BUSINESS NSW

200 YEARS

STANDING WITH MEMBERS.
DELIVERING FOR BUSINESS.

The eucalyptus stands as a constant in the Australian landscape. A symbol of resilience, endurance, and continuity.

It has witnessed generations of progress and change.

For 200 years, Business NSW has supported and championed business across New South Wales.

While the organisation has evolved over time, its commitment has remained constant.

STANDING WITH MEMBERS. DELIVERING FOR BUSINESS.

BUSINESS NSW

200 YEARS

STANDING WITH MEMBERS.
DELIVERING FOR BUSINESS.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Business NSW acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways on which we live and work and recognise their continuing significance and connection to Country.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We honour the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and commit to building a brighter future together.

JOSEPH CARROZZI AM

This bicentenary marks a rare milestone – one reached by only a small number of institutions in New South Wales. It is a moment to reflect on the history of Business NSW and the extraordinary transformation of our state.

Over two centuries, NSW has grown from a fledgling trading settlement into one of the most dynamic economies in the region, now contributing about 30 per cent of national GDP. Through booms and downturns, wars and pandemics, technological change and population growth, one constant has remained – the resilience of NSW businesses and the importance of their voice in shaping the state's future. From small family firms to major employers, they underpin jobs, drive innovation and support communities across the state.

The decades ahead will bring new challenges. Global competition is intensifying. Technology is reshaping industries. The energy transition is accelerating. Workforce needs are shifting, and lifting productivity remains a national priority.

If NSW is to remain competitive, businesses must be supported to innovate, grow and adapt. We must also reverse the decline in entrepreneurship and ensure the next generation of businesses is encouraged and equipped to succeed. Just as importantly, growth must be shared – with regional and local economies supported through targeted investment, infrastructure and stronger connections to industry.

Business NSW is setting a clear long-term direction to support that future, developed in close partnership with our members across the state. It is focused on strengthening the foundations of the economy while ensuring businesses – wherever they operate – are positioned to succeed.

Our history shows what is possible when business has a strong, credible voice. Our future will depend on keeping that voice strong, relevant and firmly grounded in the businesses we represent.

Joseph Carrozzi AM
President, Business NSW

NEW SOUTH WALES

A Story of Progress

George Street. Sydney.

DANIEL HUNTER

For 200 years, one idea has endured: that NSW businesses are strongest when they work together and are heard clearly in public decision-making.

That idea took shape in 1826, when a group of merchants and business owners came together to address the practical realities of trade, employment and growth in a young and uncertain economy. From those beginnings grew one of the state's most longstanding institutions.

The NSW they saw was a work in progress. Many still viewed Sydney as merely a penal outpost. But those early business leaders saw something else – a future built on enterprise, investment and opportunity.

Across two centuries, Business NSW and its predecessor organisations have ensured the perspective of business is reflected in the decisions that shape our economy. This has meant advocating for policies that support investment, jobs and productivity, while staying grounded in the realities faced by employers every day.

