

13 September 2025

Newcastle Airport stars in Business Hunter Awards

Newcastle Airport was the big winner at the Business Hunter Awards on Friday night, taking out the Business of the Year, Contribution to the Region and Excellence in Sustainability awards, along with Airlines and Partnership Manager Matthew Borger being named Employee of the Year.

The region's most prestigious business awards were announced at a gala ceremony at NEX Newcastle before a sold-out audience of 600 guests. This year's program was the biggest in the more than 40-year history of the awards, with a record 220-plus entrants across 19 contested categories and more than 100 finalists vying for glory.

The awards, sponsored by Newcastle Permanent, celebrate the achievements and entrepreneurial spirit of the Hunter region's most inspiring business organisations and individuals.

Business Hunter CEO Bob Hawes said Newcastle Airport's prominence in this year's awards reflected the significance of the airport's expansion and newly acquired international capability to the region's growth and future prosperity.

"Newcastle Airport is more than a transport and tourism hub, it is driving economic opportunity by expanding domestic and international flight connections to the region and supporting the growth of industries such as defence, aerospace and advanced manufacturing through the development of Astra Aerolab," Mr Hawes said.

"The achievements they have made this year in completing the international terminal, securing new flights and attracting a global technology leader in Kongsberg to the region are already providing significant benefits to the Hunter and have set a course for future growth and job creation across a range of industries.

"The contributions of the airport to driving new economic activity for the Hunter are widely recognised and supported by government and industry stakeholders across the region."

Excellence in Large Business was won by business advisers Prosperity, a Newcastle-founded firm that now operates along the east coast, while Newcastle technology solutions provider SAPHI picked up both the Excellence in Small Business and Excellence in Innovation awards.

Jeremy Brett, general manager of Singleton manufacturer Morgan Engineering, was named Business Leader of the Year (21 employees and over), while online health entrepreneur James Sneddon, of Hyphen Health, took out the Business Leader award for businesses with less than 20 employees. KPMG partner Steph Loadsman won the coveted Kristen Keegan Award for Young Business Leader, named after Business Hunter's late former CEO.

Business Hunter President Glenn Thornton bestowed the prestigious President's Award to innovative medical manufacturer Whiteley Corporation, which this year opened a pioneering \$25 million Human Therapeutics Plant in Tomago.

He also announced three new entries to the Business Hunter Honour Roll, a merit list that recognises longstanding businesses and organisations that have made substantial contributions to business. The new inductees were trade services giant Mullane, celebrating 100 years of business this year, surveying and planning firm Monteath & Powys (75 years) and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service (50 years).

Out of the Square Media (Contribution to the Region) and Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Outstanding Local Chamber) were awarded Hall of Fame status for having won their respective categories three times.

Mr Hawes said the awards demonstrated the diversity and strength of the region's business community across all sectors.

"Tonight's event has brought together an amazing array of businesses and individuals from all parts of the region who are leading the way in their fields," Mr Hawes said.

"Their achievements show that entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in the Hunter and provide confidence that we are well-positioned to grow and thrive as we continue to diversify our economy and meet the challenges of the net zero transition."

SMEs that scored big on the night included Lake Macquarie tourism newcomer Showtime Kayaking, which won the Outstanding New Business category, and Excellence in Micro Business Award winner Note It, a Maitland digital solutions business that markets a mobile-first platform to help frontline leaders capture, track and act on workplace conversations.

Port Stephens tourism operator 4WD Tours R US dominated a strong field of contenders to win the Outstanding Visitor Experience Award for its popular Stockton sand dune tours.

Other winners included A Splash of Colour Swimming (Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion), Maitland Business Chamber (Outstanding Local Chamber), Hunter Breast Cancer Foundation (Outstanding Community Organisation), Omnia (Excellence in International Business), Primary Health Network (Employer of Choice, 21 employees and over) and Loyalty Management Solutions (Employer of Choice, under 20 employees)

(Full list of winners on following page)

Media enquiries: Bob Hawes 0418 496 745

Category	Winner
Business of the Year	Newcastle Airport
Outstanding Business Leader (21 employees and over)	Jeremy Brett, Morgan Engineering
Outstanding Business Leader (under 20 employees)	James Sneddon, Hyphen Health
Excellence in Large Business	Prosperity Advisers Group
Excellence in Small Business	SAPHI
Excellence in Micro Business	Note It
Outstanding Community Organisation	Hunter Breast Cancer Foundation
Excellence in International Business	Omnia
Outstanding New Business	Showtime Kayaking
Excellence in Innovation	SAPHI
Excellence in Sustainability	Newcastle Airport
Employer of Choice (under 20 employees)	Loyalty Management Solutions
Employer of Choice (21 employees and over)	The Primary Health Network
Outstanding Local Chamber	Maitland Business Chamber
Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion	A Splash of Colour Swimming
Contribution to the Region	Newcastle Airport
Outstanding Visitor Experience	4WD Tours R US
Outstanding Employee	Matthew Borger, Newcastle Airport
Kristen Keegan Young Business Leader	Steph Loadsman, KPMG
President's Award	Whiteley Corporation
Honour Roll recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mullane • Monteath & Powys • Westpac Rescue Helicopter

Business Hunter proudly partnered with the **Newcastle Permanent** to present the Business Hunter Awards. The program and event was also supported by 19 category sponsors: **Tulloch Wines, University of Newcastle, Port of Newcastle, Quarry Mining, Apprenticeship Support Australia, Port Authority of NSW, Strike Force Services, PwC Australia, BHP, Whiteley, Business NSW, Glencore, AGL, NSW Minerals Council, Newcastle Herald, The Mai Wel Group, McDonald Jones Stadium, Orica, IMB Bank.**