

Community and Economy Committee

Business Paper

13 May 2025



Terms of Reference

1. Objective

The objectives of the Community and Economy Committee (the Committee) are to:

- *Have an enhanced level of oversight and engagement on community and economy projects, services and activities*
- *Enable Councillors and senior staff to consider issues, trends and opportunities relating to community and economy services and activities*
- *Ensure Council's community and economy services and activities are aligned with the Community Strategic Plan goals and Council's priorities, as articulated in the Delivery Program.*

In fulfilling its objectives, the ability of the Committee to maintain strategic and objective judgement is vital.

The Committee will report to Council and provide advice and recommendations on matters relevant to Community and Economy.

2. Scope

The Committee will report to Council and provide advice and recommendations on matters relevant to the Community and Economy. Muswellbrook Shire Council authorises the Committee, within the scope of its role and responsibilities to:

- Monitor and review the projects and activities conducted as part of Council's Economic Development, Tourism and Events and Community Services functions and strategies
- Provide input into the development and delivery of events and activities
- Consider seeking and awarding sponsorship applications
- Provide community feedback and input into customer experience, communications and engagement activities to improve community satisfaction
- Provide input into Council's grant, advocacy and investment attraction activities to diversify the economy and attract jobs
- Provide input into Council's community development, social and indigenous activities
- Provide input on the allocation and prioritisation of project funding
- Provide a forum to discuss social and economic trends industrial changes, challenges and opportunities that impact the Shire.

3. Authority

Muswellbrook Shire Council authorises the Committee, within the scope of its role and responsibilities to:

- Request information required to inform decision making (subject to their legal obligations to protect information and with prior consultation with the General Manager);
- Request information from officers (with approval of the General Manager) in accordance with the Councillor Request Management Procedure;
- The Committee may request these persons to present information at Committee



meetings to assist in understanding any matter under consideration; and

- Obtain external legal or other professional advice, as considered necessary, to meet its responsibilities (in accordance with Council Budget and procurement arrangements and subject to prior consultation with the General Manager).

4. Composition and Tenure

Members of the Committee are elected by Council.

Members (voting)

The members of the Committee shall be Councillors and are listed below.

- Cr De-anne Douglas (Chair)
- Cr Louise Dunn (Deputy Chair)
- Cr Amanda Barry
- Cr Jeff Drayton
- Cr Darryl Marshall
- Cr Max Morris

All members of the Committee are entitled to one vote and, in the event of an equal vote, the Chair has a casting vote.

Attendees (non-voting)

The following Council officers will act as liaison officers to the Committee:

- General Manager
- Director Community and Economy
- Manager Community Services
- Manager Economy and Tourism
- Grants and Community Engagement Advisor

Invitees (non-voting)

Other officers may attend by invitation as requested by the Committee or the General Manager.

5. Responsibilities of Members

Members of the Committee are expected to:

- Make decisions in line with the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Contribute the time needed to review and understand the papers provided.
- Apply sound objectivity and judgement.
- Express opinions frankly and respectfully and ask questions to obtain a greater understanding of the issues.
- Act, and be seen to act, properly and in accordance with the requirements of the law and Council's Code of Conduct and Code of Meeting Practice.
- Act in good faith and fidelity in the interests of Council and the community.



6. Reporting

Following each meeting, the minutes will be reported to the next Council Meeting and the Chair will be required to provide a brief summary.

7. Meetings

- The Committee will meet on the second Tuesday of every odd month commencing at 5.30pm.
- Meetings of the Committee must be advertised, recorded and published to Council's website.
- The need for any additional meetings will be decided by the Chair of the Committee, though other Committee members or Council Staff may make requests to the Chair for additional meetings.
- The Committee shall comply with Council's adopted Code of Meeting Practice and Code of Conduct.
- Meetings of the Committee are open to the public to attend.

8. Attendance at Meetings and Quorums

A quorum will consist of four (4) Committee members. Meetings will be held in Person. Councillors may attend and participate in meetings of the committee by audio-visual link with the approval of the committee.

9. Voting

The Committee is expected to make decisions by consensus, however, if voting becomes necessary, then the details of the vote are to be recorded in the minutes. Each member of the Committee shall be entitled to one vote only with the Chair having a casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

10. Secretariat

The General Manager will ensure that appropriate secretariat support is provided to the Committee. The Secretariat will ensure the agenda for each meeting and supporting papers are circulated at least 5 days before the meeting and will ensure minutes of the meeting are prepared and maintained.

Minutes shall be approved by the Chair and circulated to all Committee members within one week of the meeting and filed in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy.

11. Conflicts Of Interest

Members of Council committees must comply with the applicable provisions of Council's Code of Conduct in carrying out their functions as Council officials. It is the personal responsibility of Council officials to comply with the standards in the Code of Conduct and regularly review their personal circumstances with this in mind.

Committee members must declare any conflict of interest at the start of each meeting or before discussion of a relevant agenda item or topic. Details of any conflict of interest should be appropriately minuted.

Where members or invitees at Committee meetings are deemed to have a real or perceived conflict of interest, it may be appropriate they be excused from Committee deliberations on the issue where the conflict of interest may exist. The final arbiter of such a decision is the Chair of the Committee.



12. Induction

New members will receive relevant information and briefings on their appointment to assist them to meet their Committee responsibilities.

13. Review of Committee Terms of Reference

At least once every two years the Committee will review this Committee's Terms of Reference and make recommendations on any changes to Council for its determination.

Any changes to the Committee Terms of Reference must be approved by Council.



MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

P.O Box 122
MUSWELLBROOK

8 May, 2025

Cr D. Douglas (Chair)
Cr L. Dunn (Deputy Chair)
Cr A. Barry
Cr J. Drayton
Cr D. Marshall
Cr M. Morris
Mr D. Finnigan (General Manager)
Ms S. Richards (Director – Community & Economy)
Ms K. Manwarring (Manager – Community Services)
Mr K. Hill (Manager – Events & Tourism)
Mr I. Skaines (Grants & Community Engagement Advisor)

You are hereby requested to attend the Community and Economy Committee to be held in the Meeting Room / Teams, Muswellbrook Library, 126 Bridge Street, Muswellbrook on **13 May 2025** commencing at **5:30 pm.**

Shaelee Richards
DIRECTOR – COMMUNITY & ECONOMY



Order of Business

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1 Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country

Council would like to respectfully acknowledge the local Aboriginal people who are the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land on which this meeting takes place

2 Apologies

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

RECOMMENDATION

The Minutes of the Community and Economy Advisory Committee Meeting held on **11 March, 2025**, a copy of which has been distributed to all members, be taken as read and confirmed as a true record.

Moved: _____ **Seconded:** _____

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL HELD IN THE SEMINAR ROOMS, MUSWELLBROOK
LIBRARY, 136 BRIDGE STREET, MUSWELLBROOK ON WEDNESDAY, TUESDAY 11 MARCH
2025 COMMENCING AT 5.30PM**

PRESENT: Cr D. Douglas (Chair), Cr L. Dunn (Deputy Chair), Cr A. Barry, Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Marshall and Cr M. Morris.

IN ATTENDANCE: Cr D. Marshall, Cr R. Mahajan, Cr S. Ward, Cr S. Scholes, Cr G. McNeill (VC), Mr D. Finnigan (General Manager), Ms S. Welchman (Director - Community & Economy), Ms K. Manwarring (Manager - Community Services), Mr K. Hill (Manager - Events & Tourism), Mr M. Lysaught (Director - Property & Building), Mr I. Skaines (Grants & Community Engagement Advisor), Ms K. Hamm (Manager - Governance & Risk) and Ms P. Heusler (Administration Officer).

1 Acknowledgement of Country

The Acknowledgement of Country was read by Cr D. Douglas.

2 Apologies

Nil

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Not applicable

4 Disclosure of Any Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Cr S. Ward - Declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6.8 Post Event Report - Denman Wine Food & Film Affair 2024.

Cr M. Morris - Declared an insignificant pecuniary interest in Item 6.3 Sponsorship - Cattle Dog Muster. Cr Morris advised the Committee that he was on the original organising committee for the first event, but is no longer involved.

Cr A. Barry - Declared a pecuniary interest in Item 6.2 Art Gallery Cafe - Hospitality Training Centre. Cr Barry advised the Committee that she is an employee of AGL.

5 Business Arising

Nil

6 Business

6.1 Community & Economy Committee - Terms of Reference

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr M. Morris and Cr J. Drayton that:

The Community and Economy Committee endorses the Draft Terms of Reference for submission to Council.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr A. Barry, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris

Against: Nil



6.2 Art Gallery Cafe - Hospitality Training Centre

Disclosure of Interest

Cr A. Barry declared a pecuniary interest in this item. Cr Barry advised the Committee that she is an employee of AGL.

At 5:35pm Cr Barry left the meeting room and therefore took no part in discussion or voting on this item.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris that:

That Council approves the General Manager to discuss operating the Gallery Cafe as a hospitality training Centre with AGL, and negotiate the terms of the agreement for Council's consideration.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris

Against: Nil

At 5:39 pm Cr Barry returned to Council Chambers and resumed her chair at the meeting table.

6.3 Sponsorship - Cattle Dog Muster

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris that:

Council approves the sponsorship of \$7,500 to the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the Cattle Dog Muster Bluey and Bingo Live Experience and Meet and Greet subject to both parties entering into and meeting the requirements of Council's Sponsorship Agreement.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr A. Barry, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris

Against: Nil

6.4 Welcome Experience Update

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D. Marshall and Cr L. Dunn that:

The information contained in this report be noted.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr A. Barry, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris

Against: Nil



6.5 STEM Program Update

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr J. Drayton and Cr L. Dunn that:
The information contained in this report be noted.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr A. Barry, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris

Against: Nil

6.6 MELT Quarterly Report

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr M. Morris and Cr A. Barry that:
The information contained in this report be noted.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr A. Barry, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris

Against: Nil

6.7 Post Event Report - New Years Eve 2024

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr M. Morris and Cr J. Drayton that:
The information contained in this report be noted.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr A. Barry, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris

Against: Nil

6.8 Post Event Report - Denman Wine Food & Film Affair 2024

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D. Marshall and Cr J. Drayton that:
Council:

1. Notes the content of this report.
2. Supports the delivery of the Denman Wine, Food and Film Affair, in partnership with the Denman Chamber of Commerce, to be held on 1 November 2025.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr A. Barry, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris

Against: Nil



6.9 Community Services

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D. Douglas and Cr A. Barry that:
Cr L. Dunn be Councils representative on the Library Zone Committee.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr A. Barry, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris

Against: Nil

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris that:
The information contained in the report be noted.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr A. Barry, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris

Against: Nil

7 Closed Committee

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr A. Barry and Cr D. Marshall that:
Committee adjourn into Closed Session and members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting of the Closed Session, and access to the correspondence and reports relating to the items considered during the course of the Closed Session be withheld unless declassified by separate resolution. This action is taken in accordance with Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act, 1993 as the items listed come within the provisions outlined in Section 17 below.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr A. Barry, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris.

Against: Nil.

7.1 Industry Presentations

MOTION

Moved by Cr D. Marshall and Cr M. Morris that:

Council supports Council Officers providing presentations on the Community Strategic Plan at the April Chamber breakfast and the 2025/26 Budget at the July Breakfast.

FORESHADOWED MOTION

Council does not present at the Chamber Breakfast in April. Council presents a standalone presentation.

**ORIGINAL MOTION**

Moved by Cr D. Marshall and Cr M. Morris that:

Council supports Council Officers providing presentations on the Community Strategic Plan at the April Chamber breakfast and the 2025/26 Budget at the July Breakfast.

Motion was put to the vote and LOST

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris that:

Council does not present at the Chamber Breakfast in April. Council presents a standalone presentation.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr A. Barry, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris

Against: Nil

RESUMPTION OF OPEN COMMITTEE

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr M. Morris and Cr D. Marshall that:

The meeting return to Open Committee.

In Favour: Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr A. Barry, Cr D. Marshall, Cr J. Drayton and Cr M. Morris.

Against: Nil

The Chair read out the resolutions from Closed Committee.

8 Date of Next Meeting

13, May 2025

9 Closure

The meeting closed at 6:28 pm.

.....
Mr D. Finnigan (General Manager)

.....
Cr D. Douglas (Chair)



4 Disclosure of Any Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

5 Business Arising

Nil



6 Business

6.1 Welcome Experience Update

Responsible Officer:	Director - Community & Economy
Author:	Community Connector Coordinator
Community Strategic Plan:	<i>1 - Economic Prosperity</i> <i>A dynamic local economy with full employment for current and future residents in a diverse range of high value industries.</i> <i>An inclusive and interconnected community where everyone enjoys full participation</i>
Delivery Program Goal:	<i>Not Applicable</i>
Operational Plan Action:	Not applicable
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. TWE April 2025 Event Report PR F 3 [6.1.1 - 5 pages]2. The Welcome Experience News - Edition 1 [6.1.2 -]3. The Welcome Experience CAE Report Data April 2025 20250429 [6.1.3 - 1 page]4. The Welcome Experience Newsletter April 2025 Report F A 3 20250430 [6.1.4 - 1 page]

PURPOSE

To provide an update on the Welcome Experience programme.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The information contained in this report be noted.

Moved: _____ **Seconded:** _____

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Initiatives:

- The Welcome Experience Celebration Event
- Local Emergency Management Committee guest speaker
- Denman Men's Shed, and Fire and Rescue initiative
- Launch of bi-monthly The Welcome Experience News
- Strong media coverage, including ABC Upper Hunter and Hunter River Times

PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

Nil



BACKGROUND

The Welcome Experience is a free government service designed to support essential workers and their families who are either considering applying for, or have already accepted, a job in regional NSW. It is currently operating across 55 LGAs in the state.

Local Connectors are available to assist with various aspects of settling in, from practical matters like finding housing and choosing childcare, to exploring job opportunities for partners.

Eligible participants include government and non-government employees in the following sectors: Health (Private and Public), NSW Ambulance, NSW Police, Department of Communities and Justice, Corrective Services NSW, Education (Private and Public), Fire and Rescue NSW, RFS, and Veterinary Services.

CONSULTATION

Director Community and Economy

Manager Economy and Tourism

REPORT

The expansion phase of The Welcome Experience (TWE) in our region is well underway, with the inclusion of Singleton Council and Upper Hunter Shire Council. Since its inception, the concierge-style service has had 745 cases (562 of these cases were either ineligible or had chosen not to move or selected another location), with 65 now settled/moved here for over three months, with an additional eleven relocating. These cases represent 163 individuals, families and couples in total who are investing in and contributing to the local economy. Although some participants have departed after a year - either due to contract completion or returning overseas - the program continues to make a strong impact within the local community. Refer to TWE CAE Report Data attached.

Completed, Active, and Planned Activities:

To formally welcome essential workers who have made our region home, and to celebrate the coming together of the 3 councils, TWE hosted a special evening at the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre on Thursday, 3 April. The event was well-attended by essential workers and key stakeholders, including the Program Manager from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, which oversees this initiative. The event had a strong local focus, and featured welcome champagne served by clients of Warrior Disability Services, custom key rings produced by Stem Lab, and live music from the Hunter Regional Conservatorium, among other highlights. Refer to Event Report attached.

The Community Connector Coordinator addressed the March 2025 meeting of the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) in Muswellbrook, to advise senior staff in key government agencies as to the service capabilities. We have been invited to speak at the LEMC in Singleton on May 15.

Met with Singleton Council's Karen Valker, Acting Manager Organisation Excellence & Manager Strategy Engagement and Kevin Lomax, Skills and Employment Program Officer to workshop a formal rollout of TWE in Singleton LGA. Then presented to the Singleton Interagency Network Committee Meeting. Council is eager to maximise the potential of the initiative, and with Karen Valker returning to lead, significant progress is anticipated.

Met with Upper Hunter Shire Council's (UHSC) Acting Tourism and Events Coordinator Jenny-Lee Scharnboeck to discuss opportunities for them to engage with the service.

Additionally, we released our first bi-monthly online newsletter tailored for essential workers and key stakeholders. This was well-received, with stats highlighting that the open rate was



64% for essential workers and 50% for stakeholders. This is in contrast with an average open rate of 44% (source: Vision6). Refer to TWE Newsletter Report FA3 attached for data and link for access to newsletter.

We recently facilitated an opportunity for the local Fire and Rescue team to meet with members of the Denman & District Men's Shed, providing an overview of how they can offer support and highlighting potential hazards to be mindful of in their environment. The Men's Shed had generously supported us by assembling flat-packed furniture for a registered nurse and her family, who were emigrating to Australia. The nurse, now stationed at Denman MPS, attended the gathering with her family to personally thank the Men's Shed for their assistance. During the visit, the Men's Shed extended an invitation to her husband to return for further introductions to local business owners, offering to support him in his search for employment. The morning culminated in a morning tea provided by The Welcome Experience. The initial social media post acknowledging the support from the Denman & District Men's Shed was one of council's most well-received posts with over 140 likes and reached over 3.5k.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Financial Implications – Operational

Within the funding grant budget.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Risks are being managed as per the Risk Management Plan.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS

DPIRD

Interagency Meetings – Singleton, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter

Reference Group

Business Chambers across the 3 LGAs

LEMC/LEMO

Key government agencies and private as outlined above.

The Welcome Experience

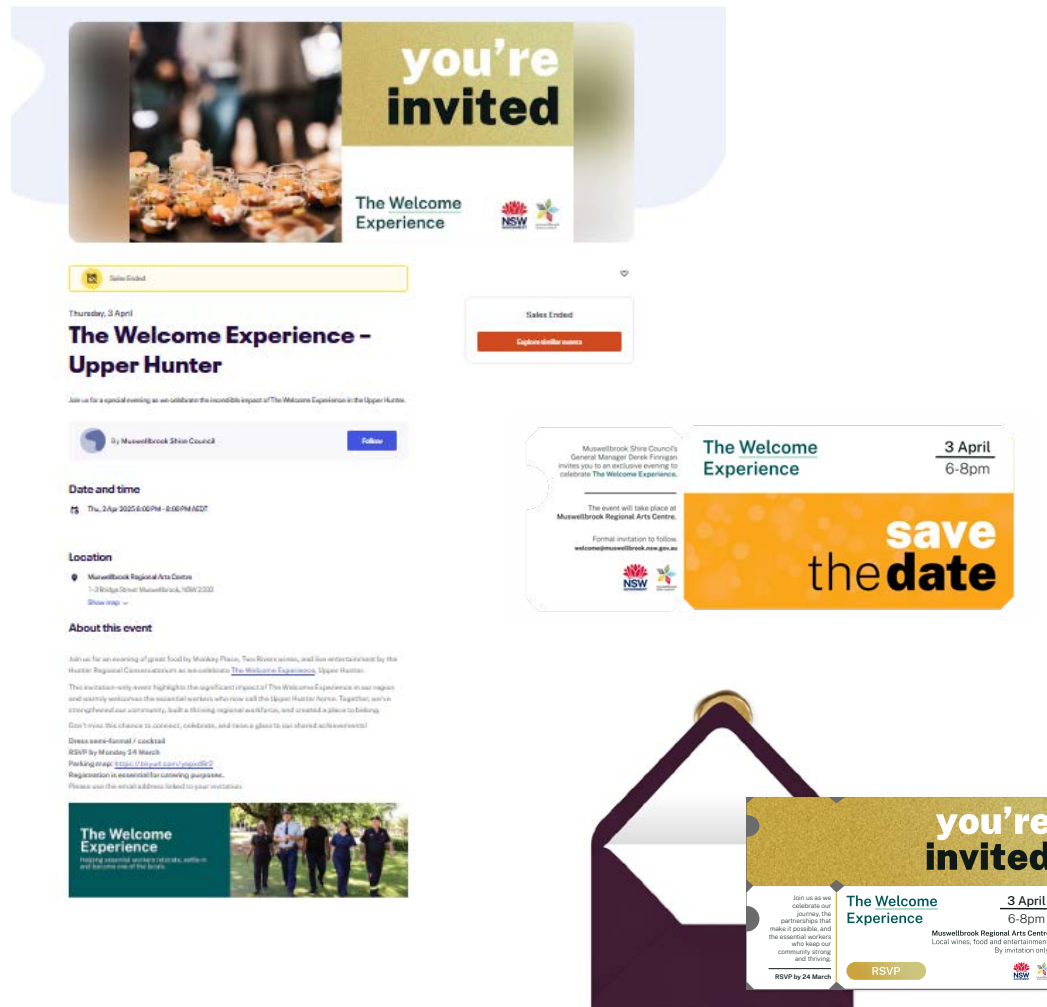
Post Event Summary

The Welcome Experience Celebration
Thursday, 3rd April 2025
Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre



The Welcome Experience Event Summary

2



The Welcome Experience

Invites and Promotion

Mixed Media

A combination of PDF, digital, and online registration platforms were used to promote the event and manage exclusive invitations. This included a Save the Date, formal invitation, and a custom Eventbrite registration page. The materials were professionally designed and distributed via online platform, email and direct contact, allowing for streamlined RSVPs, guest list tracking, and targeted follow-up communications.

The Welcome Experience Event Summary

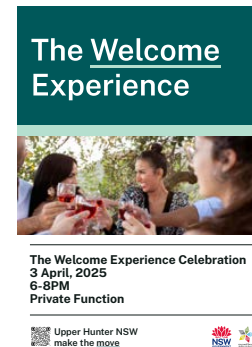
3

Signage

Interactive

A mix of custom and interactive signage was used to enhance the event experience and encourage guest engagement. This approach focused on creating interactive and visually engaging elements that aligned with the welcoming and inclusive tone of the event.

The Welcome Experience



The Welcome
Experience

One of the
locals

Upper Hunter
is home

I'm a
newbie!



The Welcome Experience Event Summary



• **The Welcome Experience**



The Welcome Experience

Take Home

Collaborative

Guests received a custom laser-engraved keyring, created in collaboration with Muswellbrook Shire Council's STEM Lab — a unique keepsake reflecting the program's local spirit. Take-home packs also included flyers and business cards to provide further information about The Welcome Experience and how to stay connected. Feedback on the personal touches was very positive.

