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Train-building pledge a boon for Hunter's manufacturing future

Business Hunter has applauded Premier Chris Minn's pledge to make the Hunter the state's home of train building again as a boon for the region's manufacturing future.

The Premier announced at the NSW Labor Conference on the weekend that his government will invest \$12 billion into train manufacturing in the Hunter, with sites at Teralba and Broadmeadow earmarked as possible locations to establish a train manufacturing facility. The facility will be operated by a private manufacturer and will refocus train procurement locally after more than a decade of major contracts going offshore.

"This is a huge vote of confidence from the NSW Government in the Hunter's industrial capability and their desire to see that strength upheld," Business Hunter CEO Bob Hawes said.

"We are really pleased to see the Government adopting a 'build them here' approach and recognising that governments have an ability and responsibility to support jobs, skills development and local businesses through the supply chain by manufacturing trains right here in our state's industrial heartland.

"The long-chain economic impacts of backing facilities like this are significant. There is a real and demonstrable benefit to not only this industry but many different sectors that will feed into it."

Mr Hawes said the Government's decision to site the facility in the Hunter recognised the region's proud history of train manufacturing and the expertise within the workforce.

"The proposal keys into the region's DNA when it comes to manufacturing, building and making things, especially train building," Mr Hawes said.

"Our future economy will be based on a mixture of existing and emerging industries and it's difficult to think of an industry better-placed than train building on which to build on that traditional strength.

"There will be enormous ongoing opportunity to supply government trains, and potentially High Speed Rail, and our region has the skills, technology and innovative approach to build them now and into the future."

Mr Hawes said the proposal's model, seeking to activate public and private sector investment, could set the facility up to not only fulfil orders for trains in NSW but potentially look for supply opportunities elsewhere in Australia.

"It makes sense that the state government is a major investor and customer, rather than the operator, so there is flexibility in the operating model," Mr Hawes said.

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