It's such a great industry and encompasses such a wide range of areas that it can offer something for everyone. I hope that by being involved in the awards and sharing my story, it will encourage women to consider a career in the industry."



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MICK EAGLETON

HALF A CENTURY

MICK EAGLETON HAS BEEN WORKING FOR THE BLOOMFIELD GROUP FOR OVER 50 YEARS. AND IF IT WAS UP TO HIM HE'D BE THERE FOR 50 MORE.

As the only family and locally-owned coal mining company in the Hunter, The Bloomfield Group has a reputation for employee loyalty and longevity. And there's no better example of this than Mick Eagleton. With a bit of convincing we got this humble worker to come forward and share his remarkable story.

Back in 1968, Mick picked up a three-month contract with Bloomfield's Ashtonfield mine as a machinery operator. Born and bred in the Hunter, Mick's start at Bloomfield was a welcome homecoming after working down in Sydney.

Fifty years later, Mick is still a machinery operator, but a proud 'hand's-on' worker who has a go at any task, from operating the dragline to fixing fences. He now

works at Rix's Creek Mine at Singleton where you'll find him happy behind the wheel on any given day.

SINCE THAT FIRST DAY ON SITE, MICK HAS NEVER WANTED TO WORK ANYWHERE ELSE OR DO ANYTHING ELSE. IF YOU ASK MICK, HE WAS BORN TO BE AN OPERATOR. EVEN BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL, MICK WOULD WORK FOR FREE JUST FOR THE CHANCE TO GET BEHIND THE WHEEL.

Because for Mick operating machinery is not just a job, but an artform. Most people wouldn't associate the operating of machines with artistry, but Mick says you'd be surprised at just how creative you can be.

It doesn't matter what he's behind the wheel of, Mick loves to operate them all, though he does hold a

special fondness for scrapers. "I loved working on the scrapers, but you don't see them around anymore. But when it comes down to it, if it moves dirt or digs a hole, I love it."

Mick is so grateful that he got a start with Bloomfield. "I've had the opportunity to work with three generations of the one family at Bloomfield," Mick says. "Management took me under their wing, they always encouraged me, and I was made to feel like part of a family, not just another worker. The best advice I was ever given was by my grandfather when I was still in school. He told me if you do right by your boss, your boss will do right by you. And the

bosses at Bloomfield over the years have always proven that true."

LOOKING BACK ON HIS YEARS MICK SAYS HE WOULD DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN IN AN INSTANT AND NOT CHANGE A THING.

"I have loved it all. Looking around every day I see changes that have been made to infrastructure, coal pads and roads and I feel proud to have taken part in helping make them happen. I've also been proud to see the young starters do well over the years. It meant a lot to me when older folks helped and encouraged me when I

started, and I've liked doing the same."

On the future of operators like him in the industry Mick says he's not sure what it will hold. "There's so much autonomous machinery coming into the industry maybe all the operators will just sit in an office one day and no one will be out behind the wheel. I hope not though because it just won't be the same."

And we agree, because it's people like Mick with his incredible work ethic and positive attitude that epitomise the best of our industry.

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MAKING THE MOST OF MUSWELLBROOK

WE RECENTLY SAT DOWN TO SPEAK WITH PIRTEK MUSWELLBROOK FRANCHISE OWNER GUS MATHER TO TALK ABOUT LIFE, THE COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS.

As an opening line I ask, “How about them Eels hey?” “Wow,” says Gus “I reckon it would be 4 or 5 years ago since Pirtek sponsored the Eels. It’s funny how associated our brand still is and the number of jumpers still in the crowd with Pirtek on them. That sponsorship certainly has paid off.”

Gus’s love of sport is well known so I had to ask

him what his advice to the struggling Eels would be. “Keep going forward! That philosophy applies to everything, not just sport. Business, life in general, you’ve got to go forward before you can achieve anything.” And going forward in life is just what Gus has done.

“I started with Pirtek in 1989, nearly 30 years ago.

What drew me to Pirtek is the professionalism and they’re very community minded. I started in 89 sweeping the floor and progressed from there. In 2006 we bought the franchise, and to go from the ground up is something special.”

But for Gus it’s not all about work and he makes sure a fair work and family

balance is instilled in his workforce. “It’s really difficult this day and age to find time with your family and friends, life is so busy, but you have to make the time. Good family life makes for a good community.”

Speaking of community, Gus’ involvement over the years with sponsorship and volunteering is second to none. “I think business owners have a responsibility to give back to the community. I’m not saying it must be a huge financial contribution; helping at a canteen or whatever it is makes a difference. I don’t think there is enough of that in town.”

GUS DOESN’T JUST TALK THE TALK! FROM SPORTING TEAMS TO EVENTS LIKE THE WESTPAC HELICOPTER GOLF DAYS, THE PCYC AND CHARITY BASH, HE’S THERE. GUS IS ALSO HANDS-ON VOLUNTEERING HIS OWN TIME FOR SEVERAL SPORTING AND COMMUNITY EVENTS.

On industry and the community, Gus is one of the best promoters in town. “Muswellbrook is unique in that we have all types of work here from growing grapes to breeding race horses to mining coal.

To be able to talk about those things in one small community is fantastic. Our business thrives on mining, but we never neglect the others like the equine industry and farming. They are equally important to us.”

On what lies ahead Gus said, “From a business point of view we see the next 5 years as a major growth time for Pirtek and our people. We have 22 employees, and some have been here over 10 years. The business would not be the success it is today without them. I think from a business point of view, the next 5 years looks very promising no matter what business you are in.”

Heading out of Muswellbrook past the office you can’t help but notice the Pirtek building has had a new look reflecting that positivity. “The revamp of our building was long overdue. Its been a bit of a long haul but we’ve got there now, and we think it looks great.”

A true local champion, @ The Coalface looks forward to watching the next exciting chapter unfold... **Go Gus!**

BHP IS CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THREE (3) NEW COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES TO JOIN ITS MT ARTHUR COAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE.

The purpose of a Community Consultative Committee (CCC) is to provide a forum of discussion between the Company and representatives of the community, stakeholder groups and the local council on issues directly relating to Mt Arthur Coal’s operations, environmental performance and community relations.

THE COMMITTEE PROVIDES A FORUM TO

- establish good working relationships between the Company, the community and other stakeholders in relation to the mine;
- allow the Company to keep the community informed about projects, seek community views on projects and respond to matters raised by the community;
- allow the community members and local councils to seek information from the Company and provide feedback on the development and implementation of projects to assist with the delivery of balanced social, environmental and economic outcomes for the community;
- discuss community concerns and review the resolution of community complaints;
- discuss how best to communicate relevant information on the mine and its environmental performance to the broader community; and
- work together towards outcomes of benefit to the mine, immediate neighbours and the local and regional community.

PERSONS WISHING TO APPLY FOR ONE OF THE COMMUNITY POSITIONS MUST COMPLETE THE RELEVANT NOMINATION FORM THAT CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE WEBSITE ABOVE.

All nominations must be received by 5pm on 31 May 2018

Send nominations to:
Colin Gellatly
Independent Chair, Mt Arthur Coal CCC
PO Box 56
Hunters Hill NSW 2110

More information regarding the roles and functions of the CCC are available from the Department of Planning website:

www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Assess-and-Regulate/Development-Assessment/Community-Consultative-Committees

In selecting the community representatives, preference will be given to candidates who can represent the concerns of a broad section of the community.

Your role as a committee member is voluntary.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- willingness to contribute constructively;
- experience and ability to provide feedback to the community and stakeholder groups;
- current residence in Muswellbrook or Denman and awareness of local and other relevant issues; and
- availability to attend a minimum of two (2) meetings annually.

BHP

PARALLEL ECONOMICS

SADDLE UP!