The Welcome Experience Event Summary

5

Post Event Media

Mixed Media

The event attracted strong post-event media coverage, including a feature on ABC Radio Upper Hunter that shared powerful interviews with essential workers and Community Connector Coordinator Katrina Kiely, highlighting the real impact of The Welcome Experience. The celebration also received a positive write-up in the Hunter River Times and several shout-outs across local social media channels, helping to amplify the event's message and reach a broader community audience.



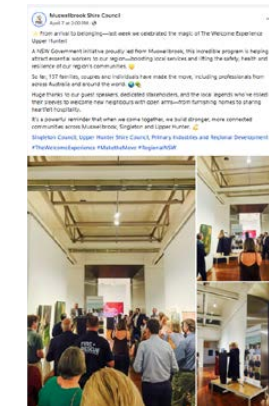
Click to play



ABC Radio Upper Hunter, April 4



Hunter River Times, April 18



Muswellbrook Shire Council, April 7



Raine & Horne, April 7

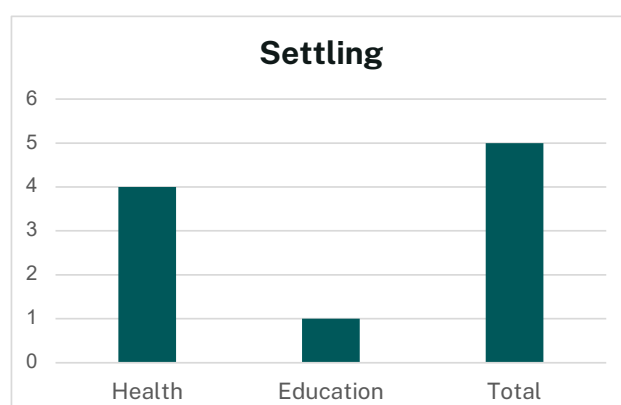
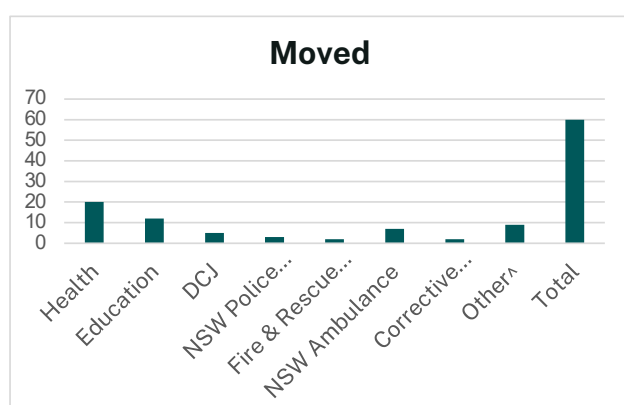
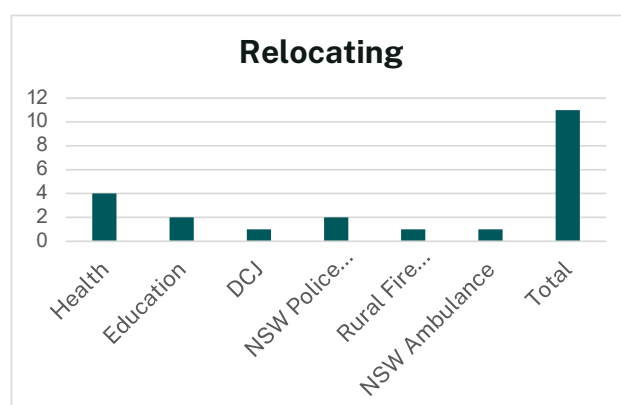
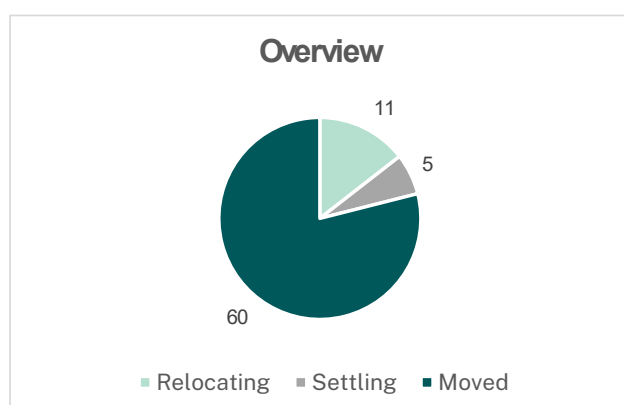
The Welcome Experience



The Welcome Experience

As at 29 April, 2025

Agency	Relocating	Settling	Moved
Health	4	4	20
Education	2	1	12
Department of Communities and Justice	1	0	5
NSW Police Force	2	0	3
Rural Fire Service	1	0	0
Fire and Rescue NSW	0	0	2
NSW Ambulance	1	0	7
Corrective Services NSW	0	0	2
Other [^]	0	0	9
Total	11	5	60
Month on Month	0	+2	0



The Welcome Experience

Newsletter Report - April 2025 (Issue 1)

On 16 April 2025, we launched the first edition of The Welcome Experience email newsletter, aimed at keeping both essential workers and regional stakeholders informed, connected, and engaged. This edition highlighted recent program milestones, including the celebration event at Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, along with Easter, Anzac Day and school holiday activities, local sporting opportunities, and reminders around road safety and holiday trading. Separate versions introducing the newsletter were sent to both essential workers and key stakeholders.

The newsletter was well received, with above-average performance compared to industry benchmarks*. Feedback and interaction indicate positive interest in future updates.



Recipients
263



Opened
143
(57.18%)



Clicks
18
(13.8%)



Bounced
10
(3.44%)



Unsubscribed
6
(2.7%)

Stats	Stakeholder Email	Essential Worker Email	Total
Recipients	185	78	263
Opened	93	50	143
Open Rate	50.3%	64.1%	57.2%
Clicks	9	9	18
Click Through Rate	9.6%	18%	13.8%
Bounced	8	2	10
Bounce Rate	4.3%	2.6%	3.44%
Unsubscribed	3	3	6
Unsubscribed Rate	1.6%	3.8%	2.7%

Preview



Desktop
Essential Workers **78.3%**
Stakeholders **68.1%**



Mobile
Essential Workers **10.8%**
Stakeholders **18.7%**

Definitions: Open, click-through, bounce, and unsubscribe rates refer to the percentage of recipients who opened the email, clicked a link, had the email bounce, or unsubscribed. ***Benchmark:** According to [Vision6](#), an average click-through rate is approximately 6.5%, and open rates between 35% and 50% are considered excellent.



6.2 STEM Program Update

Responsible Officer:	Director - Community & Economy
Author:	Innovation Co-ordinator
Community Strategic Plan:	<i>1 - Economic Prosperity</i> <i>A dynamic local economy with full employment for current and future residents in a diverse range of high value industries.</i>
Delivery Program Goal:	1.1.1 - Facilitate the expansion of and establishment of new industries and business.
Operational Plan Action:	1.2.1.1 - Deliver programs and activities in the Hunter Innovation Precinct as an exemplar economic diversification initiative for the region.
Attachments:	Nil

PURPOSE

To provide an update on the STEM Program.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The information contained in this report be noted.

Moved: _____ **Seconded:** _____

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report provides an update on the ongoing development of the STEM Program. Since its launch, the program has continued to expand its reach and offerings through the **STEM Innovation Lab** and **STEM2GO** initiatives.

The STEM Innovation Lab remains in high demand among local and regional schools, further supported by the removal of transport cost barriers. New programs delivered in early 2025 include solar oven challenges with homeschool groups, expanded partnerships with the Library, and the introduction of 3D printing and design workshops. A renewed promotional effort is underway to meet the 450-student target by 30 June 2025.

The STEM2GO program continues to reach communities across the south Muswellbrook area, with the April 2025 rollout including engaging challenges like paper planes, straw towers, and marshmallow catapults. Meanwhile, new initiatives such as the **FIRST LEGO League Immersion Days**, **iCode Club**, **World Engineering Day**, and themed events like **International Star Wars Day** and **National Science Week** further extend the program's scope.

Ongoing support and suitable budget allocation remain critical to sustaining and scaling these efforts. The Committee's continued backing will ensure Muswellbrook retains its leadership in regional STEM engagement and workforce development.



PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

Nil.

BACKGROUND

STEM Program

Muswellbrook is a recognised ‘living laboratory’ for transition initiatives in renewable energy, agribusiness, advanced manufacturing, and bioenergy. STEM education remains central to workforce reskilling and long-term economic sustainability. The STEM Innovation Lab, located in the Hunter Innovation Precinct, equips students with the tools and mentorship to build essential soft skills—problem solving, teamwork, critical thinking, and communication. The Lab is designed to address current skill gaps and prepare the region’s youth for future employment opportunities that have not traditionally been available in regional areas.

STEM2GO

Council’s commitment to social equity and inclusion is reflected in the STEM2GO program, aligned with Community Strategic Plan Goal 7 and Operational Plan Goal 2. Delivered in areas like the Wollombi Precinct, STEM2GO provides accessible, hands-on STEM learning in fun, interactive formats. Activities such as marshmallow catapults and paper table challenges have allowed students to explore STEM concepts while building confidence and community connection. The program continues to inspire curiosity and interest in STEM pathways for students who may otherwise lack access.

CONSULTATION

Director of Economy and Community

Manager of Economy and Tourism

Innovation Coordinator

Workplace Health and Safety - Officers

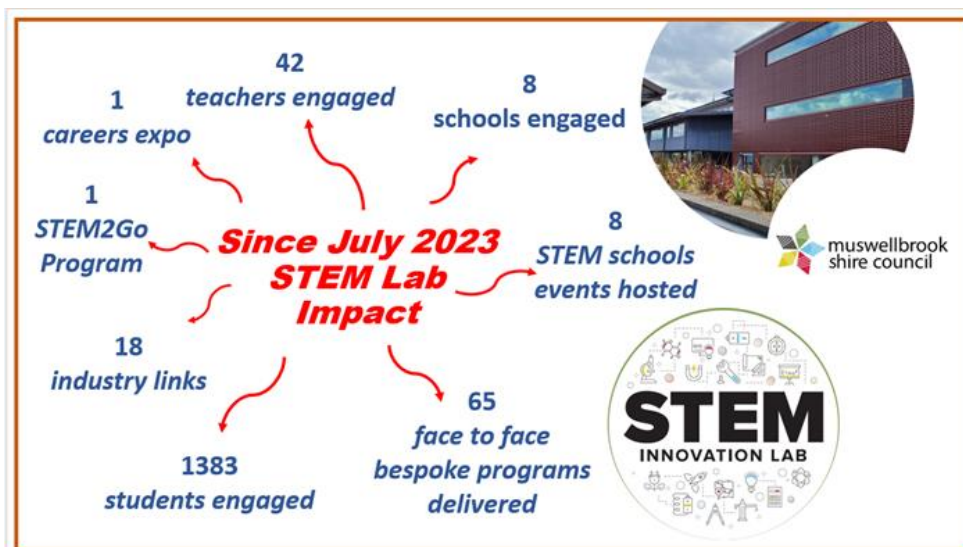
REPORT

Since the last report, the STEM Program has progressed significantly:

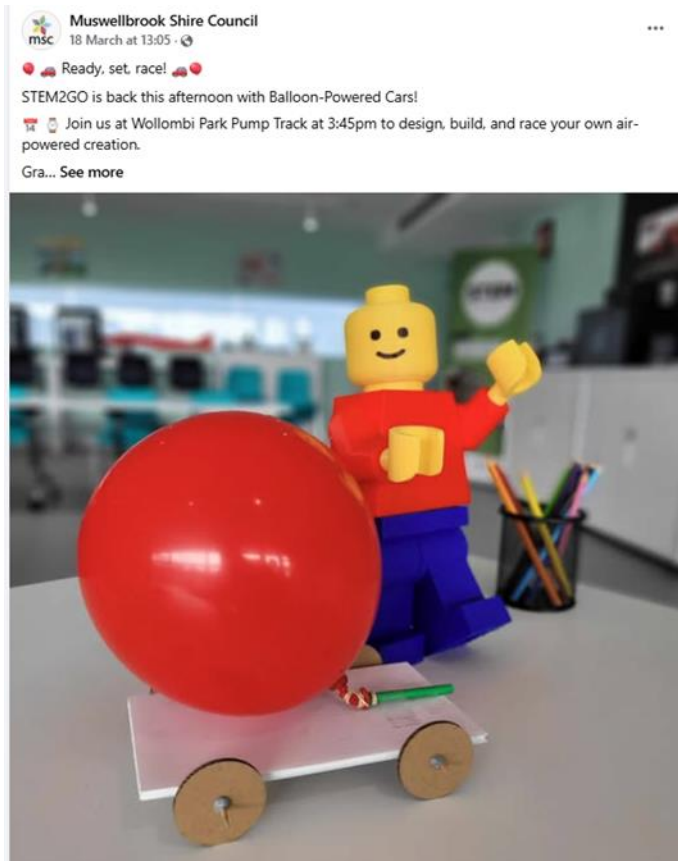
- **School Participation:** Continued interest from Muswellbrook and Denman schools, with extended access from Singleton and Upper Hunter LGAs due to bus hire subsidies.
- **Workshops & Events:** Bespoke workshops in LEGO Robotics, Astrophotography, CAD/3D printing, and Aeronautics have been successfully delivered. The **Home School Group** participated in a solar oven engineering project, while partnerships with the **Poly Farmer Foundation** and **Muswellbrook Library** continue to thrive.
- **Curiosity Kits & iPads:** To support home learning, the STEM Lab helped the Library purchase STEM resources, including kits and robotics equipment. In response to community demand, 8 iPads and protective cases have been ordered to support kit usage.
- **School Engagement Campaign:** A new round of promotional efforts is targeting local schools via face-to-face meetings and inclusion in school newsletters, aimed at reaching the 450-student engagement goal by the end of June 2025.

**Key Initiatives in Progress or Upcoming:**

- **STEM2GO:** Program recommenced in April 2025, continuing outreach to youth in disadvantaged communities with engaging weekly activities.
- **FIRST LEGO League Immersion Days:** Planned for 21–22 May for Primary and High School students at Muswellbrook Indoor Basketball Stadium.
- **iCode Club Launch (July 2025):** Partnering with Hunter-based iCode to deliver a 10-week advanced coding program, targeting youth aged 5–18.
- **Coding Club – Denman Library:** Monthly after-school coding workshops including LEGO Prime-based challenges, increasing reach to remote communities.
- **World Engineering Day (June 10 & 17):** Focused on soft skills development with guest panels and STEM problem-solving challenges.
- **International Star Wars Day (May–June 2025):** A 5-session space-themed challenge culminating in a water rocket launch day.
- **National Science Week (August 2025):** Five-day program exploring dinosaurs, rocks, renewable energy, and more, aligned with the “Exploration and Discovery Across the Sciences” theme.
- **National Space Week (October 2025):** Students will design and test Mars habitat domes over 5 weeks, integrating engineering, design, and critical thinking.







Free

STEM
INNOVATION LAB

**SCHOOL HOLIDAY
WORKSHOPS**

LEGO ROBOTICS

**AGES
10 - 16**

SESSION 1: MONDAY 14TH APRIL, 10AM – 11:30AM
SESSION 2: WEDNESDAY 16TH APRIL, 10AM – 11:30AM
LOCATION: DONALD HORNE BUILDING
140 BRIDGE ST. MUSWELLBROOK
BOOKINGS: STEM@MUSWELLBROOK.NSW.GOV.AU



**muswellbrook
shire council**



THE STEM INNOVATION LAB HAS BEEN BRANCHING OUT THROUGH GROUPS AND A FREE PROGRAM IN THE COMMUNITY.

Innovation coordinator Matt Leman has been working with local homeschoolers for some time, putting together programs that meet their educational outcomes using the Muswellbrook Shire Council facility.

"We've been covering energy transfers and activities along the lines of balloon powered cars, whirly birds, and we finished it all off with solar ovens and smores," he shared.

"It's been a great example of how we can incorporate school-based outcomes with STEM learning and hands on activities."

Matt is looking forward to furthering the community's connection with the STEM Innovation Lab, which has been visited by school groups and hosted school holiday programs.

The STEM Innovation Lab is available to the community, any schools or groups with an interest in getting in to check out the equipment and learn from the specialist team is encouraged to reach out.

You can email stem@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au or call council on 6549 3700 to be put through.

One of the activities Muswellbrook Shire Council's innovation coordinator Matt Leman has done with local homeschooled students was building and testing solar ovens.

STEM2Go Continues

There are still two weeks left of the free STEM2Go program that has been running at the Pump Track in Muswellbrook.

"It can be difficult for some families to bring kids into the STEM Lab, so we thought we'd go out into community so the children can participate in the activities that we're running," Matt Leman, innovation coordinator said.

"Once that five-week program is finished, we're certainly looking at doing more of those activities around town, sharing it around the community."

The free STEM2Go program is on Tuesday, March 25, and April 1 at the Wollombi Park Pump Track, off the Skellatar Stock Route, from 3.45pm until 4.45pm.

www.huntermvibes.com.au

The STEM Innovation Lab is excited about the opportunities available in 2025, and we are certain that we will surpass the target of 450 students before 30 June 2025. We look forward to expanding our STEM2GO program into other areas around Muswellbrook Shire.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Council has allocated funds in the 2024/25 Budget for the ongoing delivery of programmes delivered by the STEM Innovation Lab. Proposed programmes are within budget allocations.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Compliance with Local Government Act, 1993



RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

When a council runs community events, risk management is essential to ensure public safety, legal compliance, and the protection of council assets. The key Risk Management Implications include, but are not limited to:

1. Public Safety & Duty of Care.
2. Legal & Compliance Risks.
3. Insurance & Liability.
4. Reputational Risk.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS

Polly Farmer Foundation

Upper Hunter Home School Community



6.3 MELT Quarterly Report

Responsible Officer: Director - Community & Economy

Author: Manager – Economy & Tourism

Community Strategic Plan: 6 - *Community Leadership*

A dynamic local economy with full employment for current and future residents in a diverse range of high value industries.

Delivery Program: 1.1.1 - Facilitate the expansion of and establishment of new industries and business.

Operational Plan: 1.2.1.1 - Deliver programs and activities in the Hunter Innovation Precinct as an exemplar economic diversification initiative for the region.

Attachments:

1. The Melt Activities Annual Report 2024 [6.3.1 - 64 pages]
2. The Melt Activities Q 1 2025 Quarterly Report to March 2025 250507 [6.3.2 - 22 pages]

PURPOSE

To inform the Committee of the programs and activities undertaken by The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre through their Quarterly Report Q1 2025, and the Annual Report for 2024.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee accepts the Melt quarterly report for January to March 2025.
2. The Committee accepts the Melt Annual report for 2024.

Moved: _____ **Seconded:** _____

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Muswellbrook Shire Council is investing in The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre to support economic diversification and resilience as the regional and local economy evolves.

The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre undertakes a number of programs and activities to encourage innovation in the local manufacturing sector.

The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre Quarterly Report to 31 March gives details on activities and visitors as well as a number of case studies.

The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre Annual Report outlines 14 examples of the kinds of activities that have been performed by The Melt in 2024.

**REPORT****Executive Summary from the 2025 Quarterly Report to 31 March 2025**

During Q1 2025 to 31 March 2025, the Modern Manufacturing Centre (MMC) hosted 41 visitors to the facilities. Those visitors were drawn from a broad cross section of the community, which included students, start-ups, scaleups, SMEs, large corporations, academia, government, media and retirees.

- 8 facility tours were hosted for visitors to investigate the potential for MMC projects and collaborations. One example includes for the Sydney Rum Distillery to potentially assist them with their refurbishment of the antiquated stills and other equipment in the Oak Factory.
- 10 Economic Development Managers attended a meeting in the Donald Horne Building, and The Melt was invited to present and showcase how it is contributing towards economic development activities in the Muswellbrook Shire. A tour of the MMC demonstrated its functional capability.
- Initial Discovery meetings with 2 new start-up founders were conducted. Early-stage business and technical advice was provided, and additional meetings have been scheduled for Q2.
- Further project design iterations, prototype components plus business and technical product advisory were provided to existing start-ups, including FlynnAir and LockBlock, and scaleups, including Allegro, Refilled, and PlasmaLeap.
- An OT micro-credential training session was conducted for 2 Glencore Mangoolia team members and 4 new content modules were developed as part of the planned series of 42 modules. © The Melt - Commercial in Confidence 5.
- Planning, marketing, and recruitment activities were in full swing for The Melt's two industry leading startup and scaleup programs called The Melt ENGAGE and The Melt NOVA. The Melt ENGAGE is scheduled for 28-30 May 2025. Target is to attract 20-25 participating startups for ENGAGE and a further 2 scaleups for NOVA in 2025.
- Initial engagement meetings were conducted with the Denman Men's Shed and the RSL Sub-branch to gauge their interest in creating a tailored activation activity for their members in Q2.
- The Net Zero Economy Agency's "We're Bringing New Energy to the Hunter" Campaign continued into phase 2. The Melt recommended Seth Fitzgerald feature in the next phase of the national marketing campaign. Seth is a local student who The Melt MMC assisted in 2024 to design and build a wind turbine as an Extension Science HSC project. Seth received early entry into the University of Newcastle to study Mechatronics Engineering in 2025. Seth was delighted to be involved and the NZEA were thrilled to highlight Seth as a future leader. Seth will feature on the NZEA website (written and video case study) and in digital plus print media as well as on radio locally and nationally. The Melt MMC also continues to be featured in phase 2 of the campaign.
- Discussions continued with BHP regarding their potential to support The Melt's proposed Maker Projects in 2025. The Melt was unsuccessful in its submission for a NSW Government grant but believes strongly in the concept and is seeking other funding pathways to enable delivery of 4 x 3-day maker project workshops for students aged 12-17.
- Several potential partners were invited to The Melt MMC for initial discussions about proposed collaboration on 5 industry showcase events for 2025. They include, 3D printing laser cutting, CNC machining, robotic welding, and CAD/CAM design software.



