



DID YOU KNOW ...

The HVRF business survey indicated that in the three months to March 2014, Hunter businesses experienced the nationally reported improvement in trading performance to a limited extent, but profitability remained under pressure.

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

Solar bowls big power bill

WITH the state government's push to partly privatise the poles and wires of the power grid, community concerns about power prices are again a hot topic of discussion.

At Charlestown Bowling Club, secretary manager Doug Hitchcock and his board have had enough of rising electricity costs and have spent \$180,000 on a 394-panel system they believe will provide about half of their electricity needs.

Supplied and installed by Hunter company Solar Australia, the 100-kilowatt system comes with a 25-year guarantee on the panels and a 10-year warranty on installation.

"Our power bills had doubled in the past year even after looking around at other suppliers and doing all we could to minimise electricity consumption, so we decided to look at solar and went with Solar Australia after looking at various firms and doing our homework," Mr Hitchcock says.

Solar Australia energy solutions consultant Todd Watson said the club should have recouped its investment within five or six years, saving \$30,000 a year on power bills.

"Financially, it makes no sense to be paying ongoing electricity costs," Mr Watson says.



SAVING: Charlestown Bowling Club's Brett Myers, left, with Solar Australia's Todd Watson. Picture: Dean Osland

THEORY OF CO-OPERATION

"IS the Hunter important? A new perspective from Sydney."

That's the very catchy headline Regional Development Australia Hunter is using to promote an August 14 visit from Lucy Turnbull.

Ms Turnbull is speaking at a Merewether Surfhouse function, and "as chair of the Committee for Sydney is a lead advocate for the city".

We hear she will "discuss the imperative for Sydney and the Hunter to work together".

Hunter Business has heard such things are theoretically possible ...

KEEPING RECORD STRAIGHT

WITH the state election just nine or so months away, the Property Council of Australia's Hunter lunch on Friday, July 18, features the Labor candidate for the state seat of Newcastle, Tim Crakanthorp, as its keynote speaker.

The property council initially circulated details of the lunch with a list of supposed Labor policies for Newcastle, including maintenance of the heavy rail line and heavy limits to property development.

Alerted by Hunter Business, Mr Crakanthorp has apparently objected to this description of his platform, and a new version, sans policies, has been circulated.

CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUTUAL

MAITLAND Mutual Building Society chairman John Lane has retired from the board, to be replaced by

Trevor Robinson. Mr Robinson, a director since 2010, will officially assume his role as the society's 10th chairman at the next board meeting on June 27.

Mr Lane said he joined the board during the global financial crisis.

"The successful merger with Phoenix Credit Union, expanding our brand into the Newcastle market, with branches at Mayfield and

Glendale, and recognising The Mutual's 125 years of continuous operations have been highlights during my term," Mr Lane said.

NEW COUNSEL APPOINTEE

MULLANE & Lindsay have appointed Felicity Wardhaugh as a special counsel to its dispute resolution and litigation group.

Ms Wardhaugh previously worked at Hunt & Hunt, Moray & Agnew, Sparke Helmore and the University of Newcastle, where she lectured in law.

She said she was delighted to join Mullane & Lindsay.

"My time at the University was a real opportunity to give back to the legal community and to make a contribution to the practical legal training which is a key feature of the law school at Newcastle," Ms Wardhaugh said.

DINNER SUPPORTS CHOPPER

THE Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service raised almost \$10,000 at a helicopter hangar high tea last

month, attended by more than 220 people.

The next fund-raising event is an "intimate evening among the vines" on Saturday, July 19, at McWilliams Wines, Pokolbin, with a four-course degustation at the Lovedale Room, hosted by MC Scott McWilliam.

Tickets are \$120 a person or \$1100 for a table of 10. Inquire with Annette Watson at the helicopter service on 4952 0000.

HUNTERNET IN CHINA SHOW

FOLLOWING HunterNet's signing of a memorandum of understanding with the China National Coal Association, HunterNet has been offered free exhibition space at the 2014 China International Mining Equipment and Technology Exhibition in Tai'an City, Shandong Province, at the end of August.

HunterNet chief executive Tony Cade says the organisation's Asian Business Engagement Project aimed to help identify and secure business opportunities for its members, with special focus on China and Indonesia.

THEBIZ

"Voluntarily suspending clearance activity two weeks earlier than planned ... will not impact our progress overall and the project remains on track for first coal in March 2015."

Whitehaven Coal chief executive Paul Flynn on Thursday's decision to temporarily stop clearing Leard State Forest for its Maules Creek mine



DIARY DATES

Today: Alpha Toastmasters Club, 6.45pm, Newcastle Panthers.

Tomorrow: NFP Connect Hunter, June breakfast, Soul Cafe, Newcastle, 7.10am; HunterNet general members' meeting 4.45pm, Moray & Agnew, 2/45 Watt Street, Newcastle; Hunter Business Chamber, My Business is Your Business, Experienced Office Furniture, 13 Bindera Road, Lambton, 5.30pm; Demystifying Marketing, The Business Centre, King Street, Newcastle, 5.30pm.

Wednesday: Hunter Networking Forum, Unlocking the Pipeline - identifying, developing and retaining future female leaders, Fort Scratchley Multi-purpose Centre, 4pm.

Thursday: Singleton Council Business Leaders' Lunch, Visitor Information and Enterprise Centre, 11.30am.

Talk to us about your business goals and staffing plan. We will help you engage with the best people.

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