RETIRED RACEHORSE HEAVEN IN THE HUNTER

DESPITE WHAT THE ANTI RACING ACTIVISTS MIGHT SAY, THE HORSE RACING INDUSTRY TAKES POST RACING ANIMAL WELFARE EXTREMELY SERIOUSLY.

So given that two of the Hunters most important industries sit in such close proximity to each other, perhaps there's a great opportunity to work together to create an enterprise to re-home and re-purpose thoroughbreds for their post racing life on existing useable mining land.

This is not a new idea

(Well doing it on mine land is) – just a good one. In fact Racing NSW has already made a major \$5 million investment in horse welfare buying a property in Capertee near the proud mining region of Mudgee. It will be used for retired racehorses with facilities for rehabilitation, retraining and rehoming. The 2600-acre property includes state of the art equestrian

facilities and is an initiative of the Racing NSW Equine Welfare Fund. Member for Bathurst Paul Toole said, "It's a win for regional NSW and particularly the Central West, creating hundreds of jobs, both directly and indirectly."

ADOPTING A SIMILAR PLAN IN THE HUNTER WOULD BE A BOOST FOR THE HORSE RACING INDUSTRY AND

COEXISTENCE LOCALLY. THERE COULD BE MUCH MORE ON OFFER THAN THE HORSE CARE, AND IT COULD EASILY BECOME A TOURIST ATTRACTION.

Taking a few points from a government study we understand that the Australian racing industry is the second largest in the world with more than 32,000 racehorses. Horses generally have their first start as 3 year olds or older with only a few racing into double digit years. For most horses with potential life span of 25 years, these horses need to go somewhere.

So, what happens to all those racehorses? Every season, approximately 11,000 racehorses retire. Records tell us that approximately

3,000 of the 11,000 retirees go to stud, staying in the racing industry leaving 8,000 horses.

The vast majority of racehorses go on to new careers in a large range of areas, including breeding, leisure horses, sport horses, stock horses and police horses. Very, very few end up at the knackery despite the mistruths promoted by some. Like mining, the racing industry operates under a social license and must adhere to community standards.

So maybe it's time to look at the feasibility of a plan like this. The Hunter mining industry is perfectly positioned to create a productive facility. The expertise is there and perhaps the need. Giddy up!

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MY MINING LIFE

Any nicknames good or bad?
Wazz generally a bit of Cookie, and probably some worse things from the wife at times.

Where do you live and how long you been in the Valley?
I live in Singleton. I moved to the area in 2010 from Mackay due to a promotion with Orica, and soon jumped to Anglo at Drayton Coal Mine. I met my wife here at the start of 2011 and we have 3 kids that love the area.

When and why did you decide to become a miner?
I first got into explosives and loved it. I started off moving from mine site to mine site. I suppose it gave me a good work life balance and helped me achieve financial goals in life.

What's a usual day at work entail?
I start the day off with briefing the crew on their objectives for the day, whether that's prepping a shot, loading a shot or firing a shot. Then managing the safety of the crew. After work its generally looking after the kids, getting to the gym and a little time relaxing with the Mrs. I don't mind playing a bit of touch footy as well.

How big is the crew?
At present I have 10 on the shot crew and 5 to 6 drillers. Roughly overall, I think we have about 2 rotating crews of about 15, plus a day crew of about 10.

What's the best thing about your job?
Kicking off a new mine site means a lot of implementing rules and policies to achieve safe production, and to help everyone enjoy their job. It's just fantastic to be a part of a progressive new age pit.

The worst thing?
I suppose that since the Industry has taken off again, the hardest thing is getting people, and the right people at that. The company is very motivated about having the right people that live and work locally.

What's a funny story from work that you can tell?
In a past life...gee I had better not, we'll save them for pub talk hey.

Hobbies?
Camping is definitely up there, and going to remote places in this beautiful country. There is so much to see and do, and I wouldn't mind ticking a lot off my bucket list while I'm relatively young. Restoring cars would be another hobby, and getting out on my bike and going for a cruise, though most importantly family comes first.

How different is your job to what you wanted to do when you were a kid?
Every young Australian boy would love to do what I do and blow things up. If I could pick another job, I'd be hard pressed finding something that I love as much as this job and place to work.

What would your parents say about you when you were a kid?
That if there was ever any trouble in town, my parents definitely thought for some reason I was involved haha.

Family?
Yeah the wife, I'd be lost without her. I have 3 kids including a stepdaughter who is 13 and changed my life for the better when she came into it. She's a good kid - very smart but as she's in high school I'm looking into getting my gun license (haha), but to those boys just remember what my job is. Our kids are adorable and all 3 mean the world to me.

WARREN COOKE

FROM MANAGING PEOPLE, TO BLOWING THINGS UP, WARREN COOKE SAYS HE WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY. IT'S A GOOD LIFESTYLE BUT MAKING SURE HIS EMPLOYEES AND FAMILY ARE SAFE IS HIS PRIORITY.

Who are you and what do you do?
I'm Warren Cooke, or Wazz. I'm a Shot Crew Supervisor at Mt Pleasant Mine. I finished up with the Drayton Crew after the approval was knocked back, then moved to Mt Arthur as an OCE and I'm now enjoying the journey of setting a new mine site up.

What do you do in the down time?
Spend as much time with the kids as possible, and like I said traveling the country as much as we can. I just want to give them as much time as I can and as much experience with us, and teach them everything I know, but not monkey see monkey do from my teenage years.

No one has ever paid

Because the mine workers of this region continually support the Rescue Helicopter.



LIEUTENANT JAMES BRUCE, MC, DCM



Battalion and a few months later set sail for France. James saw much action in the war, leading countless ruthless and demoralising raids into the opposing German trenches in search of prisoners for interrogation and intelligence gathering. Because of his acts, the Germans bestowed the nickname of 'The Ginger Haired Devil' upon him and it is also thought that a bounty had been offered by the Huns for either his capture or death.

JAMES RECEIVED MANY PROMOTIONS AND WAS HIGHLY DECORATED FOR HIS SERVICE, EARNING BOTH THE DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL AND THE MILITARY CROSS FOR HIS BRAVERY ON

THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE WESTERN FRONT.

The first of these medals was awarded during the second battle of Passchendaele on 12th October 1917. When all the officers in his battalion were killed, James organised the remaining men and gave order to dig a new defence line which was held until the battalion was ordered to withdraw that afternoon. For his gallantry, bravery and leadership under extreme adversity in

Passchendaele, he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

At the first battle of Villers-Bretonneux early in April 1918, for further gallantry and leadership while facing overwhelming numbers of the enemy, James was awarded the Military Cross. His citation reads "Throughout the operation Lieutenant Bruce set a magnificent example of courage and coolness to his men, and his services were eminently valuable."

James was wounded in action on May 8, 1918 receiving a gunshot wound to the shoulder and evacuated to 8th General Hospital in Rouen. He was in hospital for less than three weeks before re-joining his company. A little more than 2 months later he was killed in action at Villers-Bretonneux, France on July 17, 1918.

James was killed by a German artillery shell exploding in the trenches while on his way to breakfast. He was thirty-nine years old, although on his headstone his age is stated to be forty. With his death his wife, Louisa, lost her husband and his children lost their father.

Lieutenant James Bruce, MC, DCM is buried in the Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery at Fouilloy in France. His epitaph reads: 'He Gave His Life for His Country'.

WE REMEMBER

MORE THAN 1800 HUNTER VALLEY COAL MINERS ENLISTED IN THE AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION DURING WORLD WAR ONE. HERE IS THE STORY OF THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE MADE BY ONE OF THEM.

James Bruce was born in Scotland on November 5, 1879. As a young child he immigrated to Australia. When World War 1 broke out he was 38 years old and living with his

family in Pelaw Main and working in a nearby coal mine. After enlisting in a recruiting march at Kurri Kurri on January 3, 1916, he was drafted into the 34th Infantry



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WESTPAC RESCUE HELICOPTER CHARITY RUGBY LEAGUE MATCH



This year is already set to surpass prior years with potentially 20 teams showing interest in the men’s competition plus 2 women’s representative teams.