- Following on from the success in creating customised award trophies using recycled medical plastic waste for the Hunter New England Local Health District's Excellence Awards, and for the Prestigious Hunter Manufacturing Awards 20th Anniversary Event, The Melt MMC has received several new enquiries about manufacturing sustainable trophies for other award ceremonies.

Executive Summary from the 2024 Annual Report

Overview

The Melt is dedicated to driving physical product innovation and assisting with economic diversification and growth in Muswellbrook, a place that is historically recognised for its energy, mining, and manufacturing sectors. Through strategic initiatives, programs, events and partnerships, The Melt is playing a significant role in developing an innovation ecosystem in the Muswellbrook Shire for students, existing businesses, startups, and scaleups, and is contributing positively to the community and regional economy.

This report outlines 14 examples of the kinds of activities that have been performed by The Melt in 2024.

It is only a snapshot, not a complete list of all the engagements and activities that have been undertaken.

Positive Achievements in 2024

1. Support for Local Startups and Scaleups

The Melt has successfully delivered numerous programs including our flagship The Melt ENGAGE Pre-Accelerator and The Melt NOVA Accelerator and Pilot Enabler programs, of which Muswellbrook Shire Council, AGL, and the NSW Government are our collaborating partners. Our programs are aimed at discovering and nurturing startups and scaleups, providing them with the resources, mentoring, investment, and networking opportunities necessary for growth and the commercialisation of novel physical products. These initiatives have led to the establishment of many new emerging businesses, which have potential for contributing to job creation and diversification of the local economy.

Examples include;

LockBlock, Next Gen Hydro, and FlynnAir (see case studies in this report). Additionally, our programs attract startups and scaleups from other locations around the state, Australia, and New Zealand.

This provides an ideal opportunity to showcase the benefits and opportunities that establishing a business presence in the Muswellbrook Shire has to offer those founders.

2. Collaboration with Educational Institutions

Partnering with local schools and tertiary institutions, The Melt has commenced plans to source funding for the development of programs that bridge the gap between education and industry. These programs would equip students with practical, hands-on skills and knowledge, enhancing employability and fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within the community.

3. Business Development and Advisory Services

The Melt has provided advisory services to existing businesses in Muswellbrook, helping them to streamline operations, adopt innovative practices, and enhance competitiveness. Workshops and seminars conducted by industry experts have empowered local businesses to adapt to market changes and adopt new technologies effectively. One example included



in this report is the 3D Technology Showcase Event.

4. Community Engagement and Sustainability Initiatives

Emphasising sustainability and acknowledging the global trend towards renewables and net zero emissions targets, The Melt has engaged the community in initiatives that promote awareness and responsible business practices. This includes events and promotional activities focused on energy transformation solutions, waste reduction, and the promotion of locally sourced resources, aligning with Muswellbrook's historical ties to energy production. An example of this was The Melt's involvement in the Federal Government's A Future Made in Australia, "Bringing New Energy to the Hunter" Campaign.

5. Networking and Collaboration Platforms

The Melt has established a vibrant networking environment for local entrepreneurs, investors, and industry leaders. Regular events and forums foster collaboration, enabling knowledge sharing and partnerships that drive innovation and economic growth. The Hunter Innovation Festival Roadshow Event came to Muswellbrook and Senator the Hon Tim Ayres delivered a keynote address to the attendees.

6. Promotion of Technology and Innovation

By prioritising technological advancement, The Melt MMC has positioned itself as a hub for innovation in Muswellbrook. Encouraging the adoption of new technologies across industries has not only improved efficiency, but has also attracted interest from investors looking to tap into the region's potential. Allegro Energy has become a shining example of developing novel battery storage technology in regional Australia and, in partnership with Muswellbrook Shire Council and The Melt, we were all recognised by winning the prestigious Collaboration Partnership Award at the Hunter Manufacturing 20th Year Award Ceremony. The event had 420 attendees, and in addition to that recognition we also received a personal letter of congratulation from Tim Ayres. The Allegro Energy Pilot 800KwH battery will be installed at Eraring Power Station in 2025.

7. Economic Diversification

Through its initiatives, The Melt plays a crucial role in diversifying the local economy, helping prepare it for a reducing reliance on traditional industries. By fostering the growth of technology and innovation-driven businesses, The Melt has helped to create a more resilient economic landscape.

Annual Report Conclusion

The Melt continues to emerge as a catalyst for positive change in Muswellbrook, driving economic development, supporting local talent, and fostering a spirit of innovation. By continuing to invest in the community and collaborating with key stakeholders, The Melt is well-positioned to further enhance the growth and prosperity of Muswellbrook, ensuring its evolution into a dynamic hub for diverse industries and a thriving population.

The Annual report outlines 14 examples of the kinds of activities that have been undertaken by The Melt in 2024.



The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre (MMC) Annual Report

Calendar year ended 31 December 2024



The Melt Modern Modern
Manufacturing Centre
incorporated into The
Donald Horne Building

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

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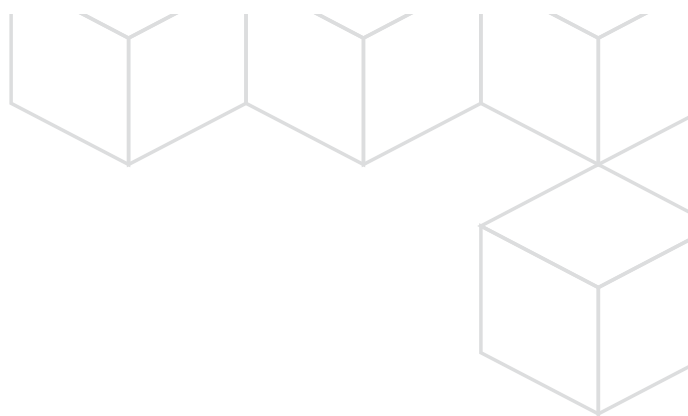
This report outlines 12 examples of the kinds of activities that have been performed by The Melt in 2024. It is only a snapshot, not a complete list of all the engagements and activities that have been undertaken.

MMC STATISTICS

During 2024 the MMC hosted 240 visitors to the facilities. Those visitors were drawn from a broad cross section of the community that included; students, startups, scaleups, SMEs, large corporations, academia, politicians, government, side-hustlers, tinkerers, media and retirees.

NOTABLE DRAW CARDS INCLUDED:

- 4 industry events that showcased the Donald Horne Building and its functionality by utilising a combination of the MMC, STEM Innovation Lab and even the entry foyer for networking. They included; Hunter Innovation Festival Roadshow, From 3D Scan to 3D Print - A 3D Technology Showcase, Hunter Manufacturing Awards Launch and BHP Together Tomorrow - Future Careers Expo;
- 2 industry leading startup and scaleup programs called The Melt ENGAGE and The Melt NOVA which attracted 17 and 9 emerging and growth businesses respectively. Noting that 177 businesses applied for entry to the programs, and/or access to funding via Melt Ventures. Those businesses ranged from Muswellbrook, throughout the Hunter, NSW, Australia and as far as New Zealand; and
- An extensive 42 module micro-credential course which was designed and is being stage developed and delivered in collaboration with Glencore Mangoola;
- 17 diverse projects that required hundreds of design iterations, prototyping and manufacturing elements for emerging businesses, SMEs and community members.



POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

1. Support for Local Startups and Scaleups

The Melt has successfully delivered numerous programs including our flagship The Melt ENGAGE Pre-Accelerator and The Melt NOVA Accelerator and Pilot Enabler programs, of which Muswellbrook Shire Council, AGL and the NSW Government are our collaborating partners. Our programs are aimed at discovering and nurturing startups and scaleups, providing them with the resources, mentoring, investment and networking opportunities necessary for growth and commercialisation of novel physical products. These initiatives have led to the establishment of many new emerging businesses, which have potential for contributing to job creation and diversification of the local economy. An examples includes; LockBlock (see case study in this report). Additionally, our programs attract startups and scaleups from other locations around the state, Australia and even New Zealand. This provides an ideal opportunity to showcase the benefits and opportunities that establishing a business presence in the Muswellbrook Shire has to offer those founders.

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Partnering with local schools and tertiary institutions, The Melt has commenced plans to source funding for the development of programs that bridge the gap between education and industry. These programs would equip students with practical, hands-on skills and knowledge, enhancing employability and fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within the community.

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Emphasising sustainability and acknowledging the global trend towards renewables and net zero emissions targets, The Melt has engaged the community in initiatives that promote awareness and responsible business practices. This includes events and promotional activities focused on energy transformation solutions, waste reduction, and the promotion of locally sourced resources, aligning with Muswellbrook's historical ties to energy production. An example of this was The Melt's involvement in the Federal Governments' A Future Made in Australia, "Bringing New Energy to the Hunter" Campaign. Details are provided in this report.

5. Networking and Collaboration Platforms

The Melt has established a vibrant networking environment for local entrepreneurs, investors, and industry leaders. Regular events and forums foster collaboration, enabling knowledge sharing and partnerships that drive innovation and economic growth. One such example was the Hunter Innovation Festival Roadshow in Muswellbrook. Senator the Hon Tim Ayres delivered a keynote address to the attendees.

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event had 420 attendees, and in addition to that recognition we also received a personal letter of congrats from Tim Ayres. The Allegro Energy Pilot 800kWh battery will be installed at Eraring Power Station in 2025.

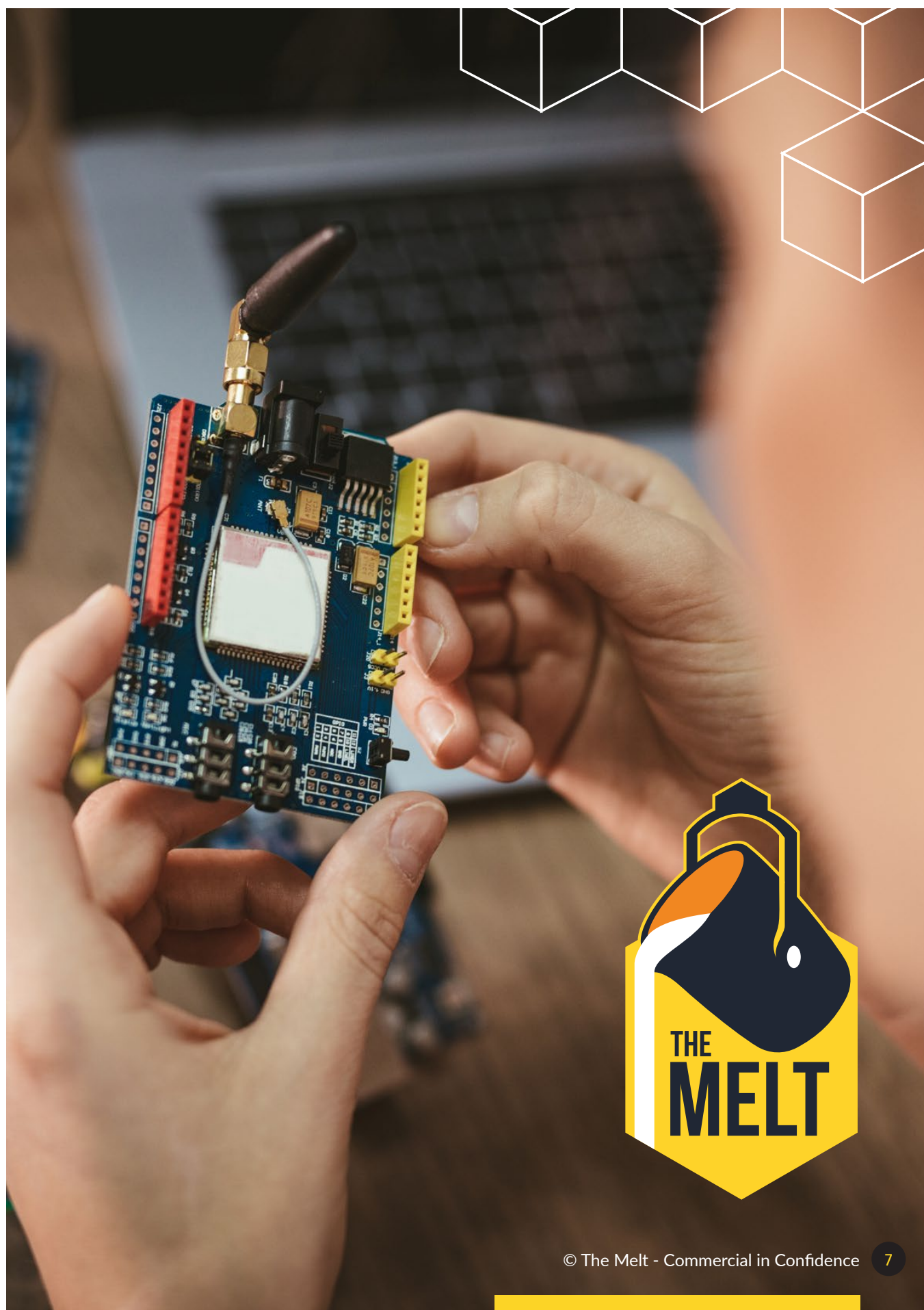
7. Economic Diversification

Through its initiatives, The Melt has played a crucial role in diversifying the local economy, helping prepare it for a reducing reliance on traditional industries. By fostering the growth of technology and innovation-driven businesses, The Melt has helped to create a more resilient economic landscape.

CONCLUSION

The Melt continues to emerge as a catalyst for positive change in Muswellbrook, driving economic development, supporting local talent, and fostering a spirit of innovation. By continuing to invest in the community and collaborating with key stakeholders, The Melt is well-positioned to further enhance the growth and prosperity of Muswellbrook, ensuring its evolution into a dynamic hub for diverse industries and a thriving population.

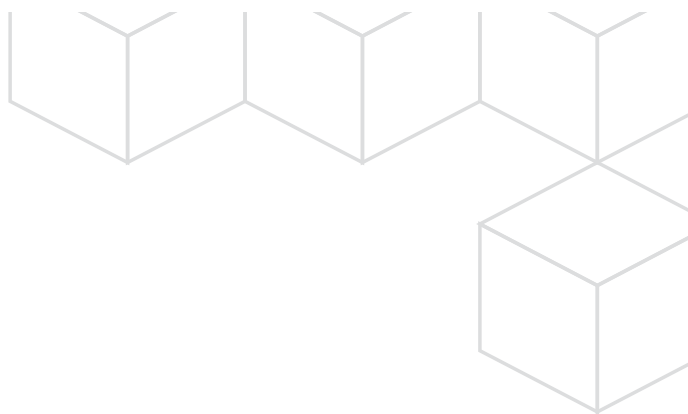
This report outlines 12 examples of the kinds of activities that have been undertaken by The Melt in 2024.



MMC CASE STUDY 1 : STARTUP

ALLEGRO ENERGY REDOX FLOW BATTERY





PROJECT SCOPE

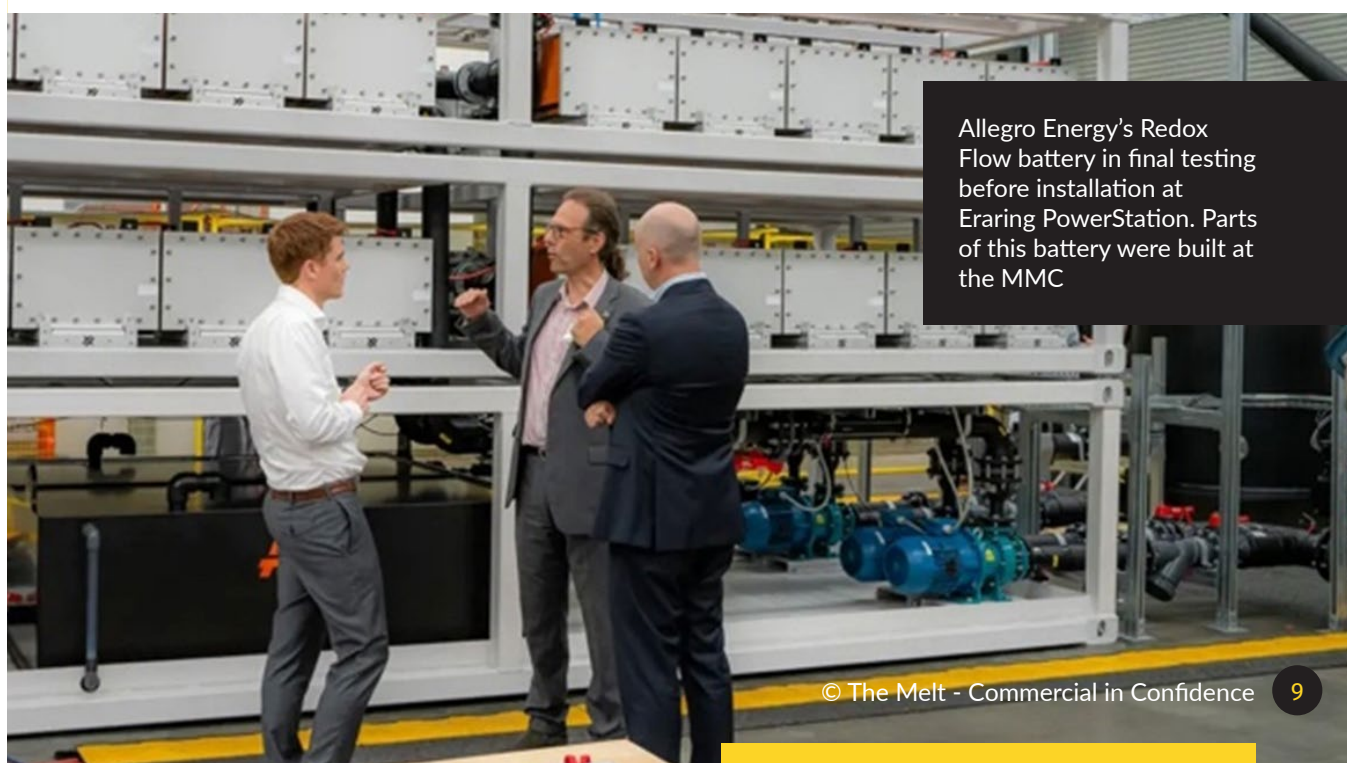
Allegro Energy was founded in 2021. The team initially comprised of University of Newcastle post graduate staff who can be considered global experts in battery and electrolyte chemistry.

Allegro Energy's innovative microemulsion electrolyte technology addresses critical challenges in renewable energy adoption by enhancing performance, reducing costs, and offering sustainable solutions for long-duration energy storage.

To commercialise this chemistry, Allegro required the construction of a "global first of a kind" version of a battery known as a Redox Flow Battery.

Allegro Energy was quickly able to secure Origin Energy as a foundation customer and early-stage investor. An 800kWh pilot battery is being built for installation at the Eraring Power station site.

It became evident to the Allegro team that if the Origin Energy project was to be delivered on time, a deep collaboration with partners was required.



MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR ALLEGRO ENERGY 800KWH PILOT PROJECT

In 2024 the MMC served as Allegro Energy's key prototyping workshop. Directly assisted by our technical specialist, Iain Yule, a myriad of different prototypes components including piping, manifolds, battery stacks and assembly jigs have been successfully manufactured.

With the diversity of advanced manufacturing machinery on offer in the MMC, complex design outcomes were achieved without Allegro needing to invest in new equipment without a deeper understanding of what equipment may have been required, avoiding time consuming installation and calibration saving time and money.

The MMC has not only produced Allegro prototypes, but we have manufactured a number of parts for the final battery installation at Origin Energy's Eraring Power Station.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	HIGHLIGHTS	LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
Pipe Design and Prototyping	14 prototypes	Jan 2024 - Ongoing
Manifold Design and Prototyping	59 prototypes	
Battery Stack Assemblies	4 sizes x multiple stack assemblies	

MMC EQUIPMENT USED

MATERIAL PROCURED

- Hartford 3 axis CNC Milling centre
 - Doosan 1600 CNC Lathe
 - Ultimaker S5 3D printer
 - SolidWorks' CAD design
 - Fusion 360 CAM programming
- PVC
 - HDPE
 - PEEK
 - Aluminium
 - Copper
 - Stainless Steel





MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

The collaboration between the MMC and Allegro was awarded "Collaboration Partnership of the Year" at the Hunter Manufacturing Awards in October 2024. The award was presented to the three collaborating partners; Allegro, The Melt, and Muswellbrook Shire Council in front of 420 guests at the event and increased the brand and offering of the MMC to the Hunter manufacturing industry.

The HMA Judges said of the collaboration, "The collaboration provides an excellent example of what can be achieved when partners with complementary capabilities come together and build a disciplined and thoughtfully structured vehicle to bring the best that each partner has to give to the fore. This project, underpinned by world class intellectual property in the critical field of battery storage systems, has the potential to make a significant impact in the field of energy transition".

Allegro Energy are being acclaimed as a shining example of the future of efficient and cheap renewable energy storage by state and commonwealth government departments and ministers. They are often featured in local and global media and requested to present at national and international conferences.



HMA Collaboration Partnership of the Year Award, accepted by Mr Ken Hill, MSC Manager Economy and Tourism at the Hunter Manufacturing Awards Gala Event in October 2024

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11



ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR A FUTURE MADE IN AUSTRALIA
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR TRADE
Senator the Hon Tim Ayres

Reference: MB24-000230

Mr Trent Bagnall
Chief Executive Officer
The Melt
trent@themelt.io

Dear Mr Bagnall

Congratulations to your team at The Melt for winning the Collaboration Partnership Award at the 2024 Hunter Manufacturing Awards.

Manufacturing is the backbone of the Australian economy and the Hunter Valley lies at the heart of Australian manufacturing. The Government has made significant investments to strengthen Australia's manufacturing base and bring jobs back home to great industrial regions like the Hunter — by developing new skills for workers across the region, establishing local clean energy projects and building a Future Made in Australia.

