

8 November 2024

## **NEW BOARD ANNOUNCED AT BUSINESS HUNTER AGM**

Business Hunter, the peak body representing businesses across the Hunter region, proudly introduced its new Board at their Annual General Meeting, held today.

Reflecting the organisation's commitment to driving growth and supporting a dynamic business environment, the newly appointed Board brings together a diverse range of leaders from industries vital to the region's future.

The 2024-2026 Board welcomes three new members alongside seven returning directors, all of whom bring extensive experience and insight.

Glenn Thornton, previously the Senior Vice President, has been appointed President after four years of dedicated service on the board. Mr Thornton's appointment marks a unique return to leadership within the organisation, as he also served as CEO of the Hunter Business Chamber (Business Hunter's former iteration) from 2001 to 2006.

Mr Thornton also continues as Chair of Business Hunter's Regional Infrastructure Committee. He expressed his enthusiasm for continuing to build on Business Hunter's successes and influence in the region and beyond.

"It's an honour to step into the role of President at such a pivotal time for our region. As we continue to navigate major challenges and opportunities, my focus will be on ensuring that Business Hunter remains the leading voice for businesses," said Mr Thornton.

"I'm excited to build on the strong foundation that's been established under Lauren and Bob's leadership, and I look forward to working with our members and stakeholders to achieve even greater outcomes for the Hunter."

"With a strong and diverse board in place, we are well-positioned to tackle key issues such as energy transition, regional infrastructure, and workforce development. Our focus will be on maintaining momentum and ensuring the Hunter continues to thrive.

The new board, detailed below, will serve for a term of two years:

Name	Position	New or Returning	Organisation
Glenn Thornton	President	Returning	General Manager Northern NSW, TSA Riley.
Holly Martin	Senior Vice President	Returning	Proprietor Marketing GP

Aaron Johansen	Vice President	New	CEO Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group
Lauren Eyles	Immediate Past President	Returning	Executive Coach and Mentor and Lecturer, University of Newcastle
Ashleigh John	Director	Returning	Managing Director of Mullane Lindsay Solicitors
Seamus Burke	Director	Returning	Partner at Sparke Helmore Lawyers
Tony Rhodes	Director	Returning	Proprietor and CEO Mullane Group
Judith Field	Director	Returning	Business NSW representative
Steve Wait	Director	New	CEO The Business Centre
Michael Huggett	Director	New	Local Chamber of Commerce representative – Lake Macquarie Business

Outgoing President, Lauren Eyles, thanked her fellow board members for their support over the last two years, including outgoing board members Hennie du Plooy, Peter Lawrence, and Genelle Scotts.

"It has been a privilege to serve as President of Business Hunter, and I'm incredibly proud of what we've accomplished together. From supporting our businesses through challenging economic conditions, returning the organisation to surplus post-COVID, growing our membership base, and strengthening our reserves, we are well positioned to continue to advocate strongly for the long-term prosperity of our region," said Ms Eyles.

"I want to extend my gratitude to the entire board, and I'm excited to continue working alongside them in my new capacity as Immediate Past President. Our advocacy efforts have supported significant wins, including hosting the Prime Minister and the Premier, and advancing projects at the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport, which are global gateways of national significance. I have no doubt Business Hunter will continue to grow and achieve even greater success in the years ahead."

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