“Things are well underway and if the enthusiasm from the pit this year is anything to go by, we are in for a big day,” said Event Organiser Danny Eather. “We’ve had interest from Moolarben, Ulan and Bengalla this year and I know a few of the teams have put the challenge out to Mangoola to field a side again.”

IT’S TIME TO GET READY FOR THE SMELL OF DENCORUB AND THE SIGHT OF OLD WASHED UP FOOTBALLERS SWEATING IT OUT IN THE NAME OF CHARITY. TEAM NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE OCTOBER 13 CHARITY RUGBY LEAGUE MATCH!

IN THE YEARS GONE BY A TOTAL OF \$207,000 HAS BEEN RAISED TO KEEP THE ANGELS IN THE AIR. LAST YEAR ALONE \$80,000 WAS RAISED AND THIS YEAR THE CHALLENGE HAS BEEN PUT OUT TO THE MINES TO GO ONE BETTER.

The day is a fully inclusive day and isn’t limited to just players. The whole community is encouraged to come down for a fun filled day, and let’s be honest, plenty of laughs.

“A lot of ideas are now transitioning to plans for off the field fun. There will be a kid’s challenge, though I can’t disclose more until closer. Also

planned is a dash for cash, with the fastest from each team nominated for a sprint race.” Danny said.

“But I think the most popular idea has to be dunk the boss.” Danny said with a laugh. “What better way to raise money then to have a boss from each pit take a turn on the drop chair to raise some money.” That sounds like a brilliant plan to us Danny! I can see the 2ways abuzz with who to nominate for that one!

For any further details on the event or to nominate a team contact Danny Eather on 0439 072 077. Team nominations are due by May 30th.

DI TO THE RESCUE

WHEN IT COMES TO THE SINGLETON COMMUNITY AND GIVING, THERE IS ONE LADY THAT IS SYNONYMOUS - DI SNEDDON, AND SHE’S DONE IT AGAIN!

During the month we had one of the guys from the pit call in to tell us about his recent interaction with Di and how she is always going above and beyond. They didn’t have to convince us here in the office as we already know Di is a fantastic asset to our community.



Most recently, Di donated her entire payment of \$2640 from the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue back to the community, this time to the Singleton Heights Basketball Association. Mark Cox from the Association told us about the difference the money will make.

“We are forever grateful. Di is an absolute gem and that money will go a long way towards our junior development and a portion will go towards assisting us raise money for an outdoor basketball court that the whole community will be able to utilise.” Mark said.

Di, take a bow. You are certainly a valued community member and its contributions to community groups from individuals like you that helps our communities prosper.

FIRED UP FOR OPEN DAY

FIREFIIGHTERS ACROSS THE HUNTER ARE ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO VISIT THEIR LOCAL FIRE DTATION FOR THE FIRE & RESCUE NSW ANNUAL OPEN DAY ON SATURDAY MAY 19.

We spoke to the boys at Singleton Fire Station who are pumped to throw open the doors and show people around. They and your other local stations will be open from 10.00am to 2.00pm and families can go along and meet their local firefighters.

A range of free activities will be on offer; including firefighting demonstrations, station tours and fire safety presentations. Firefighters will also be able to provide advice on installing or replacing smoke alarms, and preparing a home fire escape plan.

Children will be able to see the fire engines and firefighting equipment up close – always



a highlight of this much-anticipated day. They’ll also be able to take home a “Brigade Kids” activity booklet, which teaches them vital fire safety lessons.

Singleton volunteer Jason Carter said, “The Open Day is a great opportunity to see what we do. So come along to Singleton or your local Fire Station and hear about all the things we do in the community.”

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PERFECT PITCH



PORT WARATAH HELD THEIR INAUGURAL PITCHFEST EVENT WHERE COMMUNITY PROJECTS WERE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN FUNDING IN AN INVENTIVE AND FUN WAY.

The pitchfest was held during Port Waratah's Community Partner Networking event where community partners from the previous year's Community Investment and Partnership Program were invited to submit their expressions of interest with six selected to present their pitches.

First prize went to Guy Clegg from Charlie's Run 4 Kids who made a unique and heartfelt pitch for a Child Life Therapist to assist children undergoing cancer treatment.

All six finalists walked away with funding for their projects, based on the judges scores:

- **\$2,500 – Charlie's Run 4 Kids, Child Life Therapist**
- **\$1,500 – Conservation Volunteers Australia, World Environment Day Tree Planting Challenge**
- **\$1,000 – OzHarvest, NEST & Stockton Public School P&C, iPads 21st Century Learning**
- **\$500 – Great Lifestyles of Wickham (GLOW), Harmony Day & Newcastle Basketball, Safe Entry for the Stadium**

The CEO of Port Waratah, Hennie du Plooy said, "Our Community Investment and Partnership Program is something we are very proud to share with the Newcastle and Hunter Region. Providing funding is just the start, the real heroes are the people and organisations out in the community using those funds to do good. We are very privileged to be partnering with them." In 2017 Port Waratah provided \$747,125 to 112 community organisations, initiatives and events.

PEDAL POWER

THE ANNUAL KURRI COALFACE PEDAL MOUNTAIN BIKE EVENT SAW OVER 400 ENTRANTS DON THEIR LYCRA TO RAISE AN AMAZING \$24,000 FOR THE WESTPAC RESCUE HELICOPTER SERVICE.

What started as an idea discussed with the Kurri Mongrels over 5 years ago has quickly become a favourite event in the local calendar. This year was a resounding success with a record number of smiling faces covered in coal dust crossing the finishing line. For the first time the mines teams challenge was included in the event and the competition was fierce. 10 teams made up from Orica, Austar Coal, Comm Steel 1, Comm Steel 2, AMP Control, Quarry Mining, WesTrac Tomago, Bulga Coal and Coal

& Allied battled it out for the Quarry Mining Trophy. WesTrac Tomago was crowned the winners, Bulga Coal came in second and Coal & Allied took out third place. Barry Walton from the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service said it was a great day and it raised vital funds for the service. "We want to thank all the riders and families who were part of the event. In particular, days like this cannot be staged without sponsors and we would like to thank them all. We can't wait to be back next year."



WESTPAC WINNERS!

AVOIDING FATALITIES: WHAT PRICE DO YOU PUT ON A FITTER'S LIFE?

IT'S A SAD FACT BUT MINING FITTERS RIGHT HERE IN AUSTRALIA, ARE STILL BEING KILLED AND SERIOUSLY INJURED BY AVOIDABLE SUSPENDED LOAD CRUSH INJURIES WHILE CARRYING OUT MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS.

At Nivek Industries, like most people in the valley, we have friends and family working in the mining industry. It is our mission to design and build the tools to make the lives of fitters safer and easier.

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TED's remote-control operation removes the fitter from the danger zone during the lift and lower stages of suspended load component removal and replacement.

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SEND YOUR FITTERS HOME SAFELY AT SHIFT'S END...

DERBY DAY

THE LIDDELL LEOPARDS TOOK HOME THE COVETED TROPHY AT THE INTER-MINE BILLY KART RACE AT GRESFORD, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, HELPED RAISE MONEY FOR BEARS OF HOPE.

Glencore's Ravensworth Opencut are the major sponsors of the Gresford Billy Cart Derby, but not content to watch from the sidelines they also organise and participate in the battle of the mines competition, an inter-mine billy kart race between Mt Owen Complex, Liddell Coal Operations, and Ravensworth CHPP and

Ravensworth Opencut. **THE TEAMS UPPED THE ANTE THIS YEAR, IN ADDITION TO THE WINNER TAKING HOME THE TROPHY AND BRAGGING RIGHTS, THE LOSING MINES ALSO HAD TO PAY \$500 EACH INTO A CHARITY OF WINNER'S CHOICE. THE LIDDELL LEOPARDS CHOSE BEARS OF HOPE.**



Mikayla Henderson, Liddell's Environment & Community Officer said, "We're always keen to support community events like the Gresford Billy Cart Derby and look forward to the annual Billy cart showdown with other sites. We'll certainly enjoy reminding our Mt Owen and

Ravensworth colleagues of Liddell's success over the next 12 months." Mikayla said.