The Government cannot bring about this change alone. We need the ingenuity, talent and hard work of investors and accelerators like The Melt to help make it happen.

Your joint work with Allegro Energy and Muswellbrook Shire Council on a breakthrough microemulsion redox flow battery reflects the Hunter's rich tradition of industry and provides a stellar example of Australia's potential to become a genuine manufacturing powerhouse.

Your team's achievements are a testament to the power of manufacturing to make a difference in Australia. Congratulations again and keep up the great work.

Yours sincerely

Tim Ayres
20/11/2024

Parliament House CANBERRA ACT 2600
Telephone (02) 6277 7700
www.pmt.gov.au

Letter of Congratulations
from Senator the Hon Tim
Ayres



Senator the Hon Tim Ayres
Assistant Minister For A Future Made In Australia
Assistant Minister For Trade

Via email Senator.Ayres@aph.gov.au

2 December 2024

Dear Tim,

On behalf of the entire team at The Melt, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for your letter congratulating us on winning the Collaboration Partnership Award at the 2024 Hunter Manufacturing Awards. Your recognition of our work on the redox flow battery project with Allegro Energy and Muswellbrook Shire Council is truly appreciated. We look forward to installing the battery soon at Eraring Power Station.

We are incredibly proud of this achievement and the contribution it makes to the Hunter region's rich manufacturing tradition. Your acknowledgement of our efforts reinforces our commitment to driving innovation and contributing to a strong and sustainable manufacturing sector in Australia.

We also commend you and the Government on the introduction of the Future Made in Australia Bill 2024. This legislation demonstrates a clear commitment to establishing Australia as a key player in the global net zero transformation. The production tax incentives for renewable hydrogen and critical minerals are particularly encouraging, providing much-needed clarity and certainty for businesses like ours to invest in these vital industries.

The emphasis on community benefits and local job creation within the Bill aligns perfectly with our own values at The Melt. We believe that sustainable manufacturing should benefit not only the economy but also the communities in which we operate. Thank you again for your support and leadership.

We look forward to continuing to contribute to a future made in Australia, driven by innovation, collaboration, and a commitment to a cleaner, more prosperous future for all.

Yours faithfully,

Trent Bagnall
CEO, The Melt

Response to the Letter
of Congratulations from
Senator the Hon Tim Ayres

MMC CASE STUDY 2

HUNTER MANUFACTURING AWARDS TROPHIES





PROJECT SCOPE

The Hunter Manufacturing Awards are champions for vibrant and enduring manufacturing in our region. The Hunter's industrial heritage spans more than two centuries. As a result, the region hosts one of the most highly skilled workforces in the country, offering unparalleled longevity in productivity and innovation in manufacturing.

With manufacturing in the Hunter regions' DNA, the sector goes from strength to strength; pivoting to a future that is high skill and high tech. Sector leaders are innovators and collaborators working across networks and supply chains. They are outward-looking with a business strategy that is future-focused and agile.

The HMA's are recognising and promoting excellence through streamlined awards.

With this being the 20th year of celebrating manufacturing excellence in The Hunter, the MMC was asked to design and manufacture a new prestigious trophy that recipients would be proud to showcase. The brief was to design a trophy that celebrated the past and utilised the modern manufacturing techniques and technologies exemplified within the MMC.



MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR HMA AWARD TROPHIES DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE

The MMC went through a public tender process by the HMA board and was successful. The materials and finishes chosen tell of a journey from traditional manufacturing to more accurate CNC subtractive manufacturing methods, with a 3D printed metal element made using additive manufacturing technologies, highlighting the Hunter Manufacturing roots and new advanced manufacturing techniques at the MMC to support Hunter manufacturing into the future.

PROJECT ELEMENTS

Hunter Manufacturing Awards Design and Manufacture of Gala Event Trophies.

Design and Prototyping

HIGHLIGHTS

6 prototype designs

2 final designs – for award category winners and also for the overall winner of the Manufacturers of the Year

19 trophies produced

LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT

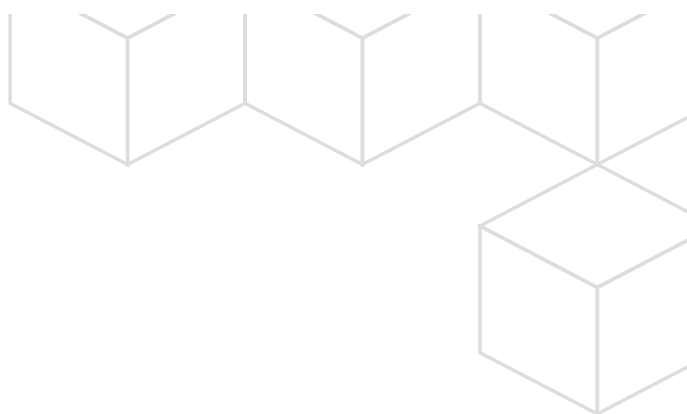
August - October 2024
(with ongoing supply for the HMA Gala ceremonies in 2025 and 2026)

MMC EQUIPMENT USED

- Hartford 3 axis CNC Milling Centre
- Doosan 1600 CNC Lathe
- Markforged Metal X 3D Printer
- Markforged Onyx Pro 3D Printer
- SolidWorks CAD Design
- Fusion 360 CAM Programming

MATERIAL PROCURED

- PVC
- HDPE
- Aluminium
- Copper
- Stainless Steel
- Nylon
- Carbon Fibre



Design Proposal

Spine is 3D printed in copper using Marked Forge Metal X. Denotes advancement and the future of manufacturing technologies



Upper profile is a nod to the saw tooth roof lines of many manufacturing facilities (Wire mill at Mayfield)

Third step is polished aluminium after CNC process denoting accuracy and attention to detail

Second step is CNC aluminium denoting advancement to digital age of manufacturing

First step is brushed aluminium denoting basic, raw material form and finish.

MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

The trophies produced at the MMC will remain the design for the HMA awards for the next 3 years.

At the commencement of the Gala Event in front of the assembled 420 Hunter manufactures and media, John Klinkenberg, The Melt's Senior Industrial Designer presented a 5-minute speech to outline the design and the production process undertaken at the MMC.

JOHN KLINKENBERG
PRINCIPAL INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER AT THE MELT

Involvement in the HMA will undoubtedly lift the profile of the MMC amongst Hunter manufactures and attract new manufactures to use the facility and either set up business or use the suppliers that exist in the Muswellbrook shire.

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MMC CASE STUDY 3

GLENCORE OT MICRO- CREDENTIALS PROGRAM

GLENCORE



PROJECT SCOPE

Glencore Mangoola Coal Mine faces challenges attracting and retaining skilled Operational Technology (OT) technicians and engineers.

To address this, Glencore partnered with The Melt to develop a targeted series of bespoke OT Micro-credential training modules to address the critical skills shortage at the Mangoola Coal Mine.

The program includes 40+ modules of content developed in collaboration between the Mangoola OT team and The Melt. The content is being delivered by subject matter experts to upskill existing Mangoola staff to support their internal OT systems, ensuring enhanced safety, improved efficiency, and greater reliability at the mine.

The training program combines theoretical knowledge with practical, hands-on laboratory exercises conducted at the MMC. Program participants gain direct experience with systems similar to those used onsite, such as industrial computing, networking systems, cybersecurity tools, digital communication technologies, and plant automation systems.



MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR OT MICRO-CREDENTIAL TRAINING

Development of the OT Micro-credential training modules began in February 2024, with practical labs starting at the MMC in June 2024.

During the year, 14 technicians and 4 engineering students have completed the program, with many more commencing self-paced learning with support from The Melt and Glencore OT team members.

Participants have expressed complete satisfaction, particularly praising the practical lab sessions at the MMC. Due to the program's success, other mining organisations have expressed interest in accessing these courses.

PROJECT ELEMENTS

Develop and Deliver OT
Micro-credential training modules

HIGHLIGHTS

40+ modules of content to be created
18 training participants to date
100% satisfaction rating from participants
3 Glencore OT team member partners
2 The Melt team members developing and delivering content and lab workshops

LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT

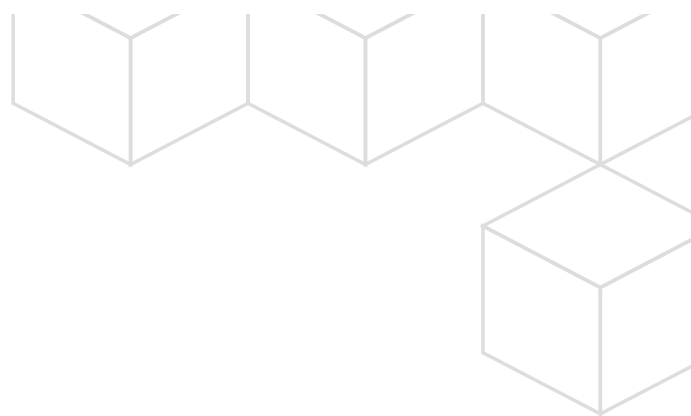
February 2024 - Ongoing development of module content and delivery of lab workshops

MMC EQUIPMENT USED

OT Lab space setup within the MMC for participants to learn and validate their understanding of the content

MATERIAL PROCURED

Various components supplied and installed at the MMC by Glencore to replicate onsite equipment



MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

The collaboration between Glencore, The Melt, and MMC benefits local industry and the community. The training provides Glencore's workforce with essential OT skills that are tailored to Mangoola's local needs. This helps improve productivity and safety and supports local employment.

Industry stakeholders have praised the program for effectively developing skills. The Melt intends to leverage the success of this initiative to support other large local Muswellbrook mining companies and local businesses facing similar OT skills shortages.

The program strengthens MMC's role as a key regional resource. It positions Muswellbrook as a centre for modern manufacturing and technical skills training.

Mangoola EEM stated:

"The partnership between Glencore and MMC shows the benefits of focused skills training. It highlights how strategic collaborations boost operational capabilities and local self-sufficiency through skilled workers."

- Beau Jackson Glencore Mangoola

KEY BENEFITS IDENTIFIED BY GLENCORE INCLUDE:

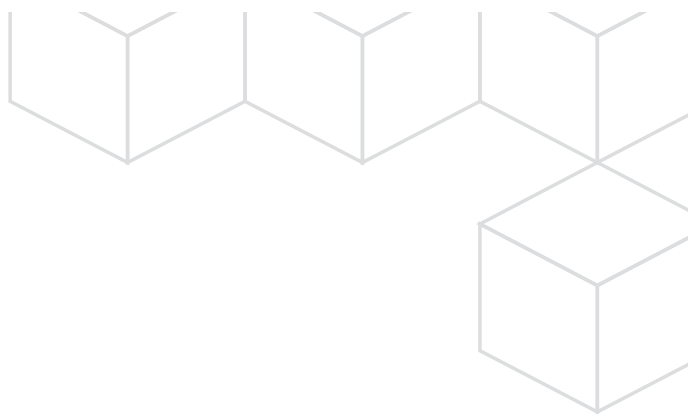
Existing electrical tradespeople now feel they can expand their qualifications and have greater job security.

OT technicians appreciate having a facility to test new OT concepts and hardware before onsite implementation.

Supervisors have increased confidence in their team's competence and can better identify capability gaps, enabling targeted training and support.

MMC CASE STUDY 4 : STARTUP REFILLED SUSTAINABLE DRINKS DISPENSER

Refilled



PROJECT SCOPE

Australia alone produces 350M+ single-use plastic bottles every year. When not recycled these can take over 400 years to break down, causing further issues as micro-plastics end up in our oceans, fresh water sources and food chain.

To address this problem the Refilled team has developed a new type of plastic-free drinks dispenser giving people a sustainable alternative to grab a still or sparkling flavoured drink on the go.

Refilled is a Sydney-based technology company building a sustainable alternative for beverage brands, organisations and consumers to go plastic-free.

Their circular economy tech uses a subscription model and involves a plumbed in, IoT enabled drink dispenser, smart QR coded drink bottles and a companion app.

Founder Ryan Nelson came up with the idea after a gym session when he had an empty reusable bottle, but the bubbler was broken, and the only alternative was to purchase a one-use-only soft drink from a vending machine.

The Refilled solution is projected to help eliminate 1 billion single-use plastic bottles by 2030.



MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR REFILLED SUSTAINABLE DRINK DISPENSER

The MMC was contacted by Refilled to design and manufacture a key component; the refiller drink diffuser which needs to accurately mix water and drink syrups to achieve a consistent delivery of drinks to the consumer.

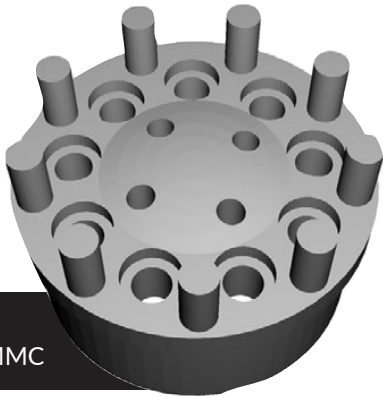
Currently these parts are primarily manufactured in Europe and are not able to be improved and redesigned.

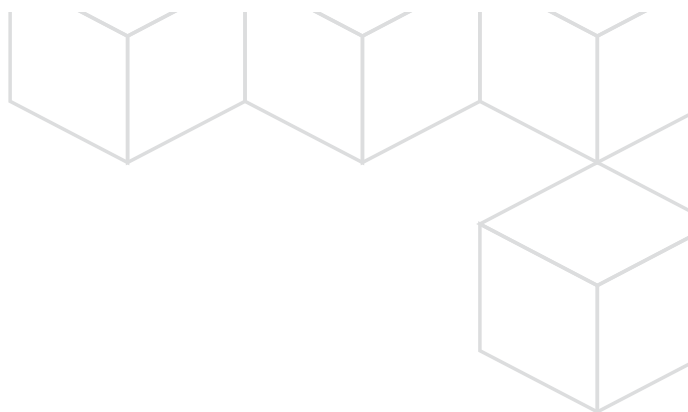
The MMC team created 3D CAD designs and produced several prototypes using the 3D printers at the Muswellbrook MMC.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	HIGHLIGHTS	LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
Diffuser Design and Prototyping	14 prototypes Design adopted and installed in 100+ customer installed machines Clients include; CANVA, Atlassian, Google, UTS, University of Sydney, Uber, Meta, JP Morgan and Aspire Lounges etc	Jan 2024-Ongoing

MMC EQUIPMENT USED	MATERIAL PROCURED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ultimaker S5 3D Printer• Cubic Resin 3D Printer• SolidWorks CAD Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PVC• HDPE• Carbon Fibre

A drink dispenser head prototype designed and constructed at the MMC





MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

Refilled has deployed the refiller to an exciting list of customers including the likes Google, Atlassian, Uber, Meta, JP Morgan, and Aspire Lounges and through the support of the MMC is aiming to expand its offering to mining and utility companies in the Upper Hunter Valley as a sustainable rehydration station.



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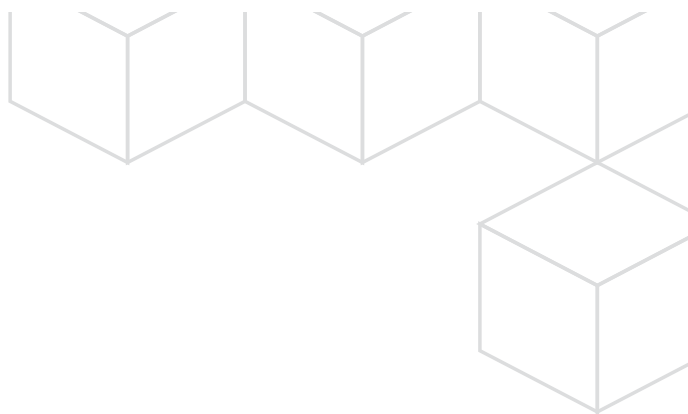
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MMC CASE STUDY 5

HUNTER NEW ENGLAND LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT EXCELLENCE AWARDS



Health
Hunter New England
Local Health District



PROJECT SCOPE

Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD) has one of the most ambitious sustainability strategies across New South Wales Health. They are aiming to be carbon and waste neutral by 2030 and feel it is no longer possible to deliver health care to our community without addressing the health of the environment.

Hunter New England Local Health District approached the MMC to collaborate with Hunter recycling business Resourceful Living to design and produce their Excellence Award trophies using recycled plastics from their renal dialysis units.



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MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR HUNTER NEW ENGLAND LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT EXCELLENCE AWARD

Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD) engaged the MMC to design, manufacture, and assemble their annual Excellence Awards.

As the largest local health district in New South Wales including facilities in Muswellbrook and Denman, HNELHD sought a complete redesign of the awards with a strong emphasis on sustainability and reuse.

Central to the project was the incorporation of recycled materials - specifically, repurposed plastic waste sourced from HNELHD's renal unit. The MMC was responsible for the precision machining of the award plaques and the final assembly of all components, delivering a refined and environmentally conscious finished product.

PROJECT ELEMENTS

Hunter New England Local Health District Design and Manufacture of Award Trophies

HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 prototype designs
- 2 final designs – for award category winners and also for the overall winner
- 15 trophies produced

LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT

September 2024 (with ongoing supply in 2025)

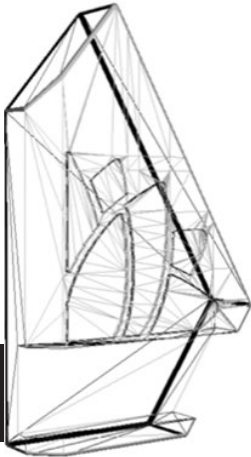
MMC EQUIPMENT USED

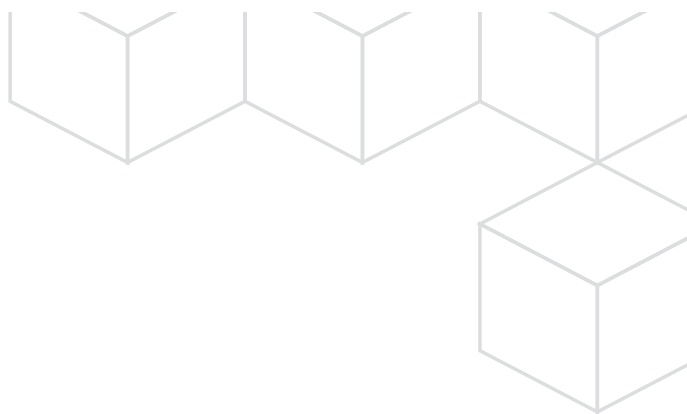
- Hartford 3 axis CNC Milling Centre
- Ultimaker S5 3D Printer
- SolidWorks CAD Design
- Fusion 360 CAM Programming

MATERIAL PROCURED

- HDPE
- Aluminium
- Stainless Steel
- Nylon
- Carbon Fibre

The trophies were designed using the latest CAD programming at the MMC

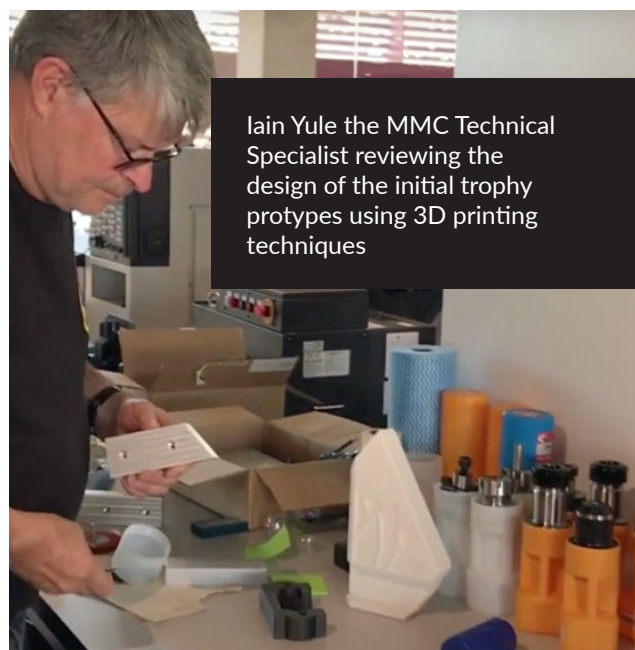




MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

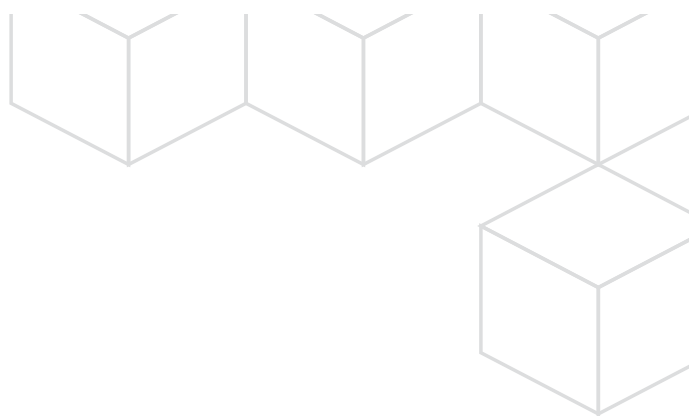
The program managed to divert more than 117 kilograms of plastic waste from the HNELHD renal dialysis units, that would otherwise go to landfill. This has saved 632 kilograms of carbon emissions, which is roughly equivalent to charging 75 thousand smartphones.

The success of this collaboration led to the adoption of the same design and approach by NSW Public Works and the Western NSW Local Health District. With new awards expected to be made at the MMC for several years to come.



MMC CASE STUDY 6 : LOCAL STARTUP LOCKBLOCK





PROJECT SCOPE

Local Muswellbrook founder, Shaun Barker from HAE Group created the LockBlock as a solution to a common and dangerous problem encountered in the mining industry.

The mining sector and many heavy vehicle industries are required to install electrical isolator switches to allow service trades people to turn off the power to the vehicle whilst undergoing service and maintenance work. The switches have provision for an isolation padlock to be applied to prevent the vehicle from being started whilst people are still working on the vehicle. Unfortunately, the padlock can be unintentionally applied whilst the power is still on, giving the false environment of safety and creating a life-threatening and highly dangerous situation.

