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BUSINESS HUNTER

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Hunter businesses shine at 2026 NSW Business Awards

Hunter businesses have taken home multiple honours at the 2026 Business NSW State Business Awards, once again demonstrating the strength, innovation and leadership of the region's business community.

The state awards, which were presented in Sydney by NRMA Small Business Insurance on Friday night, celebrate excellence across 22 categories, bringing together leading businesses and individuals from across NSW.

Three Hunter-based winners were recognised among the state's best:

- Singleton's **Morgan Engineering** was named winner of the Excellence in Workplace Health and Wellbeing Award. Morgan was the big winner at this year's Business Hunter Awards, taking out four awards including Business of the Year.
- **Strata Tech Solutions** took out Outstanding New Business**.** The Lake Macquarie mining technology company has experienced astounding growth in its first year, with its patented MACROMEC data transfer device generating more than $800,000 in revenue and securing markets across Australia, South Africa, Japan and the USA.
- **Claudia Tolhurst, of the Hunter Melanoma Foundation**, was recognised as Outstanding Employee. The award recognises her leadership and operational capability as well as her standout achievement in developing the region-wide HMF Spot Check campaign.

Business NSW CEO Daniel Hunter said this year's winners reflected the depth of talent, innovation and ambition within the state's business community.

"What connects these businesses isn't their size or industry. It's their drive to keep improving, their willingness to back new ideas and their determination to turn those ideas into results," Mr Hunter said.

Business Hunter CEO Bob Hawes said the Hunter's strong representation among the winners was a reflection of the region's diverse and resilient economy.

"These awards showcase the very best of the Hunter and reinforce the fact that our region is home to some of Australia's most innovative businesses, outstanding leaders and committed professionals," Mr Hawes said.

"Morgan Engineering's focus on creating a workplace culture that prioritises the health and wellbeing of its people has set a benchmark not only for the manufacturing sector but for businesses across the state."

Mr Hawes said the success of Strata Tech Solutions highlighted the Hunter's growing reputation as a hub for entrepreneurship and emerging industries.

"To be recognised as the state's Outstanding New Business is an extraordinary achievement and demonstrates the strength of innovative thinking and business capability developing here in the Hunter."

Mr Hawes also congratulated Claudia Tolhurst on her individual recognition.

"Claudia's award is particularly meaningful because it recognises the dedicated people who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make a difference in our communities," he said.

"Through her work with the Hunter Melanoma Foundation, Claudia has demonstrated not only exceptional business aptitude but commitment, leadership and passion in delivering positive outcomes for the people she serves."

Mr Hawes said the winners' achievements reflected well on the entire Hunter business community.

"They demonstrate that Hunter organisations can lead in innovation, workplace culture, community impact and business excellence, and we look forward to seeing even more local success in the years ahead."

The full list of winners is:

- Business of the Year, Chamberlain Australia, Central Coast
- Excellence in Micro Business, Small Batch Brewery and Hop Farm, Western NSW
- Excellence in Small Business, Port Medical Aesthetics Clinic, Mid North Coast
- Excellence in Medium Business, The Alternate Root, New England North West
- Excellence in Large Business, Skillset Limited, Western NSW
- Employer of Choice 20 Employees and Under, First Scaff, Riverina Murray
- Employer of Choice 21 Employees and Over, Hysata, Illawarra
- Outstanding Business Leader 20 Employees and Under, Michael Kurosawa Infinity Property Agents, Sydney
- Outstanding Business Leader 21 Employees and Over, Rob Weeden Shangri-La Sydney, Sydney
- Outstanding Young Business Leader, Naomi Bennett Evolve Psychology Services, Central Coast
- Outstanding New Business, Strata Tech Solutions, Hunter
- Excellence in International Business, Chamberlain Australia, Central Coast
- Excellence in Workplace Health and Wellbeing, Morgan Engineering, Hunter
- Excellence in Sustainability, Green Gravity, Illawarra
- Outstanding Visitor & 24-Hour Economy Collaboration, nowra.org.au, Illawarra
- Dean Gorddard Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual to the NSW Tourism Industry, Karina Barry, Bells at Killcare Boutique Hotel, Restaurant & Spa, Central Coast
- Outstanding Employee, Claudia Tolhurst Hunter Melanoma Foundation, Hunter
- Outstanding Community Organisation, Linked Community Services, Mid North Coast
- Outstanding Visitor Experience, The Casino Truck Show, Northern Rivers
- Excellence in Sustainable Tourism, Sydney By Kayak, Sydney
- Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion, Embrace Disability Group, South East NSW

- Outstanding Local Chamber, Jindabyne Chamber of Commerce, South East NSW
- Excellence in Innovation, Green Timber Technology, Western NSW

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