The mines competition will be back again at next year's derby and we look forward to seeing more mines vying for the trophy and raising more money for charity.

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A HOLE IN ONE

THE MINING INDUSTRY CAME TOGETHER AT THE INAUGURAL CHARITY GOLF DAY FOR HELP SEBASTIAN SOAR, RAISING AN OUTSTANDING \$15,000.

Sebastian Stace has Cerebral Palsy - Spastic Diplegia and suffers from symptoms such as poor balance, speech issues, hypotonia and spasticity. In a bid to give Sebastian a better quality of life, the Stace family have been raising money for Sebastian to undergo life changing surgery in the US.

Sebastian's dad Brett works at Ravensworth and said that when the Titan Group heard about the plan for a charity golf day they were quick to get onboard.

"WE ARE SO THANKFUL FOR THE OVERWHELMING SUPPORT FROM THE INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY AND ESPECIALLY TO TITAN GROUP. IT WAS HUMBLING SEEING EVERYONE COME



TOGETHER TO SUPPORT OUR FAMILY AND IT HAS BROUGHT US ANOTHER STEP CLOSER TO REACHING OUR GOAL." BRETT SAID.

Chris Heath, Titan Group Operations Manager, and his staff worked hard to make the event a success.

"It was a fantastic turn out from local businesses supporting a fellow worker. As businesses we all compete in the same industry but on this day we all came together to play and support one of our own and the day was a great success. We are already looking to make it an annual event." Chris said.

The winning team was Betts Bower Transport, but everyone who participated deserves a trophy!

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation for Sebastian please go to: donations.rawcs.com.au/Default.aspx?ProjectNo=806&YearRegistered=2017-18



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MUSWELLBROOK SCOUT GROUP

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With an extraordinary variety of outdoor activities, from 'traditional Scouting skills' such as camping and bush craft, through to performing arts, leadership development and community service they offer amazing

adventures for our kids. And it's not just for the kids, Muswellbrook Scout Group Leader Gwen Thring says they are always looking for adults to volunteer as leaders. "We would love to see more adults getting involved. "I've

been a Leader for 16 years and you get so much more out of it than you put in." To find out more make your way to a meeting at 80 Ford Street, Muswellbrook or call Gwen on 0419 665 497.
Joeys (6-8 years) - Thursday 4.30pm - 5.30pm
Cubs (8-11 years) - Tuesday 6.30pm - 8.00pm
Scouts (11-14 years) - Thursday 6.00pm - 8.00pm
www.nsw.scouts.com.au



PLAY TIME



YOUNG SINGLETON CHILDREN HAVE BEEN GIVEN A HELPING HAND IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT WITH THE ADDITION OF A NEW WOODWORKING SHED AT SINGLETON HEIGHTS PRE-SCHOOL.

The new play equipment was funded through BHP's Benefitting My Community

program. Speaking at the launch, Mt Arthur Coal General Manager David

Boshoff was thrilled to support local kids' growth in a practical way. "I'm excited we can do something meaningful as an organisation to contribute to young peoples' education," Mr. Boshoff said. "Aside from being great fun, playing in the shed will see the kids socialise and collaborate, build, share and learn. Come the end of the year, they'll be well and truly ready for 'big school'." Singleton Heights Pre-School Director Neisha Dean said the community based, not-for-profit center appreciated BHP's support in providing the shed.

"THIS IS AN INVESTMENT IN THE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILDREN IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE, AND IT IS A WONDERFUL ADDITION TO THE QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WE PROVIDE." SAID MS. DEAN. As part of the shed unveiling Mr. Boshoff took the children through safety exercises involving the identification of potential hazards and the importance of wearing personal protective equipment. Mr. Boshoff said BHP was committed to safety both on and off the mine

'AVE A LAUGH WITH

FREE HEADS SMASH REPAIRS

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Why shouldn't you write with a broken pencil? Because it's pointless.

site. "People are our best resource – whether it's the children here today, or at our mine. We need to invest in them, support their development and put them in the best possible situation to succeed."

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Influenza vaccinations

The flu and you

The flu can cause severe illness such as pneumonia and bronchitis

The flu virus can live outside the body for hours



Cover your face when you cough or sneeze

Wash your hands thoroughly and often

You can be contagious a day before symptoms appear

Stay at home until you are well



There is no live virus in the flu shot

You can't get the flu from a flu shot!



A flu shot is your best protection

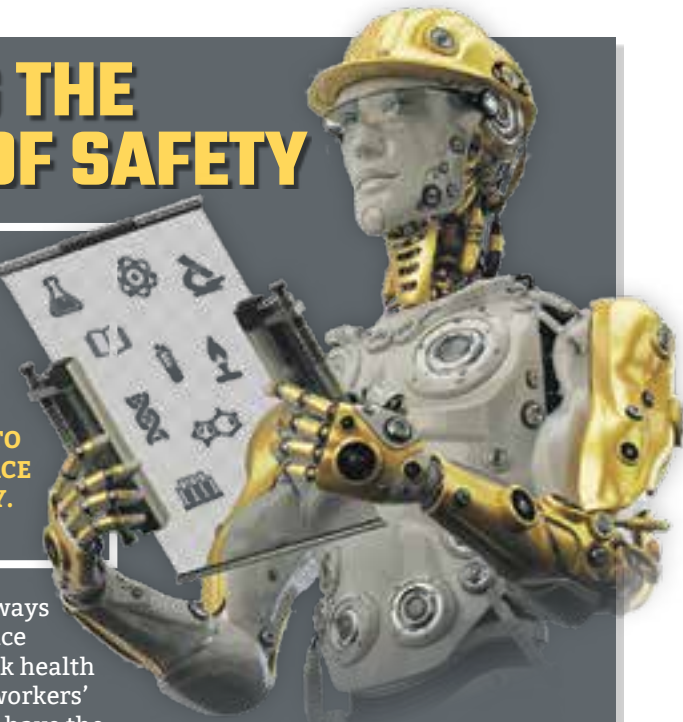
To arrange a flu vaccination clinic for your workplace, please contact CS Health

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SHAPING THE FUTURE OF SAFETY

A NEW STUDY FROM CSIRO'S DATA61 IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SAFE WORK AUSTRALIA HAS IDENTIFIED SIX 'MEGATRENDS' SET TO RE-SHAPE WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY.



New technologies and ways of working will introduce new challenges for work health and safety (WHS) and workers' compensation, but also have the potential to make work safer and reduce workplace injury over the next 20 years.

The Workplace Safety Futures report explores how six mega trends underpinned by advances in digital technologies and shifting employment patterns may affect WHS and workers' compensation in Australia in years to come.

The six megatrends shaping the future workforce environment for Australia include:

The extending reach of automated systems and robotics.

The costs of advanced automated technologies are likely to continue falling and the capabilities and widespread deployment are likely to continue rising. Physical workplace injury is predicted to fall by 11 percent by 2030 as the use of robotics including AI and drones replaces dull, dirty and dangerous tasks.

Rising workplace stress and mental health issues.

Australia's workforce is registering increasing levels of stress and mental health issues. New and intensifying uses of digital technologies in the workplace may exacerbate problems with mental health and stress, but technology also presents opportunities to manage these issues.

Rising screen time, sedentary behaviour and chronic illness.

The amount of daily screen time has grown for both adults and children and there is a continued drift away from manual jobs towards sedentary jobs. Rates of obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and other chronic illnesses continue to rise.