HAE Group solved this problem by creating the LockBlock device. The LockBlock product is integrated onto the isolation switches. The LockBlock provides a physical barrier to prevent a safety padlock from being applied whilst the power is still on. The padlock can only be applied once the isolator switch has been turned to the off position.



MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR LOCKBLOCK DESIGN AND PROTOTYPING

Beginning in 2024 and continuing into 2025 the MMC provided full design iteration and prototyping services to HAE Group to develop this product.

Local Muswellbrook resident Shaun Barker contacted The Melt for support. The Melt Principal Engineer Clint Bruin and Technical Specialist Iain Yule met with Shaun to discuss the identified problem and the potential solution. Shaun provided an initial concept design for the LockBlock solution. The Melt conducted a technical review of the problem and proposed solution.

Shaun had a very clear vision for the solution but required technical support for CAD design and prototype construction and development.

At the end of the first meeting The Melt had created a SolidWorks CAD design of the first prototype and converted this to an STL file for 3D printing. The first prototype was 3D printed on the same day, and Shaun was able to collect the part and take it with him for assessment.

Following this there have been 24 design iterations, and 16 prototypes developed to date through design modifications and enhancements.

With the diversity of advanced manufacturing equipment on offer at the MMC, complex design outcomes were achieved without HAE Group needing to invest in any equipment to develop the product from ideation through to a production ready part.

Efficiency and speed are the outcomes of interacting with technical specialists who have a diverse skill set in operating the broad variety of equipment within the MMC. Removing the need for in-house re-training and upskilling.



PROJECT ELEMENTS	HIGHLIGHTS	LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
LockBlock Design and Prototyping	16 prototypes 24 iterations 10 working products for testing Assisted with vendor selection for initial production	Jan 2024-Ongoing
MMC EQUIPMENT USED	MATERIAL PROCURED	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ultimaker S5 3D Printer• Cubic Resin 3D Printer• SolidWorks CAD Design• Hartford 3 axis CNC Milling Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carbon Fibre Nylon• PLA 3D print• ABS 3D print• PVC machined• Resin 3D print	

MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

HAE Group has produced a trial batch of LockBlock units. These have been fitted to the isolator switches and installed on 10 mining vehicles at the Glencore Mangoola site. The units are currently undergoing service testing and evaluation.

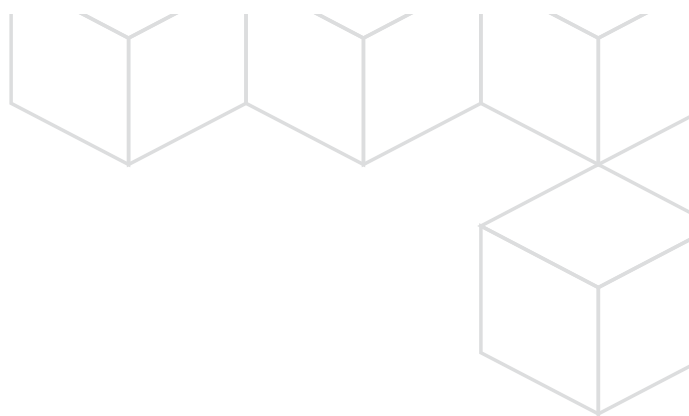
Following the successful evaluation process, it is envisaged that Glencore will install approximately 200 of these units on their vehicles and mining plant that have an isolator installed. Each isolator has a service replacement interval of approximately two years.

HAE Group is currently outsourcing manufacturing of the product. Moving forward they are investigating the purchase of equipment to establish their own manufacturing facility in the local Muswellbrook region.

MMC CASE STUDY 7

THE MELT ENGAGE 2024 CLEANTECH PRE-ACCELERATOR PROGRAM





PROJECT SCOPE

The second year of The Melt ENGAGE Cleantech Accelerator Program has seen a great upswing in momentum.

An impressive cohort of 20 high calibre, mature climate tech/ cleantech participants from 17 emerging businesses that were highly engaged across the three-day program. Our target of 25 participants was deliberately ambitious considering our regional location.

The 2024 program participation represents an impressive increase of 180% on the 11 participants (from 11 emerging businesses) that attended the inaugural 2023 program.

We had 177 emerging businesses submit inquiries about joining our programs and/or seeking venture funding since the start of this project. However, we are very selective about who can participate because they must meet with the objectives of the project and be cleantech focused.

WE ARE VERY PLEASED AT THE GROWTH OF THE PROGRAM IN ONLY ITS SECOND YEAR, ESPECIALLY AS THE PROGRAM IS:

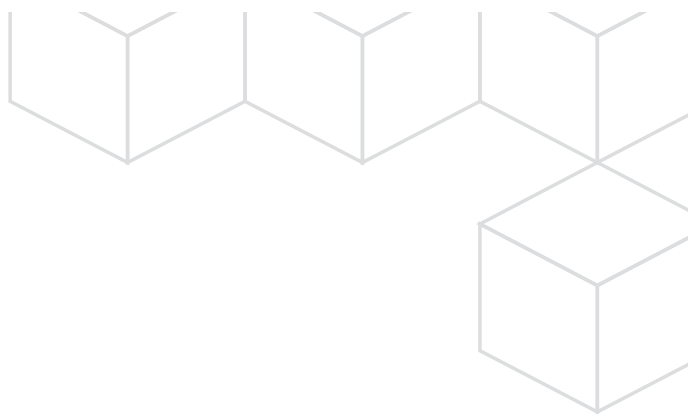
Focused on cleantech/ climate tech founders building physical products (traditionally a very smaller pool).

Delivered in Muswellbrook, a regional centre 3 hours' drive north-west from Sydney where most of the innovation ecosystem activity exists within NSW.

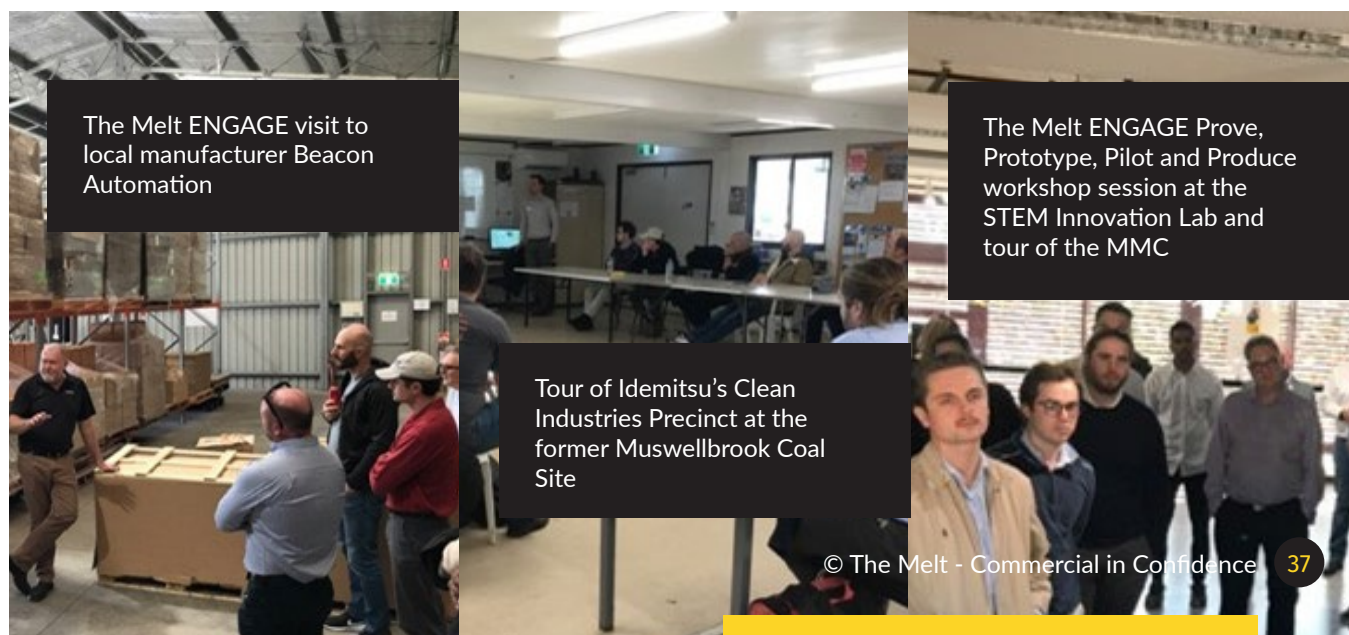


OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPATING EMERGING BUSINESSES IN 2024

- **Vesi Water** (New England based founder): providing water security and decarbonising the water trucking industry through next generation Atmospheric Water Generation (AWG) technology and is deploying it through Water as a Service (WaaS) commercial offer. Vesi's technology extracts water from the atmosphere.
- **Australian Electric Vehicle Specialists** (Hunter based founder): manufacturers of bolt-in electric conversion kits in the Asia Pacific region, so any automotive workshop can bolt-in one of their electric conversion kits rather than simply rebuilding the old internal combustion engineer.
- **Leverage eFuel** (Sydney based founder): provide carbon emission abatement as a service to industries that need to emit carbon at scale in order to operate. Their full chain carbon capture utilisation service is used to produce e-SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuel) that is sold to the airline industry.
- **tepy.ai** (Sydney based founder): developing an AI-integrated wearable Bluetooth device with silent speech recognition that enables people to interface with their smartphones and computers voice-free, eyes-free and hands-free to help them adapt to the built environment without requiring building modifications that are carbon intensive.
- **AusBioEnergy** (Sydney based founder): Using sustainable, traceable biomass to replace fossil fuels, AusBioEnergy is a biofuel production and delivery infrastructure business that will help solve Australia's fuel security issues, reduce transport emissions, and create a new domestic and export industry.
- **EM Energy** (Hunter based founder): devised a solution known as the Organic Hydrogen Electrolyser Cell (OHEC). This breakthrough technology produces hydrogen from abundant organic materials using organic chemistry. In contrast to conventional methods, the OHEC eliminates the need for energy or water as crucial inputs for hydrogen production.
- **Akula Energy** (Melbourne based founder): a green hydrogen energy company that uses novel electrolyser technology to produce hydrogen from sea/salt water directly. This leads to a significantly lowered levelized cost of hydrogen for off-taker, accelerating commercial adoption.
- **Hydroxsys** (New Zealand based founder): Minimise your wastewater streams and maximise sustainability with next-generation Hydroxsys membrane filtration technology.
- **FlynnAir** (Muswellbrook based founder): venturi hydraulic technology that enables fluid to remain in a tank on mining equipment while work is being safely done which reduces the need to empty those substantial amounts of mostly fossil fuel oils to waste.
- **RAM Manufacturing** (Hunter based founders)- Echidna Strip: a recycled plastic carpet gripper that is an alternative to the current single-use product used in residential and commercial carpet installation. It supports the circular economy by minimising waste and the extraction of new materials, aligns with global sustainability goals and manufactured within NSW.



- **APT Specialist Hydraulics and Training** (Hunter based founder): Training for trades working in clean tech using VR and AR technology.
- **Alion Energy** (Central Coast based founder): automated solar PV technology that increases the efficiency and ease of maintenance of solar PV.
- **Totex** (Melbourne based founder): Residential sustainable heating and cooling through an all-in-one system that provides heating, cooling, hot water, and even pool heating.
- **WinnWave** (Hunter based founder): developed a horizontal axis Parametric Pendulum Wave Energy Converter (PPWEC) to generate grid scale renewable electricity from near shore and offshore ocean waves.
- **Always Carbon** (Sydney based founder): Always Carbon permanently removes carbon from the atmosphere by delivering Biochar projects.
- **Loop Hydrometallurgy** (Sydney based founder): Electrowinning cell for copper production onsite (alternative to historic smelting process).
- **NextGen Hydro** (Muswellbrook based founders): in-line hydro innovation coupled to a Permanent Magnetic Generator, that will provide a consistent 24-hour power supply, as long as there is a source of mechanical movement (in this case water flow, through their in-line hydro system) for all consumers no matter the scale.



MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM DELIVERY

The MMC boasts incredible facilities that enable the program to be delivered in a unique and compelling way. On Day 1, the formalities and program presentations occur within the STEM Innovation Lab utilising a classroom style layout. Participants are treated to an extensive introduction to The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre capabilities and services.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	HIGHLIGHTS	LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
Program Design, Recruitment and Delivery	<p>20 high calibre, mature climate tech/ cleantech participants from 17 emerging businesses</p> <p>177 emerging businesses have submitted inquiries about joining our programs and/or seeking venture funding</p> <p>100% of participants would recommend the program, with an average program rating of 4.9/5</p> <p>Publicity and feedback on socials were excellent. The volume of impressions on LinkedIn posts alone was in excess of 12,000 per month in March, April, May and June during the marketing, recruitment and delivery phases. Pleasingly, this was a 20% boost on engagement from the previous year</p>	May 2024



MMC FACILITIES USED

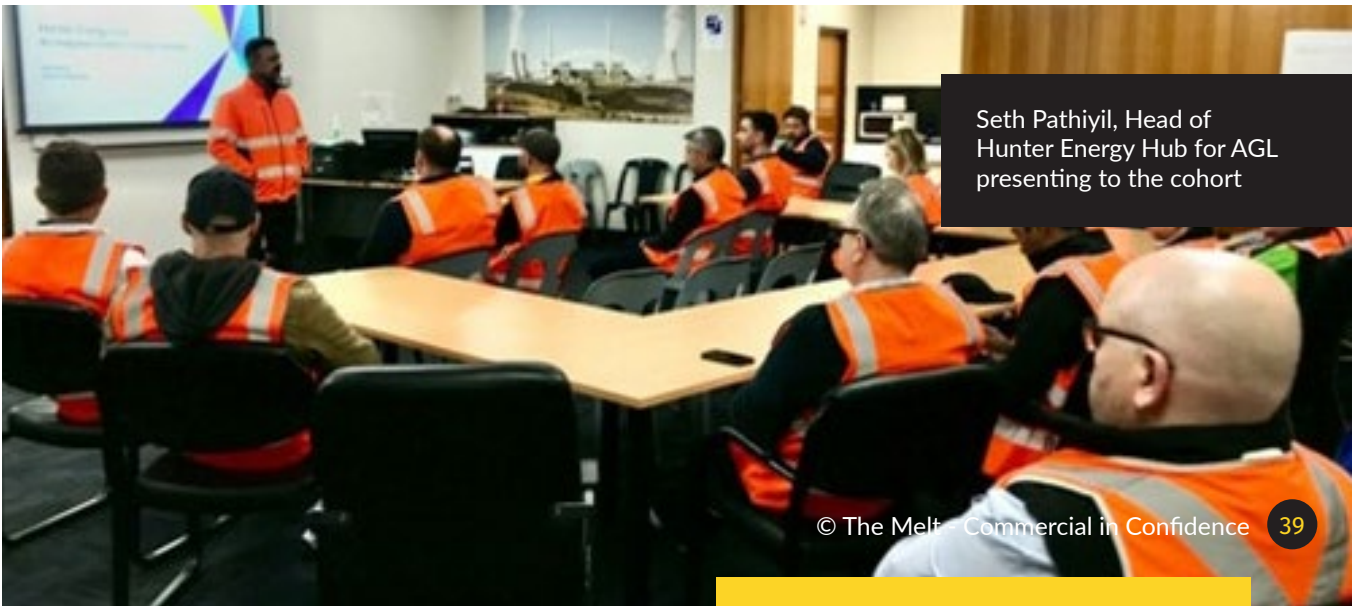
STEM Innovation Lab and MMC for content delivery

PROGRAM PARTNERS

- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- NSW Government
- AGL

PROGRAM LOCAL SUPPORTERS

- Idemitsu Australia
- Rarekind
- Ethtec
- Beacon Automation
- Two Rivers
- Muswellbrook Regional Gallery
- Pukara Estate
- DoublePicc
- Royal Hotel
- Eatons
- Allegro Energy
- Resourceful Living

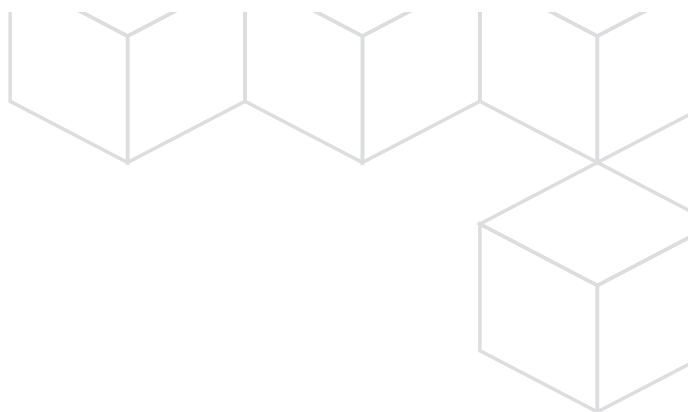


MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

The Melt ENGAGE program consisted of 21 elements that included formal and informal presentations, site tours and visits to Muswellbrook's innovative manufacturing businesses, plus the AGL Hunter Energy Hub and Idemitsu's Clean Industries Precinct, plus unique culinary experiences at Two Rivers and Pukara Estate. Catering and hotel accommodation is all provided locally.

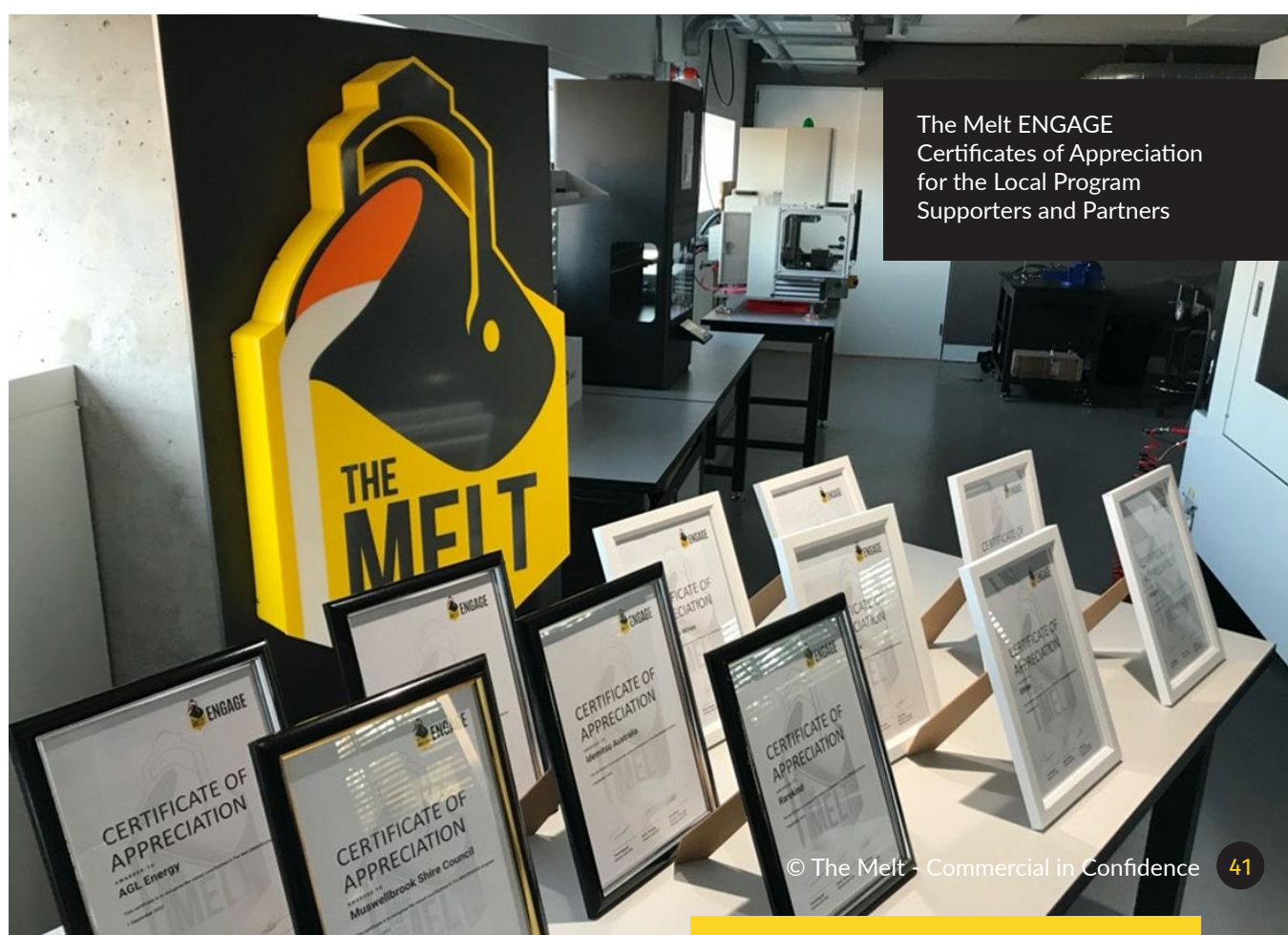
The 3-day event was a resounding success. 100% of participants indicated in a survey that they would recommend the program, with an average program rating of 4.9/5. From the feedback gathered, participants found the following experiences the most valuable:

- **AGL and Idemitsu Tours:** These tours stood out for showcasing how traditional energy players are adapting to the energy transition. Seth Pathiyil's clear and engaging presentation at AGL, and the insight into Idemitsu's challenges and future plans, deeply resonated with participants. The tours were appreciated for providing a firsthand look at how these companies are innovating and driving change in the industry, with some participants identifying business opportunities at Idemitsu.
- **Allegro Energy Tour:** The visit to Allegro was praised for demonstrating the power of focused investment and momentum. Co-founder Fraser Hughson's insights into their journey, particularly around simplicity in execution and recent capital raises, were timely and relevant for participants undergoing similar phases in their own ventures.
- **Hunter Innovators and Startup Panels:** These sessions, included Bruce Richards, General Manager of Beacon Automation and Jess Hodge, co-founder of Resourceful Living, were inspiring for their entrepreneurial journeys. The emphasis on agility, innovation, and testing market demand resonated with attendees, offering actionable advice for evolving businesses.
- **Manufacturing Insights:** Presentations from Clint Bruins' "The Melt 4Ps Process" were highlighted for their clarity and expertise, leaving participants with practical and coherent systems to implement in their own businesses. The Ethtec site tour was also noted for providing impactful insights into manufacturing in Australia.
- **Networking and Regional Experience:** The winery tours and the overall experience of touring the Hunter Valley were valuable from a networking perspective. Participants appreciated the opportunity to connect in a unique setting and experience the region's industrial and cultural offerings.