Blurring the boundaries between work and home.

An increasingly large share of Australian workers are entering into work arrangements that enable them to work from home or other locations, blurring the boundaries between work and home life.

The gig and entrepreneurial economy.

The gig economy refers to freelance task-based work organised through online platforms or 'apps'. It changes the way we work away from traditional employment models. Although the Australian gig economy is still relatively small, at least some growth is anticipated.

An ageing workforce.

The average age of Australia's workforce is increasing along with the ageing of the population as a whole and older Australians are having to stay in the workforce longer.

Safe Work Australia is already looking at ways the findings can inform future policy development and draw attention to areas where new guidance, research and data might be needed.



GET SLIPPERY

FOR THE FISHING GURUS WE HAVE A TREAT.

These fishy slippers are guaranteed to keep your feet cosy this winter. Straight from the catwalk (or catfish walk) to your home.

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN, SIMPLY SMS: FISHY SLIPPERS AND YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO 0438 474 290.

Limit of one entry per person. LTPM/17/02507

WIN!

FLICK THE FLU

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDS THAT EVERYONE FROM SIX MONTHS OF AGE SHOULD GET THE FLU VACCINE. THAT MEANS YOU! HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO THEIR ADVICE.

Influenza is a respiratory illness commonly known as 'the flu'. Typical flu symptoms include fever, cough, muscle aches and pains, nasal congestion, headache, sore throat and fatigue. Plus, there's also the especially nasty strain of 'man flu' that affects half the population.

According to NSW Health statistics, approximately 20 per cent of the population are affected by the flu each year. The virus is airborne and mainly spread by droplets made when an infected person coughs or sneezes and can remain active when airborne for more than 45 minutes. People can be infectious before they even have symptoms which makes it even more likely for you to catch it unknowingly.

While most people recover from the flu in about a week, it can lead to more serious health

problems like bronchitis or pneumonia. Complications from the flu can be deadly with an estimated 3,500 deaths in Australia each year.

Influenza is caused by a virus, which is a tiny infectious germ that hosts itself on another living organism's cells. Different strains dominate each year. Each year a new flu vaccine is created based on the all the latest evidence and information to decide which strains of flu are likely to appear in the next flu season. Vaccines are created to protect against these strains, usually containing three or four strain vaccines.

VACCINES ARE NOT FOOL PROOF, HOWEVER IN HEALTHY ADULTS THEY ARE 60 TO 70 PER CENT EFFECTIVE.

But the flu vaccine is not just about protecting yourself it's

also about protecting other people, including those who are too sick or too young to be vaccinated, as well as vulnerable groups such as babies, people over 65 years and pregnant women. The more people who are vaccinated in the community, the less likely the flu will spread.

This year's government-funded flu vaccine is already available. It's free for people in at risk categories which include pregnant women, people aged 65 or older, people with medical conditions such as asthma or diabetes and here

in NSW flu jabs are free to children between six months and five years old.

SO WHY ISN'T EVERYONE JUMPING AT THE CHANCE FOR A JAB?

Unfortunately there is a lot of misinformation about the flu vaccine, the main myth being that the vaccine gives you the flu. Which is impossible as the vaccine contains a

tiny amount of deactivated, unharmed virus, it does not contain any of the live virus that causes influenza.

The rumour may have started because some people experience minor flu-like symptoms after receiving the vaccine which is due to the vaccines' interaction with your immune system. These tend to be rare and mild, only lasting for one or two days.

SO, UNLESS YOU PLAN ON AVOIDING CONTACT WITH OTHER PEOPLE OR GETTING AROUND IN A HAZMAT SUIT THROUGHOUT THE FLU SEASON, DO THE SMART THING AND GET YOUR SHOT.

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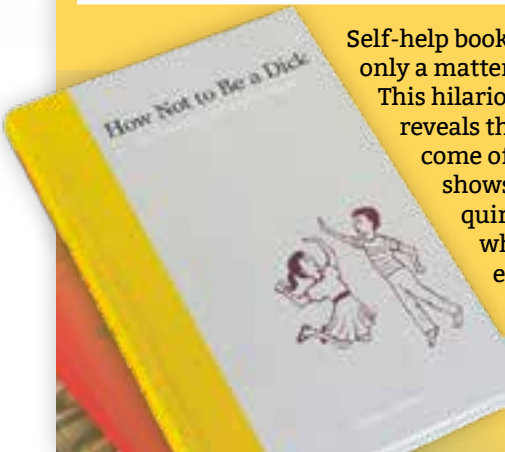
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HOW NOT TO BE A DICK

WELL IT MAY NOT BE FEATURED IN OPRAH'S BOOK CLUB, BUT IT WILL BE SURE TO GET THE TWO-WAY CHATting.



Self-help books are everywhere these days, so it was only a matter of time before this topic was covered. This hilarious and true-to-life illustrated guide reveals things you might do that make you come off as a selfish POS. More importantly, it shows you how to avoid them! Follow as two quirky illustrated children break down what makes you that dick and how to elevate your standards of decency.

When you've finished reading it drop it into someone's locker or office as a not so subtle hint.

amazon.com

SLEEPING UNDER THE STARS

TAKE YOUR BED WITH YOU EVERYWHERE YOU GO.

putting up a tent. It also comes in handy after a few too many drinks at the pub! amazon.com

The Heavy Duty Inflatable Car Mattress is very comfortable and consists of 10 independent air compartments. It deflates to a small package that can be stored behind the seat in your ute and is perfect for any camping trip where you don't want the hassling of



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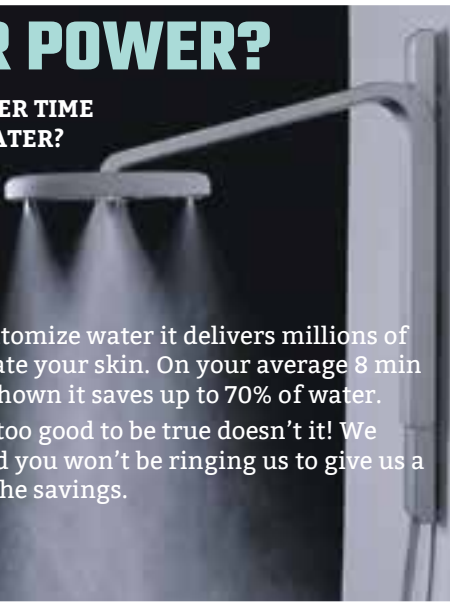
THIS ITEM SHOULD BE COMPULSORY IN EVERY AUSTRALIAN HOUSEHOLD, ESPECIALLY DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS.

How many times do you sit outside at a barbeque and spend all your time waving flies away from the food. The bug-a-salt shotgun “decimates flies on contact.” Using just salt! Pour a bit of salt into the top of the nerf like gun, pump it, aim and shoot. Environmentally friendly and best of all if you miss and hit the food it’s all seasoning. bugasalt.com

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Committed to WORKING TOGETHER



Malabar Coal has developed a radically different proposal for EL5460, previously known as Drayton South. This new underground proposal has been designed to address community and stakeholder concerns about past proposals and minimise any possible impacts on our neighbours.

We understand that, if a coal mine is to be successful, it must coexist with local industries and gain its social licence from the community.

Malabar’s plan will use the existing processing, handling and rail infrastructure at the Drayton Mine for the any future project, so that there are no new impacts for our neighbours.

Benefits of the underground only project include about 350 new direct, long term jobs for the region and many more indirect jobs.

Malabar’s proposal will also generate significant economic and social benefits for the local area, for NSW more broadly and for the national economy. The project will provide ongoing support for local businesses and, over the 30 years of this project, provide \$1.7 billion of royalties to the State.

How is Malabar’s proposal different from past proposals?

1. Malabar will only mine underground. No need for blasting, with no dust and noise related impacts or impact on equine health or nearby properties. Mining operations will be invisible to the horse studs addressing any impact to the reputation or operations of the horse studs.

2. The portion of EL 5460 beneath and south of the Golden Highway has been relinquished. This includes the land beneath the Godolphin and Coolmore horse studs and Golden Highway.

3. Better rehabilitation outcomes Malabar will deliver a far more visually appealing final outcome at the existing Drayton Mine-site by using reject stone and rock from the underground mine at Spur Hill or an underground mine at EL 5460 to fill the legacy voids at the Drayton Mine.

DAN BRINGS IT HOME IN STYLE



PLENTY ACROSS THE HUNTER AND THE REST OF THE COUNTRY CHEERED LOUDLY AS LOCAL MINING CELEBRITY AND SHOOTER DANIEL REPACHOLI SHOT HIS WAY TO A GOLD MEDAL AT THE GOLD COAST COMMONWEALTH GAMES.

While most Commonwealth Games athletes were painstakingly watching their diet and fitness before competing, the Australian shooter dubbed 'The Mountain' did things a little different. Dan smashed four chicken parmigianas and some pizza in the five days before and relied on a pair of unwashed socks to go for Gold.

MOST MINERS WOULD AGREE THAT THE DIET OF A SHOOTER ISN'T TOO BAD.

Unlike other competitors, who stayed in the athletes' village, Dan stayed at a pub because it was closest to the shooting range. "We couldn't go and drink but we could eat what we wanted. It had good food and the parmas were excellent," he said.

On the lucky rainbow toe socks he wore, he confessed he rarely washed them much to the disgust of his fellow competitors. "I wash them when I smell them," he admitted. Holding back tears on the podium while being cheered by his young family this was clearly a big achievement for Dan and perhaps the last gold he will add to his collection after he announced he was retiring from the sport to focus on family.

@ The Coalface couldn't be more proud of our local champion so if you see him around give him a thumbs up...and if it's in the pub – shout him a beer. Well done mate!

THE SHOUT'S ON US!



WIN A CASE OF XXXX GOLD TO CELEBRATE THE GOOD TIMES THANKS TO THE CLUBHOUSE.

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DOWNHILL ADVENTURE, UPHILL LIFE

WHEN IT COMES TO SETTING GOALS AND FOLLOWING DREAMS, GRAEME MUDD IS AT THE TOP OF THE HILL. IT WAS HARD NOT TO GET LOST IN HIS ADVENTURES WHEN WE SAT DOWN TO TALK.

Graeme is a fitter machinist by trade, completing his apprenticeship at Abel Underground through Hunter V-Tec. Currently, he is working at Integra Underground for Walton Mine Services as a development fitter on production.

But what's makes Graeme different than most of us is that when he takes time off work, it's not to go on a relaxing holiday, but instead to chase after his dream, competing in the Downhill Mountain Bike World Circuit.

Downhill mountain biking is not for the fainthearted. Riders traverse their way down steep rough terrains featuring jumps, drops, rocks and other obstacles at death defying speeds. Graeme has dedicated himself to competing in this extreme sport and seeing just how far he can go. But it hasn't come easy.

"Basically, for the past 3 years I have worked 6 months here locally in the mining industry, and then spent the remainder of the year overseas competing in the Downhill Mountain Bike World Circuit." Graeme says



with determination in his eyes. "For my age I am late onto the scene, but when weighing up what the future would hold I thought it would be best if I completed my apprenticeship, so I had something to fall back on. Now it's a mix of work and following my dream."

GRAEME AT FIRST ENTIRELY FUNDED HIS OWN JOURNEY AND HIS COMMITMENT PAID OFF WHEN HE WAS LUCKY ENOUGH ON THAT FIRST TOUR BANK IN 2013 TO TAKE OUT A CRANKWORX PRO MEN SLALOM EVENT. "FOR ME THAT WAS JUST THE BEGINNING OF THE DESIRE TO ACHIEVE MORE."

Graeme will this year split his time between Canada and Europe between the Crankworx and World Cup Events. "I base myself out of Quebec in Canada. Quebec is such an amazing place. You have your favorite events and tracks, and there is a track there that is one of my favorites that I do really well on."

It's not a cheap exercise either. His first full race season in 2015 was self funded and cost approximately \$50k. Last year he was lucky enough to be in a factory team, and this year he has teamed up with local bike

industry supplier Lusty Industries onboard Santa Cruz bikes. "The guys at Lusty Industries are nothing short of amazing. It's a really professional and friendly environment and I'm so glad to be part of the team. With their support, and the fact I've done more preparation at home, I think I will give this World Series a fair shot."

Graeme attributes much of his success and the ability to follow his own path to his dad. "My old boy has been in the mining industry all his life, and it was the sacrifices he made when I was a kid that gave me opportunity to develop my skill and be living this life. It's a tribute to him and the man he is."

Graeme is very excited about heading off to compete this year, but he says it wouldn't be possible without all the support he's received. "To be able to achieve my goals knowing I have the support of people back home is a dream come true. I have to thank my employer Walton Mining Services for their ongoing support. They are a fantastic company to work for. I also can't thank Lusty Industries enough for giving me a shot. I'm going be giving it my all to make them proud."

It looks like it's going to be a big year ahead for Graeme and all of us in the Hunter will be wishing him luck.

Follow Graeme's journey on Instagram - @graemebobmudd



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DOWN & DIRTY

OUR RESIDENT ‘RACING NUT EDITOR AT LARGE’ JASON ‘SALA’ STEPHENS DONNED OR SHOULD WE SAY CONNED ME INTO LETTING HIM BAG A MEDIA VEST, TO GET BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE RECENT AUSTRALIAN 4 DAY ENDURO AT CESSNOCK.

It was 40 years ago in 1978 that Cessnock held the very first Australian 4 Day Enduro, and so the return to Cessnock for the 40th anniversary was an absolute cracker reported Jason.

The event brought plenty of excitement and thousands of visitors came to town including plenty of our local mining population to watch 350 riders compete. It proved to be one tough event and over 100 didn’t finish. Racing took place all around Cessnock on bush tracks and at Cessnock Showground.

JASON SAID, “IT WAS A HIGHLIGHT WATCHING THE TOP RIDERS. DANIEL MILNER WON IT OUTRIGHT, NO ONE COULD COME NEAR HIM HE’S A PHENOMENAL RIDER.”

Watching the female riders was a treat as well Jason reported, “We’ve had the best enduro riders 5 years in a row. Our girls have won the international 6 day enduro which is the biggest off road in the world and they put in a good show here at Cessnock. The track was hard, good and fast. Not too many big stacks although one guy got choppered out on day one.”

The final moto at the Racecourse on Saturday drew a crowd of about 3000. All of the hard work paid off and Cessnock Motorcycle Club vice-president Malcolm Hall was reported saying, “We’ve had nothing but good comments – people from England, New Zealand, America, and the old boys coming up and saying they really appreciated it, the event provided a number of Cessnock riders with their chance to compete in their first four-day enduro, and the local contingent all performed well, finishing in the top 100.”

He said. “It has been a very successful event for the town, the riders and the supporters. The town had a real buzz about it.”



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MAY MADNESS!

WE'RE INTO MAY AND THE FISHING HASN'T FAILED TO IMPRESS WITH ALL FORMS OF FISHING RUNNING INTO OVERDRIVE.

OFFSHORE

With the current hooking to the south, the Marlin bite slowed throughout the start of April but seems to have picked up again as we head into May. There's reports of good numbers

of Stripes and Blues encountered late April so Big Blue fever can't be far away.

On the local reefs the Snapper are starting to become more consistent with some big fish starting to chew on soft plastics around the shallow reefs.

Mackerel madness April was a cracker month as the Mackerel pushed south down towards Harrington. Ian 'Nugget' Collins reports a great session up that way recently scoring a nice bag of Spotted Mackerel and even a nice Jewie on a floating Pilchard. We think this would have to be a case of more arse then class!