The publicity and feedback on social media were excellent. The volume of impressions on LinkedIn posts related to the program being run from the MMC alone was in excess of 12,000 per month in March, April, May and June during the marketing, recruitment and delivery phases. Pleasingly, this outperformed our expectations and was a 20% boost on engagement from the previous year.

The Melt ENGAGE Pre-Accelerator program is an incredible way to showcase the benefits and opportunities that Muswellbrook can offer emerging businesses, particularly those who are creating novel physical products.

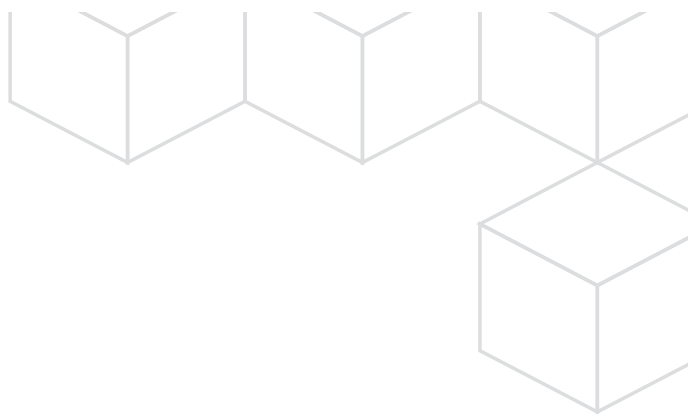


MMC CASE STUDY 8

THE MELT NOVA 2024 CLEANTECH ACCELERATOR AND PILOT ENABLER PROGRAM



ACCELERATOR



PROJECT SCOPE

The second year of The Melt NOVA Accelerator and Pilot Enabler Program has also seen great momentum.

The Melt NOVA program is ongoing and operates year-round. We are continuing to provide services and functions aligned with our program initiatives through four key modules being; Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs), Business Case Development, Enterprise Sales Training and Productioneering.

The Melt takes a long-term approach to supporting all our program participants throughout their entire lifecycle. The timelines and trajectories of hardware startups/scaleups are highly variable. Due to the ongoing, flexible nature of the program, companies can participate in multiple modules and therefore participate across multiple years.



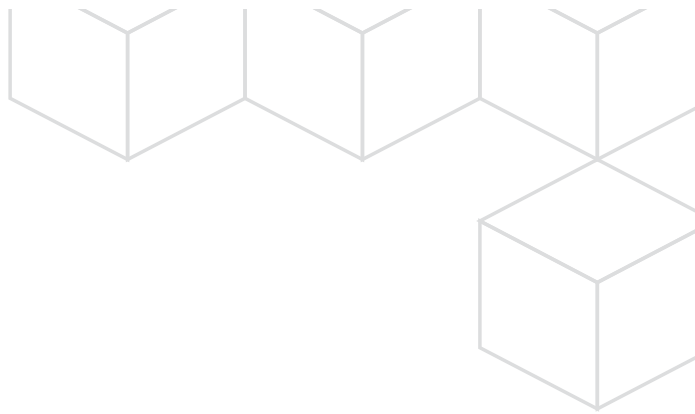
The Melt CTO Clint Bruin and Technical Specialist Iain Yule assisting The Melt NOVA Program Scaleups

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The Melt is delighted to have achieved the target number for 2024 of 9 startups/scaleups participating in The Melt NOVA program. They are listed as follows:

- **Allegro Energy:** participating in our (1) productioneering module and (2) LCA module to support delivery of their 800kWh pilot system at Origin Energy's Eraring Power Station. Significant support has been provided to Allegro Energy this year with 2 FTE The Melt personnel (Productioneering Expert and Industrial Designer) embedded within the Allegro team to help them design, deliver and deploy the pilot system. The pilot system is a huge milestone for Allegro as it will allow them to work towards delivering a 5MW battery at Eraring. At the 2024 Hunter Manufacturing Awards gala event, The Melt, Allegro Energy and Muswellbrook Shire Council received the Collaboration Partnership Award. This was direct validation that The Melt's Cleantech Accelerator and Pilot Enabler project is making a meaningful difference. Our efforts gained significant exposure at the awards event attended by 420 delegates and through a variety of media including social, print and TV. The Melt also provided investor relations support to Allegro in their latest Series A raise of \$17.5M (which Melt Ventures was pleased to follow-on)
- **Endua:** participated in our LCA module for their pilot Power Bank System to provide them quantified impacts to provide transparency to stakeholders and support sustainable decision making.
- **Refilled:** participated in our LCA module for their Refiller machines to provide them quantified impacts to provide transparency to stakeholders, support sustainable decision making and secure new customers. Additional support is also being provided with investor relations. AGL is considering the installation of a Refiller, which is a direct consequence of The Melt's Cleantech Accelerator and Pilot Enabler project of which AGL is a program partner. Other customers include Atlassian, Google, Canva, Microsoft, JP Morgan etc
- **Aquacultr:** participated in our Business Case Development Module to help them secure pilot customers for their sustainable barramundi farms and Enterprise Sales to help them secure a corporate partner for investment and distribution opportunities. AGL is keeping an eye on the development of this scaling business.
- **MGA Thermal:** investor relations support was provided during their latest raise of \$5.7M (which Melt Ventures was pleased to follow-on). This latest raise will significantly aid their mission to decarbonise large-scale global industries and prove the scale and industrial capabilities of their thermal energy storage systems. Total raised to date is \$31m
- **NewEra Bio:** supporting them with investment, introductions to potential customers and other co-investors, grant writing and exploring support through our LCA module.
- **Hullbot:** supporting them with grant support and grant writing, introductions to potential customers and/or partners in the Hunter Region to scale up their manufacturing capability and exploring support through our LCA module.
- **AusBioEnergy:** participated in our Business Case module where we supported them with a review of their business model and business case.
- **Plasma Leap:** supporting them with investment and introductions to potential customers and investors.



MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM DELIVERY

The MMC facilities combined with The Melt's technical specialist team enable the program to be delivered in a unique and compelling way that is tailored to the needs of each scaling business, whatever their growth stage and trajectory.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	HIGHLIGHTS	LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
Program Design, Recruitment and Delivery	<p>9 high calibre climate tech/ cleantech scaleups are participating in the program</p> <p>100% of participants would recommend the program, with an average program rating of 5/5</p> <p>Publicity and feedback on social and traditional media channels including radio, print and digital</p> <p>Allegro Energy and MGA Thermal continue to successfully attract significant investment and grant funding (circa \$50m)</p>	May 2024 - Ongoing
MMC FACILITIES USED	PROGRAM PARTNERS	PROGRAM LOCAL SUPPORTERS
MMC for prototyping and pilot plant component building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Muswellbrook Shire CouncilNSW GovernmentAGL	Local service providers have provided materials and network connections to supply chains

MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

The Melt NOVA program is assisting emerging companies to scale. The MMC provides support to those emerging businesses with the aim of encouraging them to leverage local manufacturing and other service providers, supply chains, and potentially consider setting up manufacturing, production, warehousing or distribution centres of their own within the Muswellbrook LGA.

Economic diversification is a key focus of Muswellbrook's Council and The Melt NOVA Program is providing an avenue to entice future industries into the LGA.

On 28 March 2024, the Federal Government announced it will invest \$1 billion in the new Solar Sunshot Program. The announcement occurred at the former Liddell Power Station and included Mayor Steve Reynolds and several key Ministers who are responsible for energy transition related portfolios. The program seeks to support the commercialisation of Australian solar photovoltaic (PV) innovations and to enhance solar PV supply chains in Australia. The MMC and The Melt's NOVA (and ENGAGE) programs will assist such companies with that Commercialisation process within the Muswellbrook LGA.



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MMC CASE STUDY 9

3D TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

***“FROM 3D SCAN TO
3D PRINT”*** SHOWCASE



PROJECT SCOPE

The Melt in association with technology partners Central Innovation, Quarry Mining, CBTech and Markforged hosted an Industry Showcase titled "From 3D Scan to 3D Print: A 3D Technology Showcase".

The event was held at the MMC and attracted a diverse range of attendees from the local community, industry, academia and students to witness a demonstration of the 3D technologies available within the facility.

Each event partner provided the audience with a presentation of their products and services that together defined the workflow process from 3D scanning to 3D CAD design using SolidWorks software to create a model that could then be 3D printed using the Markforged printers within the MMC. Quarry Mining provided a range of sophisticated applications for 3D printed parts that they supply to their mining clients as examples.



From 3D Scan to 3D Print A 3D TECHNOLOGY SHOWCASE

central
innovation

QUARRY
MINING
& CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT PTY LTD





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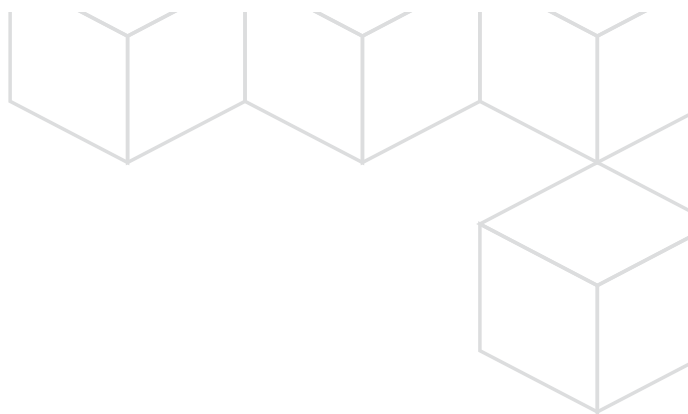
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MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM DELIVERY

The Hunter Innovation Precinct, Donald Horne Building was the perfect setting for this 3D technology showcase. The partner presentations were delivered in the STEM Innovation Lab and the 3D scanning and 3D printing demonstrations occurred in the MMC. Light refreshments were served in the foyer area.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	HIGHLIGHTS	LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
Industry Showcase Design, Recruitment and Delivery	32 attendees 4 presenters 9 partners representatives Extensive social media reach through partner reps Diverse media coverage	June 2024 – with intentions to continue an event series in 2025

MMC FACILITIES USED	PROGRAM PARTNERS	PROGRAM LOCAL SUPPORTERS
Partner presentations were delivered in the STEM Innovation Lab. The 3D scanning and 3D printing demonstrations occurred in the MMC. Refreshments were served in the foyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CBTech• Markforged• Central Innovation• Quarry Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Muswellbrook Shire Council• Power FM• ABC



MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

This event provided an excellent opportunity for local existing businesses, community members, students, startups and entrepreneurs to see practical demonstrations for the adoption and integration of 3D technologies into real world use cases and hear from industry experts.

The feedback from participants and partners was stellar. All partners have agreed to continue to explore additional events in 2025.



MMC CASE STUDY 10

BHP TRANSITION TO 2030
“TOMORROW TOGETHER
WORKFORCE CAREERS
SEMINAR” EVENT (X2)



PROJECT SCOPE

The Melt provided assistance to host the BHP Mt Arthur Coal Employee Transition Seminars at the MMC and STEM Innovation Lab in September 2024.

BHP held two evening events to ensure access for their shift working staff was achievable.

The objective was to share information with their employees about the future of jobs and industry in the Hunter, introduce them to our local education and training providers and course options available as well as provide an opportunity for engagement with Workforce Transition industry experts.

In total 80+ employees registered for the event.



MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR BHP TOMORROW TOGETHER WORKFORCE CAREERS SEMINAR EVENTS DELIVERY

The Hunter Innovation Precinct, Donald Horne Building was the perfect setting for these two Careers Seminars arranged by BHP in collaboration with The Melt.

BHP presented an update to their staff about the Transition to 2030 status and then a panel discussion followed. The Melt, TAFE, UoN, AGL and NSW Government Skills and Training Department representatives provided opinions about the future work opportunities within the Muswellbrook area. Reskilling, upskilling, entrepreneurship, and starting a new business were topics covered by the panelists.

The panels and presentations were delivered in the STEM Innovation Lab and the recruitment/ career progression specialists had booths setup in the entry foyer area where light refreshments were also served.

Attendees also toured the MMC. It was an excellent opportunity to showcase the facility and capability to those BHP staff who might be considering a career change into designing and building a physical product.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	HIGHLIGHTS	LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
Presentation and panel discussion, workforce transition expo, MMC facility tour	80+ participants registered 6 workforce transition industry expert companies exhibited their services 8 panellists provided information about the future of jobs and industry in the Hunter, and they were introduced to our local education and training providers	September 2024 – two events

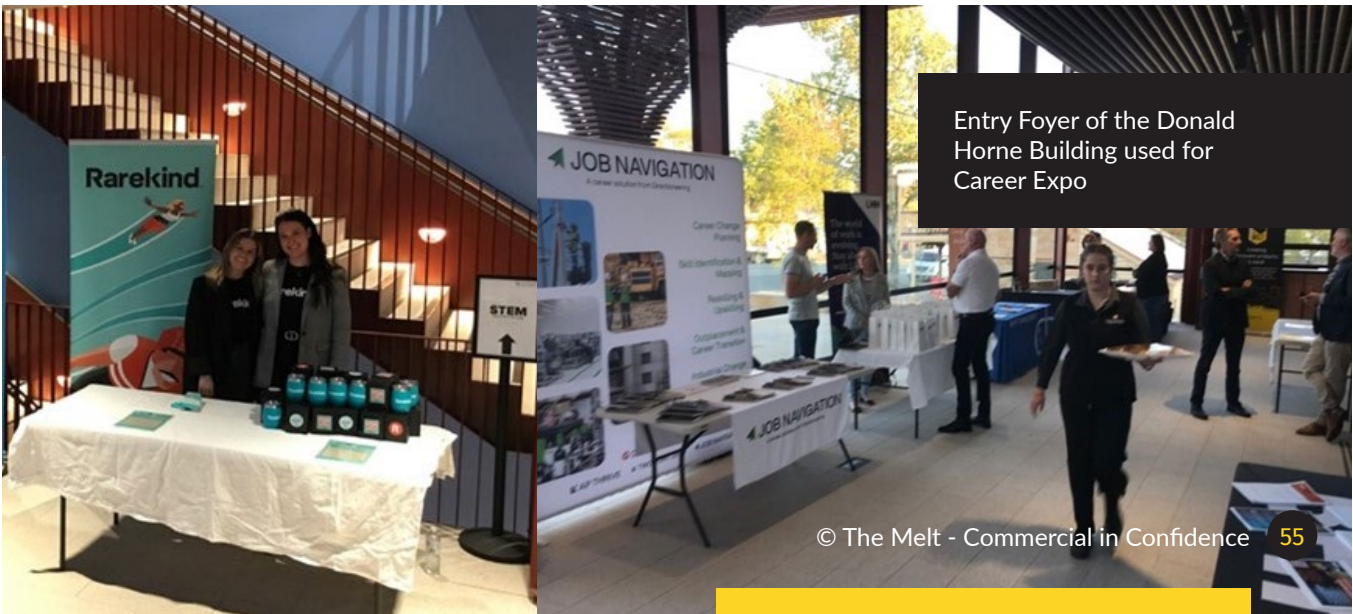


MMC FACILITIES USED	PROGRAM PARTNERS	PROGRAM LOCAL SUPPORTERS
MMC tour, STEM Innovation Lab for presentations and panel discussions and the entry foyer for industry expo and light refreshments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">BHPMuswellbrook Shire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">AGLNSW Government – Skills and TrainingUniversity of NewcastleTAFE

MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

As BHP prepares to cease its Mt Arthur coal mining activities in the leadup to 2030, the significance of these events could have meaningful impact in future career decision making processes for their current staff.

BHP’s objectives were fulfilled. Attendees received information about the future of jobs and industry in the Hunter and they were introduced to our local education and training providers and workforce transition industry experts.

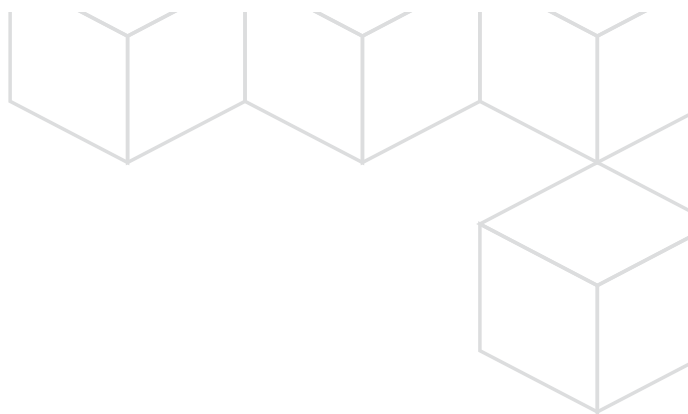


MMC CASE STUDY 11

NET ZERO ECONOMY AGENCY

*“WE’RE BRINGING NEW
ENERGY TO THE HUNTER”*

CAMPAIGN



PROJECT SCOPE

The Melt was asked to participate in the Australian Government's "We're Bringing New Energy to The Hunter" campaign because, in their words, "The Melt plays an important role in our local community and regularly communicate and share manufacturing and cleantech innovation information to audiences and key stakeholders".

"We're Bringing New Energy to The Hunter" is an exciting campaign run by the Net Zero Economy Authority. The campaign aims to provide information about Australia's energy transformation, illustrate the local impacts and opportunities for the Hunter region and help the community feel empowered to play an active role.



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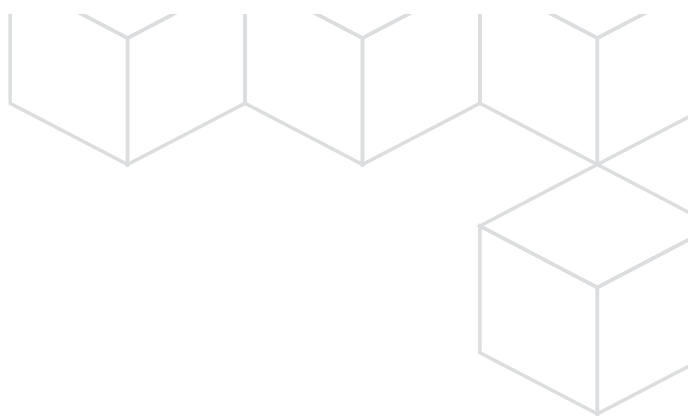
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MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR NET ZERO ECONOMY AGENCY “WE’RE BRINGING NEW ENERGY TO THE HUNTER” CAMPAIGN

The Melt’s COO and Director, Brett Thomas featured heavily in the campaign. This included on banners, posters, in print media, videos, sound bites for radio network distribution, video boards on the popup installations and on various websites.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	HIGHLIGHTS	LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
Written Case Study Content Development and Video for “A Future Made in Australia” website, plus TV, radio, advertorial popups and print media	<p>Broad and diverse promotion of MMC activities throughout the Hunter region and other coal mining and coal fired power station locations in NSW and Queensland</p> <p>It is likely that hundreds of thousands of people saw elements of the campaign</p> <p>Campaign managers Horizon Group reported that excellent feedback was received from audiences</p>	September - November 2024 (with potential for ongoing campaign involvement in 2025)

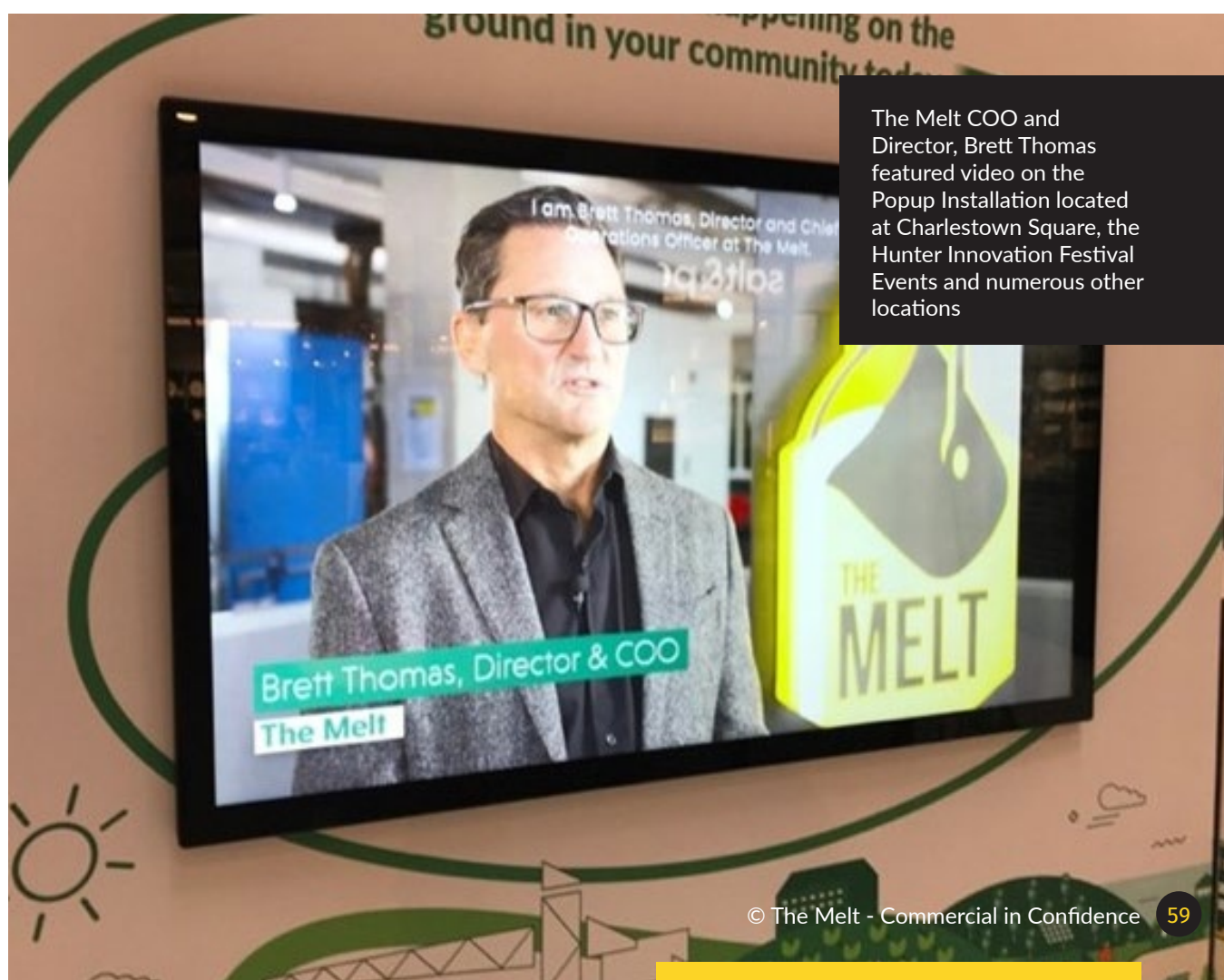
MMC FACILITIES USED	PROGRAM PARTNERS	PROGRAM LOCAL SUPPORTERS
MMC facilities were used to film video footage plus undertake various interviews with local radio and print journalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Net Zero Economy Agency• A Future Made in Australia• Federal Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2NM• Power FM• ABC• 2NUR• Coal Face Magazine• Newcastle Herald• NBN• Charlestown Square pop-up installation• Hunter Innovation Festival Roadshow events (x5)• Hunter Innovation Festival Conference Event• A Future Made in Australia (featured on website)



MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

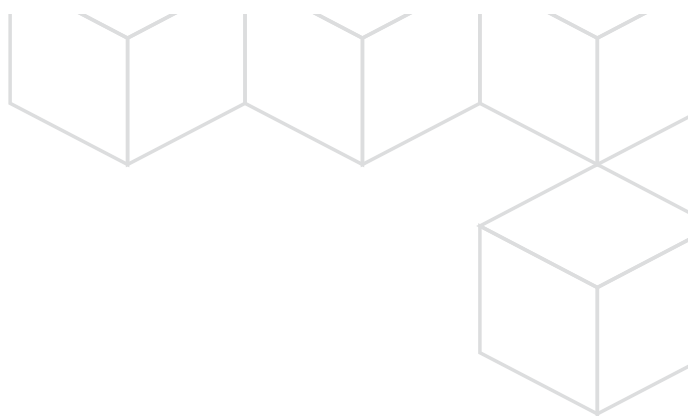
A stakeholder kit, which includes a range of educational resources in easy-to-share formats has been developed. It can be accessed by local community members.

The stakeholder kit is located on the website (visit: afuturemadeinaustralia.gov.au) and includes; infographics, animations, case studies (written and video) and FAQs.



MMC CASE STUDY 12

HUNTER INNOVATION FESTIVAL MUSWELLBROOK ROADSHOW EVENT



PROJECT SCOPE

The Hunter Innovation Festival is hosted by Hunter iF Limited, a for purpose organisation dedicated to accelerating innovation, developing collaboration, attracting and promoting knowledge, resources, and know-how to the Hunter innovation ecosystem.

The festival offers innovators and entrepreneurs anywhere from our local ecosystem to the national and international stage the opportunity to join us in Newcastle and the Hunter to contribute to our burgeoning knowledge economy.

Leveraging the success of previous Festivals, the event was extended to include a roadshow event in Muswellbrook to appeal to innovators to extend reach across the Greater Newcastle and Hunter region and beyond to the breadth of Australia.

The 2024 Muswellbrook Roadshow event was titled, "Harnessing the Power of Innovation: New Energy Project Opportunities". It was supported by The Melt and MSC and included an informative and inspiring keynote address by Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Assistant Minister for A Future Made in Australia and Assistant Minister for Trade, plus carefully curated presentations, panel discussions.

The event presentations were delivered to a full house in the STEM Innovation Lab and followed by a tour of the MMC facility.



Shaelee Richards, MSC
Director Community and
Economy Opening Address

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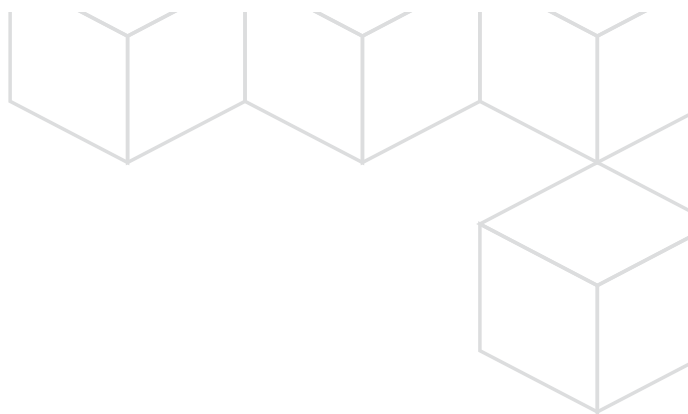
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MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR HUNTER INNOVATION FESTIVAL MUSWELLBROOK ROADSHOW EVENT

The Melt team provided event support, promotion, appeared on the speakers panel and hosted tours of the MMC.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	HIGHLIGHTS	LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
Hunter Innovation Festival Roadshow event, keynote address, panel discussion, industry presentations and tour of the MMC facilities	<p>35 attendees plus 15 presenters and event support team</p> <p>Broad and diverse promotion of MMC activities throughout the Hunter region</p> <p>Excellent feedback was received from the full house audience</p> <p>Senator the Hon Tim Ayres visit to Muswellbrook</p>	October 2024 (with potential for ongoing events in 2025)

MMC FACILITIES USED	PROGRAM PARTNERS	PROGRAM LOCAL SUPPORTERS
The STEM Innovation Lab and MMC facilities were used for the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MSC• AGL• Net Zero Economy Agency• A Future Made in Australia• Federal Government• HunterIF• NewH2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2NM• Power FM• ABC• Newcastle Herald• Hunter Innovation Festival Roadshow events at Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Port Stephens and Singleton• Hunter Innovation Festival Conference Event website



MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

Extending the Hunter Innovation Festival to the Muswellbrook area is acknowledgement of the immense work being conducted and the momentum that is building within the Hunter Innovation Precinct.

Attracting Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Assistant Minister for A Future Made in Australia and Assistant Minister for Trade is evidence that the Federal Government is paying attention to the work being done in Muswellbrook. Together with MSC, The Melt is promoting manufacturing and ways to build upon the prosperity that the region has contributed to NSW and Australia more broadly.

The event attracted a full house of attendees from all parts of the Hunter. It was an excellent opportunity to showcase the facilities and services being offered in Muswellbrook to people that had not visited previously.





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2025



The Melt
Modern Manufacturing Centre (MMC)
Quarterly Report

Period ending 31 March 2025





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The Melt is dedicated to driving physical product innovation and assisting with economic diversification and growth in Muswellbrook, a place that is historically recognised for its energy, mining, and manufacturing sectors.

Through strategic initiatives, programs, events and partnerships, The Melt is playing a significant role in developing an innovation ecosystem in the Muswellbrook Shire for students, existing businesses, startups, and scaleups, and is contributing positively to the community and regional economy.

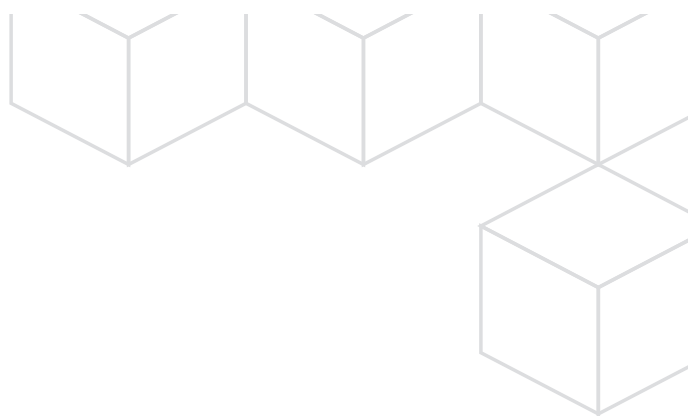
This report outlines 4 examples of activities that have been performed by The Melt in Q1 2025 (January to March). It is only a snapshot, not a complete list of all the engagements and activities that have been undertaken.

MMC STATISTICS

During Q1 2025 the MMC hosted 41 visitors to the facilities. Those visitors were drawn from a broad cross section of the community that included; students, startups, scaleups, SMEs, large corporations, academia, government, side-hustlers, tinkerers, media and retirees.

NOTABLE DRAW CARDS INCLUDED:

- 8 facility tours were hosted for visitors to investigate the potential for MMC projects and collaborations.
One example includes for the Sydney Rum Distillery to potentially assist them with their refurbishment of the antiquated stills and other equipment in the Oak Factory.
- 10 of the HJO economic development managers attended their meeting in the Donald Horne Building and The Melt was invited to present and showcase how it is contributing towards economic development activities in the Muswellbrook Shire. A tour of the MMC demonstrated its functional capability.
- Initial discovery meetings with 2 new startup founders were conducted. Early-stage business and technical advice was provided and additional meetings have been scheduled for Q2.
- Further project design iterations, prototype components plus business and technical product advisory was provided to existing startups including FlynnAir and LockBlock, and scaleups including Allegro, Refilled and PlasmaLeap.
- An OT micro-credential training session was conducted for 2 Glencore Mangoola team members and 4 new content modules were developed as part of the planned series of 42 modules.



- Planning, marketing and recruitment activities were in full swing for The Melt's two industry leading startup and scaleup programs called The Melt ENGAGE and The Melt NOVA. The Melt ENGAGE is scheduled for 28-30 May 2025. Target is to attract 20-25 participating startups for ENGAGE and a further 2 scaleups for NOVA in 2025.
- Initial engagement meetings were conducted with the Denman Men's Shed and the RSL Sub-branch to gauge their interest in creating a tailored activation activity for their members in Q2.
- The Net Zero Economy Agency's "We're Bringing New Energy to the Hunter" Campaign continued into phase 2. The Melt recommended Seth Fitzgerald feature in the next phase of the national marketing campaign. Seth is a local student who The Melt MMC assisted in 2024 to design and build a wind turbine as an Extension Science HSC project. Seth received early entry into the University of Newcastle to study Mechatronics Engineering in 2025. Seth was delighted to be involved and the NZEA were thrilled to highlight Seth as a future leader. Seth will feature on the NZEA website (written and video case study) and in digital plus print media as well as on radio locally and nationally. The Melt MMC also continues to be featured in phase 2 of the campaign.
- Discussions continued with BHP regarding their potential to support The Melt's proposed Maker Projects in 2025. The Melt was unsuccessful in its submission for a NSW Government grant but believes strongly in the concept and is seeking other funding pathways to enable delivery of 4 x 3-day maker project workshops for students aged 12-17.
- Several potential partners were invited to The Melt MMC for initial discussions about proposed collaboration on 5 industry showcase events for 2025. They include; 3D printing laser cutting, CNC machining, robotic welding and CAD/CAM design software.
- Following on from the success in creating customised award trophies using recycled medical plastic waste for the Hunter New England Local Health District's Excellence Awards, and for the Prestigious Hunter Manufacturing Awards 20th Anniversary Event, The Melt MMC has received several new enquiries about manufacturing sustainable trophies for other award ceremonies.

The Melt continues to emerge as a catalyst for positive change in Muswellbrook, driving economic development, supporting local talent, and fostering a spirit of innovation. By continuing to invest in the community and collaborating with key stakeholders, The Melt is well-positioned to further enhance the growth and prosperity of Muswellbrook, ensuring its evolution into a dynamic hub for diverse industries and a thriving population.

MMC CASE STUDY 1 :
LOCAL STUDENT SETH FITZGERALD
NET ZERO ECONOMY AGENCY
*“WE’RE BRINGING NEW
ENERGY TO THE HUNTER”*
CAMPAIGN PHASE 2



Australian Government



PROJECT SCOPE

In 2024 The Melt participated in phase 1 of the Australian Government's, A Future Made in Australia, "We're Bringing New Energy to The Hunter" campaign. In their words, "The Melt plays an important role in our local community and regularly communicate and share manufacturing and cleantech innovation information to audiences and key stakeholders".

Run by the Net Zero Economy Agency, the "We're Bringing New Energy to The Hunter" campaign extended into phase 2 in 2025.

On this occasion, the campaign shifts to targeting the attention of younger generations. The aim is to provide information about Australia's energy transformation, illustrate the local impacts and opportunities for the Hunter region and help the younger community feel empowered to play an active role.



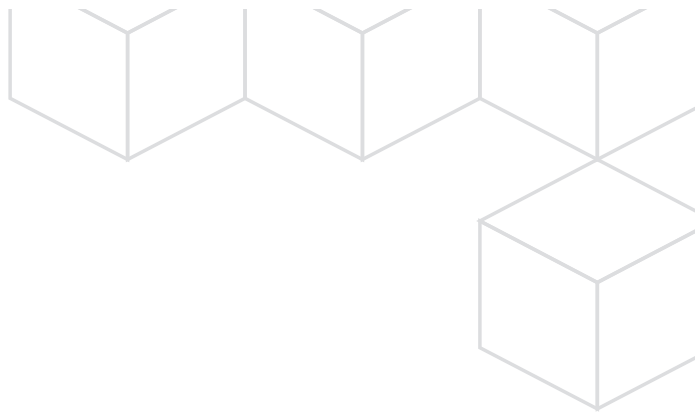
MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR NET ZERO ECONOMY AGENCY “WE’RE BRINGING NEW ENERGY TO THE HUNTER” CAMPAIGN - PHASE 2

The Melt’s COO and Director, Brett Thomas featured heavily in phase 1 of the campaign. NZEA approached Brett and requested recommendations for young shining examples of local talent with an interest in the Hunter’s energy transformation.

In 2024, The Melt MMC played an integral role in assisting Seth Fitzgerald a local year 12 student to design and build a wind turbine as his major project in an Extension Science subject. Seth did an exceptional job and was recognised for his talents with an early-entry offer to the University of Newcastle to study Mechatronics. Seth is passionate about engineering and intends on establishing a career working on projects that will ultimately help the Hunter’s economic diversification and energy transformation.

Seth was interviewed, photographed and recorded at The Melt MMC. According to the NZEA, his journey including the project within The Melt MMC is likely to appear on banners, posters, in print media, videos, sound bites for radio network distribution, and on various websites, starting in Q2, after the federal election is completed.





PROJECT ELEMENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT

Written Case Study Content Development for “A Future Made in Australia” website, plus radio, advertorial and print media

Broad and diverse promotion of MMC activities throughout the Hunter region and other coal mining and coal fired power station locations in NSW and Queensland

March 2024 with potential for ongoing campaign phase 2 involvement Q2 2025

It is likely that hundreds of thousands of people will see and hear elements of the campaign in phase 2

Campaign managers Horizon Group reported that Seth was an excellent example of what the campaign needed

MMC FACILITIES USED

PARTNERS

LOCAL PROMOTION

MMC facilities were used to capture footage plus undertake interviews with Seth Fitzgerald and Brett Thomas

- Net Zero Economy Agency
- A Future Made in Australia
- Federal Government

Content is expected to be launched in Q2 2025 after the federal election is completed

Expecting wide distribution through local radio, magazine publications, newspapers, relevant conferences and various websites including A Future Made in Australia – written case study and imagery

MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

According to NZEA, a stakeholder kit will be developed for phase 2 that will include a range of educational resources in easy-to-share formats. It will be accessible by local community members once published on the “A Future Made in Australia” website (visit: afuturemadeinaustralia.gov.au). It is expected to include; infographics, animations, case studies and FAQs.

MMC CASE STUDY 2 : LOCAL STARTUP FLYNNNAIR



PROJECT SCOPE

FlynnAir founder Russell Flynn has worked in various mines around the Muswellbrook Shire for many years. Russell participated in The Melt ENGAGE 2024 program and in Q1 2025 he progressed his design iterations and prototypes.

He developed an initial prototype for a venturi device using buy-off-the-shelf components from a local hardware supplier at one tenth of the price of commercially available venturi devices. However, in its initial form, there was no defensibility of the IP because it could be easily reverse engineered and therefore was not truly marketable.

The venturi device enables fluids to be retained in vessels using compressed air. The benefit is that for many maintenance tasks that involve large vehicles with hydraulic fluids stored under pressure, that fluid is drained prior to commencing work for safety reasons. As an example, a haul truck contains 500+ litres of hydraulic oil. If that oil is unnecessarily required to be drained it becomes a waste product, regardless of its remaining useful life and it must be handled and disposed of accordingly. This is a very costly exercise.

The FlynnAir device makes it possible to safely retain that oil within the hydraulic system whilst maintenance and repair work can be carried out.

MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR FLYNNAIR DESIGN AND PROTOTYPING

The MMC provided full design iteration and prototyping services to FlynnAir to develop this product.

Muswellbrook mine worker Russell Flynn contacted The Melt for support. Russell had a very clear understanding of the problem and solution fit but required significant technical and business mentorship support in order to redesign and build a marketable product that could compete against and outperform existing competitors.

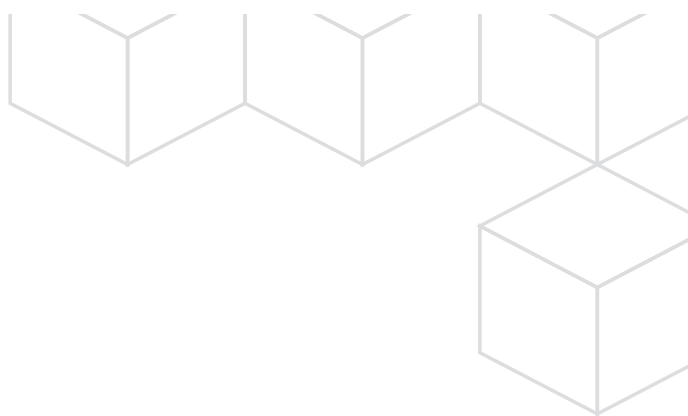
The Melt Principal Engineer Clint Bruin and Technical Specialist Iain Yule met with Russell to discuss the identified problem and the potential solution. Russell provided an initial prototype for the venturi solution. The Melt conducted a technical review of the problem and proposed solution.

The Melt team provided extensive CAD design and the equipment within the MMC was used to create 8 prototypes and iterative functional developments to circulate trial units amongst a small group of trusted testers in real world situations.

Russell has limited budget and is time constrained. So, The Melt team continues to provide support at the pace which suits Russell.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	HIGHLIGHTS	LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
FlynnAir Design and Prototyping	8 prototypes 20 design iterations Several working product prototypes deployed for testing in real world situations by trusted industry friends	January 2024 and ongoing in Q1 2025

MMC EQUIPMENT USED	MATERIAL PROCURED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ultimaker S5 3D Printer• Cubic Resin 3D Printer• SolidWorks CAD Design• Hartford 3 axis CNC Milling Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carbon Fibre Nylon• PLA 3D print• ABS 3D print• PVC machined• Resin 3D print



MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

FlynnAir has produced a trial batch of the venturi units that are unable to be reverse engineered. The latest generation of 3D printing equipment contained within the MMC has enabled the redesigned venturi unit to be created in a single 3D printed unit. The only way to reverse engineer the new product would be to cut it open, and in doing so that would destroy it.

The units are currently undergoing service testing and field evaluation and the feedback is being incorporated into design iterations.

Following the successful evaluation process, it is envisaged that the product would be IP protected prior to an initial small batch production run that would be offered to early adopters for further market testing and analysis.

FlynnAir is currently time and budget constrained, so having affordable access to The Melt team and MMC equipment is providing the opportunity to advance the novel product design at a pace and timeframe that suits Russell.

This novel venturi product could provide a very significantly cheaper alternative to existing products on the market. Profit margins would be high, because of the use of 3D printing technology to mass produce the items.

The benefits of retaining the fluid, rather than draining it, each and every time maintenance and repair operations are required is immense. Cost savings of approximately \$1000 per oil replacement event are expected, and of course there is an up and down stream waste product handling and processing reduction, which has positive environmental outcomes.



MMC CASE STUDY 3 : LOCAL STARTUP NEXT GEN HYDRO



PROJECT SCOPE

Next Gen Hydro co-founders Brandon Edwards and Dan Perfremment run very successful existing fabrication businesses in Muswellbrook.

They each have a farming background and a passion for solving the challenges of providing affordable energy to run irrigation systems on their own farm and to help other farmers tackle the problem.

Brandon and Dan participated in The Melt ENGAGE 2024 program, to gain insight into the challenges and opportunities of bringing new hardware products to market, and to network with like-minded founders and potential customers in Idemitsu and AGL.

Next Gen Hydro is attempting to develop a novel approach to leverage the energy generated by the flow of fluid through a pipe, to extend the distance of fluid travel whilst maintaining adequate pressures for irrigation systems to function efficiently and very cost effectively.

MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR NEXT GEN HYDRO DESIGN AND PROTOTYPING

The MMC has provided business and product advisory and some initial design feedback to assist Dan and Brandon conceptually with this product.

Dan and Brandon have a very clear understanding of the problem and solution fit but require significant technical and business mentorship support in order to design and build a marketable product that could compete against, and outperform existing competitors.

They have significant time constraints because they are both running other successful existing businesses. So, The Melt team continues to provide support at the pace which suits them.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	HIGHLIGHTS	LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
Next Gen Hydro Design and Advisory	<p>Concept design support has been valuable to Dan and Brandon</p> <p>The Melt ENGAGE 2024 program provided network connections to potential future customers like AGL and Idemitsu</p> <p>Participating in the program also exposed Dan and Brandon to other like-minded startup founders who are building physical products</p>	March 2024 and ongoing in Q1 2025

MMC EQUIPMENT USED

SolidWorks CAD Design



MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

Next Gen Hydro continues to progress their conceptual design with the support of the MMC.