ESTUARY

It will be all eyes on the bay throughout May with sights set on Longtail Tuna as the waters inside the heads have been taken over in a big way with the flying speedster. Some lucky anglers have also picked up some large Cobia while targeting Longtail.

It would seem the Jew are out to feast now with reports of Jewies coming in from all over the place ready to take a soft vibe in the lake, to a live bait soaked in the Bay or Harbour.

BEACH

We always leave the best to last... the annual mullet run hasn't failed to turn on the fishing from our sandy shores with all the usual species firing up. Safe to say the boat hardly hit the drink last month as we spent some time fishing the beaches for XXL Molloway.

Keep floatin' The Thrifty's



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WHERE LESS IS MORE

LAST MONTH I TOOK A LOOK AT THE FINNISH DESIGNED AND MANUFACTURED SLEIPNER DB120 TRAILER, AN INNOVATIVE TRAILER SYSTEM DESIGNED TO MOVE LARGE TRACKED EQUIPMENT SUCH AS DOZERS AND DRILLS. DELVING DEEPER, THIS MONTH I EXPLORE SLEIPNER'S CORE PRODUCT RANGE, THEIR E-SERIES SYSTEM.

a vanguard in onsite machine transportation, this is where Sleipner made their name, with a design so simple, that it fundamentally challenged the traditional concept of

excavator logistics. Used to transport tracked excavators (backhoe or front shovel) over large distances, this unique system has expanded to cater to a range of operating weights from 22t, all

the way through to 565t, including Hitachi's EX5600 and Cat 6060, regularly found here in the Valley. When embedded in daily use, owners have reliably doubled, sometimes tripled, their machines undercarriage life.

WITH UP TO 15% OF AN EXCAVATOR'S LIFE SPENT 'WALKING', MOVING MACHINES FROM A TO B CAN BE INCREDIBLY COSTLY. THE SLOWEST FORM OF ALL TRANSPORTATION, THIS METHOD OF MOVING AN EXCAVATOR, RESULTS IN AN INEFFICIENT USE OF QUALIFIED STAFF, DECREASED UTILISATION AS WELL AS ACCELERATED WEAR AND TEAR OF A MACHINE'S UNDERCARRIAGE.

Intro the Sleipner E-Series System, with two operators, an excavator and dump truck. Working as a pair, with the truck as a tow unit, the operator of the excavator manoeuvres (aka drives) their machine into the two cradles. Taking no more than 2 – 3 minutes to automatically lock the excavator into the cradles, the operator lowers the boom of the excavator, placing the bucket of the machine into the rear tray of the dump truck and raising the front tracks of the excavator 50cm above the ground.

Simple as that, ready to go. Matched up with a Cat 797 or Komatsu 960E Dump Truck, a 550t excavator can be towed safely at 10km/h and stop with immediate and effective force, by simply raising the boom, in turn lowering the tracks of the excavator into the dirt.

With loading the critical part of an operating mine's process, Sleipner's value proposition is simple, 'load where you need, not where you can'. Uphill, downhill or around tight corners, the E-Series units allow operators the flexibility to quickly and efficiently manage their excavator fleets.

Albeit, not cheap, the upfront costs of a unit are quickly recovered in the savings achieved with increased machine utilisation, improved operational efficiencies and decreased maintenance costs, with pay back typically taking less than one year. Funny thing however (and please excuse my cynicism), with a world fixated on making 'quick' money, who really cares about long-term savings, when the person incentivised for his decisions today, won't be there tomorrow...

Like to know more, contact Nick Bolton of Equipment Placement on email sleipner@equipmentplacement.com.au.

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CHOPPER SCHOOL



THIS MONTH WE GOT A HIGHFLYING OPPORTUNITY TO SEE WHAT IT TAKES TO GET A LICENSE TO FLY A CHOPPER.

If you have ever been up in a helicopter I'm pretty sure you will agree it's a bit of a thrill. Getting a license to fly one is a whole other kettle of fish. But as we learnt this month, it's not as much of a pie in the sky dream as you would think.

Hunter Valley Helicopters was established 10 years ago doing scenic flights, lunch

tours and it's grown from there. With that success they've decided to branch off and start a chopper flight school at Cessnock, conveniently based right here where we live and work.

So, one nice sunny afternoon I buckled up and wound up a Robinson R44 with flight training instructor Oliver

McClelland. This job really is a blast some days.

As the chopper left the ground it was impossible to not grin as we hovered along the runway before swooping off over the beautiful vineyards of Pokolbin.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT YOU ABSOLUTELY DON'T HAVE TO BE A ROCKET SCIENTIST AND JUST ABOUT ANYONE CAN BE TRAINED TO FLY. IT'S LIKE DRIVING A CAR.

Oliver said, "Of course there's a lot to take in at the beginning and there's new skills to develop, but as you progress through your training the well structured syllabus helps make sense of it all. It's all about common sense. You're using your hands and your feet at the same time, but again, that's no different when you are driving a car. The necessary skills develop quickly over time."

Oliver told us they've already got quite a few local miners going through the paces and they all love it. "It's something they can share with mates and family. One or two are doing their private license and the rest are doing the full commercial version. Some are potentially looking at a career change down the track," said Oliver.

Oliver reckons the good thing about a helicopter career is that it's often in tourism industry to begin with, so it's weekend work if you want to keep your day job and just fly for a bit of fun on the weekends.

SO, IF YOU WANT TO BECOME A HELICOPTER PILOT, HOW LONG IS IT GOING TO TAKE, HOW HARD IS IT AND HOW MUCH IS IT GOING TO COST?

While it's not cheap it's also not so prohibitive that a regular miner couldn't afford it. A lot of people just fly once per week on the weekend, which will take one and a half to two years. Others just want to smash it in six months.

A commercial license is around \$52,000. Private is around half that.

"THE TRUTH IS IT'S NO MORE EXPENSIVE THAN SOMEONE WHO'S RIGHT INTO HORSES OR CARS. THE WHOLE IDEA IS THAT WE CAN TAKE ANYONE FROM ANY BACKGROUND AND TRAIN THEM TO FLY A HELICOPTER," SAID OLIVER.

50 hours gets you a private license and a commercial license generally takes 105 hours. On a private license you can go anywhere. Touring would obviously be a lot of fun and a bit different to the average weekend drive. Guys also love it for fishing in remote areas. You can go anywhere in a helicopter, you can even land in your backyard if it's big enough. Want to impress that new love interest? Pick her up in a chopper.

Hunter Valley Helicopters run training, scenic flights, lunch tours, winery tours and even weddings. Give them a call at Cessnock Airport on 0488 711 778.



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KING OF PIES

I can still remember the day I was born and the look on my dad’s face as I emerged from the warm embrace of mum’s tummy. Dad turned to the doctor and said, “Well done doc. I can’t believe she survived, he’s got a head the size of an over inflated Steeden!” Over sized noggins run in our family due to the oversized brains contained within.

Anyway, as the day progressed I settled into life as the chosen one and shared a beer (‘Mothers Milk’ as it’s always been called in our family)

with dad and we debated the life that lay ahead and the important traditions I would be expected to follow as a ‘Hunter Royal’.

TRADITION DICTATED THAT MY FIRST PIE WOULD BE FROM ‘COXY’S’. AND SO IT WAS ON THE MORNING OF SECOND DAY OF MY LIFE, I SMASHED A SQUARE NUMBER IN ONE BITE.

The proud look on the faces of both my parents said it all. I put on two kilos that day as excited relatives and community leaders turned up on

WITH THE RECENT BIRTH OF A NEW ROYAL BABY I WAS REMINDED OF MY OWN ROYAL LINEAGE AND THE LIFE OF SERVICE AND DUTY BESTOWED ON ME FROM BIRTH.

mass with pies and sausage rolls from bakeries far and wide across the Kingdom of the Hunter as gifts to celebrate the occasion.

As we left the hospital in the Royal Carriage (Dad’s mint green FJ), our loyal subjects lined the streets chanting congratulations like “Onya Sol!” “Your shout Sol!” and “Get a dog up ya!” from one particularly well-oiled reveler who was still bitter Dad landed Mrs. Sol, my mum, as his future bride and Queen after a lunch time school punch up in year seven.

As a young man raised on pies from different local bakeries for breakfast lunch and dinner, Dad could punch like Maitland pie eating boxing champ Lionel Rose. And his love life began the same, punching well above his weight with Mum.

Home from hospital on the third



day Dad ran me through a few more traditions over some coldies and a few left over Crofts sent down by the Mayor of Aberdeen. The mighty Dragons would be my big league team and the Greyhounds my home team heroes. Like the English Royals we loved horses too, and a betting legend and bookie I would become.

As they say, “It’s a big job, but someone’s got to do it” and do it I have done.

May your pies be hot and your beers cold.

Long live the King! Pieminister Sol.



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All of the organs are deciding who should be in charge.

“I should be in charge,” said the brain, “I run all the body’s systems, without me nothing would happen.”

“I should be in charge,” said the heart, “I circulate oxygen and nutrients all over.”

“No! I should be in charge,” said the stomach, “I process the food that

gives us energy.”

“I should be in charge,” said the legs, “without me the body couldn’t go anywhere.”

“I should be in charge,” said the anus, “I am responsible for waste removal.”

All of the other body parts laughed at the anus and insulted him. So he shut down.

Within a few days, the brain had a terrible headache, the stomach was bloated, the legs got wobbly, and the heart pumped toxic blood. They all decided that the anus should be the boss.

What is the moral of the story? Even though everybody else does all the work, the asshole is usually in charge.



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EXPERIENCE IT

**EXP RESTAURANT
IN POKOLBIN IS NOT
A JUST A MEAL. IT'S
AN EXPERIENCE.**

I love food. Whether it's fish and chips served in newspaper, a schnitty from the pub, or a fancy a la carte dinner, I love food in all its variations. But there's definitely a special place in my stomach for the king of all meals. The degustation menu. Okay, so maybe it's more to do with my greedy appetite and the fact that plate after plate of food just keeps arriving at the table. The anticipation of wondering what's next,

even while still eating the course before.

I first learnt about degustation restaurant EXP from a friend who couldn't stop posting photos to their Facebook page. A barrage of images of amazing dishes that looked more like works of arts then plates of food. As new images popped up every 10 minutes with accompanying comments raving about their delectableness I knew this was a job for @ *The Coalface*. My mission - was the food as good as it looked or was this a case of Facebook photoshopping. When we arrive at EXP,

I'm immediately struck but just how intimate it is. Which is really just another word for small. But it's a nice atmosphere, and surprisingly unpretentious. In my eagerness we are the first people there, but it's not long before every table is taken. For every table to be filled on a weeknight says more to its popularity and reputation than anything else could. The waitress offers us two options for dinner. There is the \$85 EXPposure Tasting menu or

the \$110 EXPerience Tasting menu. I choose the second without looking at any of the dishes as I like the idea of each dish being a surprise when it arrives.

And arrive they do. As the chef brings each dish to our table he provides a lengthy description. I just not my head and smile as I have no idea of half of the things he's saying. As he leaves I make comments to my friend, "Did he just say that butter is Lucerne hay flavoured?" "What's a sea blite?" "Saltbush? Is that an ingredient? I thought it was a dance move."

Despite my confusion on what each dish is, there's no confusion that each is a unique and masterful creation. It's easy to see that more thought has gone into the creation of one dish then I put into all the dinners I cook

at home in an entire year. I pause (for at least a whole second) and admire each dish before picking up the eclectic cutlery and digging in. Then it's a fun guessing game to work out what I'm eating. I'd be lying if I said I loved the taste of every dish, as some of the flavours I'm not particularly partial to. But I did love trying every dish and every plate left the table empty. Each dish was interesting, mixing flavours and textures in unique ways that made every dish thought provoking.

I could go on to give you a detailed list of each dish and its ingredients, but I don't want to ruin the surprise. If you are after flawless service and impeccable food, then I highly recommend EXP Restaurant. It's an amazing EXPerience.



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THAI ME KANGAROO DOWN SPORT!

THE LAST TIME WE REVIEWED THE LAND OF PAD THAI AND LADY BOYS IT DIDN'T GO SO WELL. SO, LIKE THE HANGOVER 2 MOVIE WHICH WAS SET IN THAILAND, WE DECIDED TO MAKE A SEQUEL.

As part of the missus' exhaustive month long 40th birthday festival, 10 of us decided to travel to Thailand to celebrate. Having to write this story, obviously it was all about work for me. In between long, long hours at my computer writing this up while the others had fun, I did manage to get up to the occasional bit of mischief.

Leaving downtown Singo just after the Coal Festival, I headed for Sydney airport. Being a corporate blagging type the missus managed to score us some passes to the Emirates lounge and that set the scene for a couple of weeks of bloody great holidaying. After smashing the awesome free food and single malt scotch in the lounge we hopped on the A380 Bangkok bound. A bloody good airline that Emirates.

Landing in Bangkok we emerged to the warm tropical atmosphere and chaos. From there the destination was the swanky Lebua hotel in central Bangkok made famous in the Hangover 2 movie. It didn't disappoint. 57 floors up, our room had movie star views and was pure luxury.

WITH ONLY A FEW DAYS IN THE CAPITAL BEFORE HEADING SOUTH TO PATONG WE GOT BUSY.

To start we took a long tail boat ride up the Chao Phraya River and into the surrounding canals to get a wonderful feel for this stunning river city and its people. It's a must do few hours where chaos and calm sit side by side in perfect harmony. Later we ventured to an upmarket Thai restaurant called the Namsaah Bottling Trust and it was amazing. Don't miss it if you are in Bangkok.

The next day we decided to walk the city toward Chinatown and every step in this great city revealed a feast for the eyes and the senses. Worn out but determined not to give up, we decided to take a tuk tuk night food tour and what followed was as fun and tasty as it gets. Down and dirty local restaurants served up a feast to remember. Bangkok, we love you.

FROM THERE WE JUMPED BACK ON A PLANE AND HEADED TO PATONG BEACH IN PHUKET FOR THE NEXT 8 DAYS.

We landed right on Thai New Year and straight into the annual national water fight that is the Songkran Festival. WOW! The streets are filled with people and the entire population is drenched and having fun. This is the time to go and it's a site to behold and experience.

We stayed at The Amari resort and it didn't disappoint. The rooms, the food, and the set up on the bay saw us eating, drinking, diving and generally living it up in style. It's the place to stay. Venturing into town we checked out the nightlife. The place is heaving and yes there are lots of the tacky

girly bars offering all kinds of interesting entertainment. No, we didn't indulge. But we did stop at a few street front ones and watched the world go by and yes it was entertaining to say the least.

OVER OUR STAY WE DRANK PLENTY OF BEER AND LOADS OF COCKTAILS. WE TOOK LONG TAIL BOAT RIDES TO BEACHES THAT LOOK BETTER THAN A POSTCARD. WE RODE TUK TUKS EVERYWHERE AND WENT TO FLASH BEACH CLUBS AND DODGY BARS.

Easily the best day of all was a speedboat ride we took with the amazing Vitamin Sea

Speedboat Company out to the Phi Phi Islands and the bay from the movie The Beach along with a few other stops. Our darling host 'Darling' was as funny as she was professional, and the crew was amazing and friendly. The boats are brand new and they fly. We went snorkeling, eating, drinking and sightseeing on what was a day to remember. Do it when you are there and forget rest, Vitamin Sea are the best!

So, to wrap up, if our first article didn't motivate you to get up and go to the land of Pad Thai and ping pong then we hope this one will. It's a top of the list destination.



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