The Melt team continues to look for ways to assist the co-founders to source funding from grants and other sources plus access to local University students in an attempt to potentially source affordable and sharp minds to help understand the technical feasibility of the idea and build the business case for future product development.

Next Gen Hydro is currently time and budget constrained, so having affordable access to The Melt team for advisory, design and future prototyping will provide the opportunity to advance the novel product design at a pace and timeframe that suits the co-founders.

The benefits of this technology, if it makes it to market could be significant, nationally and internationally. The cost of energy required to run irrigation pumps is a significant portion of a farm's overheads. Irrigation water reliability is essential to maintaining a viable farm.



Next Gen Hydro Co-founders Brandon Edwards and Dan Perfement

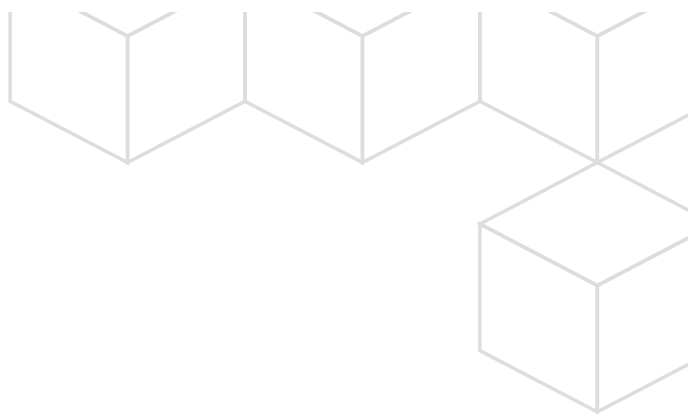
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MMC CASE STUDY 4

MUSWELLBROOK

REGIONAL ART GALLERY -

BESPOKE HANGING HOOKS



PROJECT SCOPE

Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery has an extensive and diverse range of art works. These works are highly valuable and irreplaceable.

Securely and safely hanging these works is proving to be a significant challenge.

Commercially available hanging hooks are not a suitable match for the Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery hanging infrastructure.

Gallery curator Elissa Emerson engaged the services of The Melt MMC to assess the needs and demands for a suitable hanging hook, and to design a bespoke hanging hook to meet the unique needs of the gallery.



SolidWorks CAD rendering
of the final design

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MUSWELLBROOK MELT MODERN MANUFACTURING CENTER (MMC) SUPPORT FOR DESIGNING AND PROTOTYPING BESPOKE ART HANGING HOOKS

The Melt’s Technical Specialist Iain Yule and Gallery Curator Elissa Emerson held an on-site meeting at the Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery to assess and review the need for creating bespoke hanging hooks for the gallery’s art.

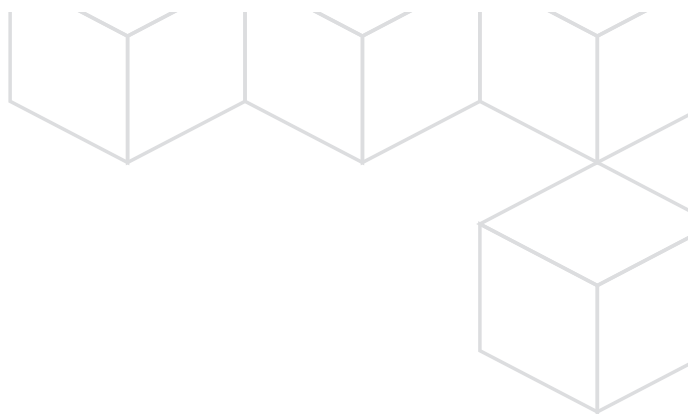
After conducting a technical review of the requirements, an initial SolidWorks CAD design for the first prototype was created.

The initial prototype was 3D printed in PLA material for review and consideration.

Elissa identified several required amendments for the hook to be suitable.

The second prototype version was created and assessed. That new amended design was deemed appropriate for the needs of the gallery.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	HIGHLIGHTS	LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT
Gallery Hook Design	2 prototypes	November 2024 – Ongoing
Prototyping	6 design iterations	
Local production vendor selection	10 working products created for testing Assisted with local vendor selection for initial production	
MMC EQUIPMENT USED	MATERIAL PROCURED	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ultimaker S5 3D Printer• SolidWorks CAD Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carbon Fibre Nylon• PLA 3D print	



MUSWELLBROOK COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

Muswellbrook Art Gallery will require approximately 1000 of the bespoke art hanging hooks for their own needs.

Elissa Emmerson is in contact with Singleton Art Gallery who also experience the same problem.

Singleton Art Gallery is currently reviewing the hanging hook design to confirm the suitability of the design is in keeping with their local in-service demands.

It is envisaged that Singleton Gallery could also require approximately 1000 hooks.

According to Elissa, it is realistic to foresee that other galleries will show interest in the hooks once they are in manufacture.

Local Muswellbrook fabrication business Eddies Trailers has been approached to quote the manufacture of the hooks using their state-of-the-art metal laser cutting facility.

Each hook can be laser cut from stainless steel sheet and mechanically formed into the final shape.





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2025



6.4 Gallery Rebrand

Responsible Officer:	Director - Community & Economy
Author:	Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre Director
Community Strategic Plan:	4 - <i>Cultural Vitality</i> A culturally rich and diverse Community with strong identities, history and sense of belonging
Delivery Program Goal:	4.3.2 - Deliver an arts program.
Operational Plan Action:	4.3.2.1 - Develop a 12-month Art Program.
Attachments:	1. MSC Brand Guidelines - Gallery [6.4.1 - 1 page]

PURPOSE

To rebrand Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre as Muswellbrook Regional Gallery (MRG) in alignment with Council's brand guideline, to reduce community confusion, and improve public engagement and recognition.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The Community and Economy Committee:

1. Endorses the official rebranding of Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre as Muswellbrook Regional Gallery.
2. Supports the implementation of the updated brand across all external signage, digital platforms, communications, and formal documentation.
3. Notes that the revised brand reinstates a historically significant identity and addresses issues of clarity, branding consistency, and sector alignment.
4. Approves the rollout of a communications strategy to inform the community and stakeholders of the gallery offer to improve visitation.

Moved: _____

Seconded: _____

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the proposed rebranding of Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre to the Muswellbrook Regional Gallery in response to long-standing issues of public confusion and misidentification. The current brand lacks clarity and does not align with contemporary expectations of what constitutes an art gallery, with the term Arts Centre often misunderstood.

The proposed brand restores a historically recognised identity used from 1976 to 2000 and eliminates ambiguity while improving community recognition. It also addresses ongoing confusion with other public galleries due to similar acronyms and aligns with current sector branding trends across New South Wales and Victoria. The rebranding requires minimal financial outlay and will be delivered through existing operational and branding budgets.

PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

Nil.



BACKGROUND

The gallery was established in 1976 as Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery, a title retained until the year 2000, when it was changed to Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre. However, media, stakeholders and the public have continued to refer to the institution using variations of its earlier title. This suggests a disconnect between the official title and public recognition.

The inclusion of the term Centre has been identified as a barrier to engagement, particularly among audiences unfamiliar with the gallery's function. Furthermore, the acronym MRAC contributes to confusion with MRAG (Maitland Regional Art Gallery).

This proposal seeks to align the gallery's brand with both sector norms and community understanding.

CONSULTATION

Consultation has taken place internally with external research and review of peer institutions informing the decision. Consideration has been given to public perception, media representation, and user behaviour. Stakeholder input indicates strong support for a simplified, recognisable brand that better represents the function of the gallery and is free of confusing terminology.

REPORT

The rebranding of Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre to Muswellbrook Regional Gallery addresses longstanding issues around public recognition.

The current brand has created confusion in the community, with the term Arts Centre prompting uncertainty about the function of the facility. Despite its official title, the gallery is frequently referred to in media, community discussion, and by stakeholders as Muswellbrook Art Gallery or Muswellbrook Regional Gallery. The term Centre has been identified as a deterrent to engagement, particularly among individuals unfamiliar with arts sector terminology.

The revitalised brand – Muswellbrook Regional Gallery – retains a reference to the gallery's original identity (used from 1976 to 2000), while removing ambiguity and restoring clarity about its purpose. This brand aligns with contemporary branding practices for public galleries and is both familiar and intuitive for community members and audiences.

Importantly, the revitalised brand resolves an issue of acronym confusion. The previous title, Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre (MRAC), was frequently mistaken for Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG), with both institutions often referred to by their acronyms in sector communications and funding applications.

The removal of the term Arts Centre and refinement to Gallery aligns the brand with state-wide trends. The inclusion of Regional is retained to acknowledge the gallery's reach, historical identity, and programmatic scope, while ensuring clear differentiation from nearby institutions.

The rebranding will be implemented gradually, with updated signage, digital assets, and printed materials rolled out in line with planned branding updates and operational timelines. The revitalised brand better communicates the facility's role to the public, strengthens its visibility, and ensures alignment with both local and sector-wide branding conventions.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The financial implications of the gallery's rebranding are minimal and can be absorbed within existing operational budgets:

External Signage: The gallery currently has limited and aged signage that is due for renewal



regardless of the brand update. The cost of updated signage will be incorporated into the planned improvement schedule and does not represent additional or unbudgeted expenditure.

Internal Signage: There is no existing internal signage requiring replacement, and no additional internal signage is anticipated as part of the brand update.

Marketing Materials: The revitalised brand will be introduced as part of regular design and production cycles, primarily through exhibition catalogues and promotional material. The rollout will also be supported through existing social media platforms and digital communication channels, negating the need for any dedicated expenditure.

Overall, the brand update presents no significant financial burden and will be delivered through standard budgeted activities associated with branding and operational updates.

Ongoing Operational and Maintenance Costs Implications Associated with Capital Project

1. Financial Implications – Capital

Nil

2. Financial Implications – Operational

Nil

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This brand update is consistent with Council's branding protocols. It does not conflict with any current policy.

STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct statutory or legislative requirements associated with the brand update. All necessary updates to Council records, external businesses, and organisations will be managed through administrative processes.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

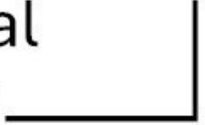
Key risks include temporary public confusion during the transition period and inconsistent use of legacy branding in external references. These risks are mitigated through a coordinated rollout, clear communication, and stakeholder engagement. The implementation of a brand usage guide will ensure consistency.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS

The updated brand will be communicated through a phased public rollout, including digital announcements, social media updates, signage replacement, local media releases, and direct communication with partner organisations. Messaging will focus on enhancing public understanding of the gallery's identity and celebrating the return to a clear and resonant brand that reflects its cultural role in the community.

Muswellbrook Regional Gallery Logo

MAIN LOGO

Muswellbrook
Regional
Gallery 

MAIN LOGO - REVERSE





6.5 Denman Outdoor Pool

Responsible Officer:	Director - Community & Economy
Author:	Manager Community Services
Community Strategic Plan:	2 - <i>Social Equity and Inclusion</i> An inclusive and interconnected community where everyone enjoys full participation
Delivery Program Goal:	5.2.1 - Facilitate and implement improved all abilities access and inclusion across the Shire.
Operational Plan Action:	5.2.1.1 - Implement funded priorities from the access audit of Council owned buildings and public spaces.
Attachments:	Nil

PURPOSE

The report outlines attendance figures, membership trends, and financial insights for Denman Outdoor Pool for the 2024/25 swimming season. It also highlights the operational and financial challenges associated with the Denman Pool. The purpose is to inform Council of the current position, and to support planning and resource allocation moving forward.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The Committee notes the information contained in the report.

Moved: _____ **Seconded:** _____

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre shows strong user engagement and positive financial trajectory. In contrast, Denman Outdoor Pool presents a financial challenge that requires careful consideration. Council's support will be essential in continuing to provide high-quality, accessible aquatic services while ensuring operational sustainability across both sites.

PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

The delivery and community support of swimming programs at the Denman Outdoor Pool was raised at the last Community & Economy Committee meeting.

BACKGROUND

Denman Outdoor Swimming Pool was opened on 1 November 1975. The 50m outdoor pool, small wading pool, and learn to swim pool are seasonal facilities that operate between October – March/April. Other amenities include a kiosk, change rooms, showers, and toilets.

The Denman Outdoor Pool major infrastructure assets include pump and filtration systems.

**REPORT**

The attendance breakdown of patrons 6-month seasonal usage of the Denman Outdoor Pool:

Category	% of Total Visitors	Visitor Count
Membership > Swim	42%	2,858
Casual > Swim	24%	1,646
School > Groups (PE, Learn to Swim, >1hr)	16%	1,100
Casual > Spectator	5.3%	356
Casual > Swim (<5 years old)	3.8%	256
Casual > Training Nights & Club Events	3.6%	241
Casual > Swim (Concession)	1.7%	115
Membership > Fitness Passport	1.1%	75
Pass > Swim	1%	67
Membership > Mine Membership	0.22%	15
Free Entry (Unclassified)	-	250
TOTAL		6,979

Key notes from the above table:

- **Membership usage** makes up the largest portion of attendance, with 42% of users accessing the pool under a paid membership.
- **Casual swimming** and **school-based bookings** combine for 40%, confirming broad community and educational engagement.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Denman Outdoor Pool operates at a **significant deficit**, resulting in a substantial budget subsidy to provide this community facility.

Ongoing Operational and Maintenance Costs Implications Associated with Capital Project**1. Financial Implications – Operational****General Denman Outdoor Pool – Financial Overview**

Annual Operating Expenses:	\$300,000
Annual Revenue:	\$33,000

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil



STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Nil

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS

Nil



6.6 Post Event Report - Easter Family Fun Day 2025

Responsible Officer:	Director - Community & Economy
Author:	Tourism and Events Coordinator
Community Strategic Plan:	4 - <i>Cultural Vitality</i> A culturally rich and diverse Community with strong identities, history and sense of belonging
Delivery Program Goal:	4.3.1 - Develop and implement a program of Shire events to engage more locals and attract more visitors
Operational Plan Action:	4.3.1.1 - Work in partnership to deliver events which support the community and attract visitors to the Shire.
Attachments:	Nil

PURPOSE

To provide Council with a post event report on the Easter Family Fun Day.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The information contained in this report be noted.

Moved: _____ **Seconded:** _____

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Easter Family Fun Day, hosted by Muswellbrook Shire Council on Saturday, 19 April at Highbrook Park, was a vibrant, family-friendly celebration that brought together over 3,500 community members for a day of free activities. The event's activations included a baby animal petting zoo, performance by the Vegie Plot, bunny hop sack races, egg and spoon races, a lolly jar guessing competition, a special appearance by the Easter Bunny, and the traditional easter egg hunt. A subsidised community fund-raising BBQ was operated by Nine Lives Cat Rescue to support their ongoing initiatives.

Council staff actively engaged with attendees by dressing as a range of characters, enhancing the celebratory atmosphere and promoting the public exhibition of the Council's Community Strategic Plan. A comprehensive marketing campaign, including social media outreach, local media coverage, and community partnerships, ensured widespread awareness and participation. The event successfully fostered community spirit, inclusivity, and engagement, aligning with the Council's objectives to support and connect with residents across the Shire. The event garnered an overwhelmingly positive response from the community.

PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

Nil.

BACKGROUND

The Easter Family Fun Day is an annual community event organised by Muswellbrook Shire Council to celebrate the Easter holiday and foster community engagement. Held on Easter



Saturday at Highbrook Park, it traditionally offers a range of family-friendly activities, a community group fund-raising BBQ, and is sponsored by Bengalla Mining Company.

CONSULTATION

Council's Property & Place, Works, and Community Services departments.

REPORT

Marketing and Media Exposure

The 2025 Easter Family Fun Day was promoted through a comprehensive marketing campaign aimed at maximising local awareness and attendance. Key promotional activities included:

- **Social Media Campaign:** Muswellbrook Shire Council utilised its Facebook and Instagram platforms to share event details, updates, and engaging content leading up to the event. Posts included the Easter Bunny's pre-event visit to the Mayor and General Manager, information about activities, schedules and acknowledgments of sponsors, reaching a combined audience of over 10,000 followers.
- **Traditional Media:** The event was featured in local print media, including The Hunter River Times, enhancing reach within the community.

Community Engagement

The Easter Family Fun Day served as a significant community engagement initiative, fostering inclusivity and participation across diverse demographic groups.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Easter Family Fun Day is a budget item in Community and Vitality Events. Part sponsorship is also provided by Bengalla Mining Company.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The event was delivered in accordance with the event risk management plan.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS

Community information was provided across a range of social and print media.



6.7 Post Event Update - Gather In the Glow 2025

Responsible Officer:	Director – Community & Economy
Author:	Tourism & Events Coordinator
Community Strategic Plan:	4 - <i>Cultural Vitality</i> A culturally rich and diverse Community with strong identities, history and sense of belonging
Delivery Program Goal:	4.3.1 - Develop and implement a program of Shire events to engage more locals and attract more visitors
Operational Plan Action:	4.3.1.1 - Work in partnership to deliver events which support the community and attract visitors to the Shire.
Attachments:	Nil

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a post event report on the Hunter Innovation Precinct Gather in the Glow event.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The information contained in this report be noted.

Moved: _____ **Seconded:** _____

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Saturday 3 May, Muswellbrook Shire Council held Gather in the Glow, a complimentary evening of culinary offerings, illumination, artistic expression, performance, and technology. This event marked the culmination of the Community Reference Group's contributions to Council's Community Improvement District (CID) Project, delivered with support from the NSW Government's CID Pilot Program.

Gather in the Glow was an overwhelming success, drawing more than 2,000 attendees. The event showcased the community's enthusiasm for innovative nighttime public space activations where attendees engaged with science, the arts, and technology. The event reaffirmed Council's dedication to fostering social connection and inclusivity through innovative and high-quality programming. A standout success was the unexpected engagement with the Muswellbrook Library, resulting in membership enquiries, browsing and borrowing.

PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

Nil.

BACKGROUND

Gather in the Glow was a free community event held from 5PM to 8PM at Muswellbrook's Hunter Innovation Precinct. This event was part of the NSW Government's Community Improvement District (CID) Pilot Program, with the NSW Government contributing \$316,666 to Muswellbrook Shire Council's CID initiative.



Highlights included:

- Caricaturist and Digital cartoonist.
- Illuminated roving performers, local buskers, and youth musicians providing entertainment throughout the evening.
- Photographic projections showcasing the town's rich history, presented by the Muswellbrook Shire Local and Family History Society.
- A digital art exhibition curated by the Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council, highlighting First Nations creativity.
- Dynamic demonstrations from the University of Newcastle SMART Science: Force & Motion, and Councils STEMLab Robotics activations.
- Complimentary refreshments from Blue Flame restaurant, a community group fund-raising BBQ, & Double PICC cafe.

The event exemplified Council's commitment to fostering community engagement and celebrating local culture. By activating the Hunter Innovation Precinct, the event not only provided entertainment, but also encouraged residents to view shared spaces in a new light, aligning with the goals of the CID Pilot Program.

CONSULTATION

CID project Community Reference Group, key precinct stakeholders, including Blue Flame Restaurant, Muswellbrook Local and Family History Society, The University of Newcastle, and Muswellbrook Shire Council's, Library, StemLab, and Property & Place teams.

REPORT

Gather in the Glow successfully showcased the potential of the Hunter Innovation Precinct as a central space for events, community connection, and cultural expression, underscoring Council's commitment to enhancing local vibrancy and economic resilience.

Marketing and Media Exposure

Councils' Media team orchestrated a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy for the Gather in the Glow event, aligning with Council's Communications and Media Policy. The campaign encompassed a blend of traditional and digital media, including event-specific posters along with the addition of paid Facebook posts to boost visibility and reach.

Community Engagement

The event facilitated a platform for ongoing community engagement, coinciding with the public exhibition of the Draft 2025–2035 Community Strategic Plan. Attendees were encouraged to provide feedback on the draft plan, fostering a collaborative approach to Muswellbrook's future development.

Challenges, Learnings & Attendee Feedback

The cancellation of the drone demonstration in the Donald Horne Building was made without consulting the event manager, leading to a communication breakdown. As a result, staff members continued to inform attendees that the drone demonstrations would proceed, causing confusion and disappointment. Some attendees expressed dissatisfaction during and after the event regarding the unannounced cancellation.

The event's planning and execution were primarily managed by two Council staff members: the Tourism and Events Coordinator and a casual events staff member working 10 hours per week. This limited staffing structure posed significant challenges in meeting the demands of multiple



events scheduled for 2025. This stretched capacity impacted approval processes, delivery timelines, and vendor engagement across the entire Council's annual events schedule.

Additionally, the absence of access to a suitable Council vehicle impeded operational efficiency during the setup and pack-down of the Gather in the Glow event. This limitation continues to hinder the transportation of essential event equipment and materials across all Council events, leading to delays and both increased costs and staffing pressures.

Key Recommendations:**Enhancing Communication Protocols for Event Activations**

1. To ensure seamless execution of Council events, it is imperative that all staff involved in event activations comprehend the pivotal role of the Event Manager in decision-making processes, particularly concerning the rescheduling or cancellation of scheduled activities that impact the experience and enjoyment of attendees.
2. To ensure cohesive event execution, mandatory attendance for all ad hoc Council staff in all pre-event communications and delivery meetings.

Enhance Logistical Support

Ensure the events team has access to suitable and reliable transportation resources to facilitate the efficient movement of equipment and materials. Reliable transport is crucial for timely setup and breakdown of event infrastructure, directly impacting overall event success.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The event was funded through the NSW Government's Community Improvement District (CID) Pilot Program.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The event was delivered in accordance with the event risk management plan.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS

Nil.



7 Closed Committee

Nil

8 Date of Next Meeting

8 July, 2025

9 Closure