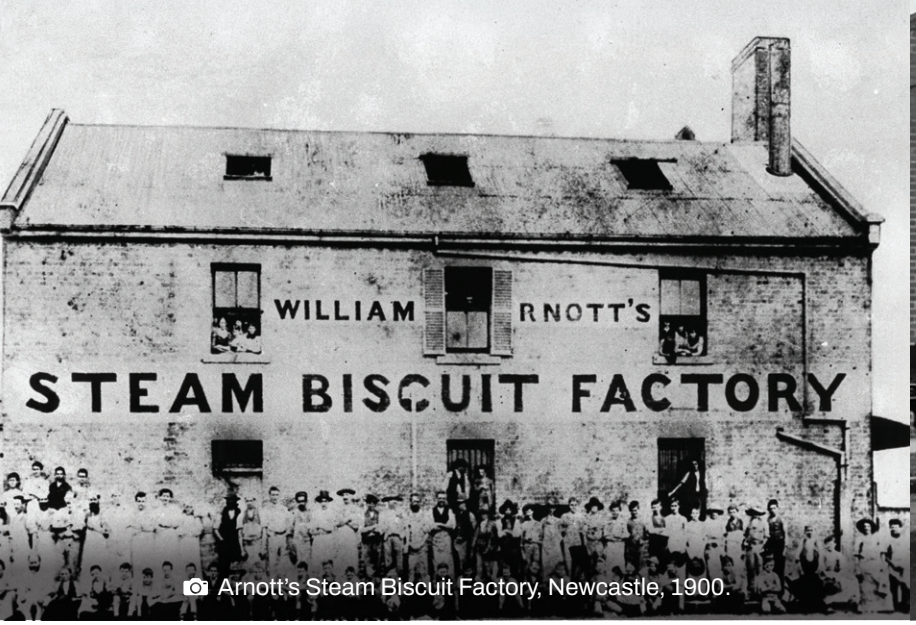
A defining theme of that work has been the balance between economic growth with workforce wellbeing. From early insurance models to today's workers' compensation system, the focus has been on practical solutions that support both business confidence and worker protection.

That role continues today. In 2025 and 2026, Business NSW worked to help support stability and reform in the state's workers' compensation system during a period of significant pressure – a reminder that while circumstances change, the need for balanced reform does not.

This book tells the story of that journey. It is not a simple or linear story, but one of reinvention, partnership and persistence.

Most importantly, it is a story that continues – driven by the thousands of businesses across NSW whose voices we represent every day.

Daniel Hunter
CEO, Business NSW



Arnott's Steam Biscuit Factory, Newcastle, 1900.

Three Threes horse-drawn delivery wagon, c. 1920s.

200 YEARS

OF BACKING BUSINESS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

In 1826, Sydney, established on Gadigal land, was a young colony – harsh, distant, and rapidly changing.

Saxby & Coleman Cordial Works, Taree, c. 1913.

Chamber of Manufactures parade float, 1934.

When a small group of merchants gathered to address the practical realities of trade and supply, that meeting marked the beginning of what would become the Sydney Chamber of Commerce.

In a city founded as a penal settlement, it signalled a shift – a growing confidence in commerce and in the colony's future. And an early effort to define Sydney not as a place of punishment, but as a place of opportunity.

Over the decades, that vision would be tested, challenged and transformed. This is a story of reinvention, merger and advocacy, of ambition, disagreement and resilience. It is the story of an organisation that, despite setbacks and uncertainty, repeatedly emerged to meet the needs of business.

It is also a story intertwined with the journeys of New South Wales and Australia as they moved towards nationhood.

From a small commercial outpost established on Gadigal lands, the state has grown into a global economy. From a single centre of commerce, it has expanded into a network of regional and metropolitan business communities.

Along the way, the organisation has reflected the changing face of business itself, evolving from a small group of merchants into a voice for business across industries, regions and communities.

What began with just 60 members in Sydney has grown to represent tens of thousands of businesses.

At every stage, the central idea has held: business is stronger when it works together and speaks with a clear voice.

1826

- Sydney Chamber of Commerce established.
- Early chamber meetings functioned as a "parliament of business" before NSW had full representative government.

1885

- The Chamber of Manufactures of NSW emerges, building on overlapping membership drawn from the Sydney Chamber of Commerce.

1910

- The first NSW Workmen's Compensation Act is passed, but is limited to high-risk occupations.

1901

- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry established.

1912

- Chamber of Manufactures of NSW establishes Manufacturers Mutual Insurance Company (MMI), offering employer-based insurance mutuals.

WWI
1914–1918

1926

- Workers Compensation Act 1926 is passed.
- Workers Compensation Commission is established.
- Workers compensation becomes mandatory for all employers.

1935

- Manufacturers House opens at 12–14 O'Connell Street, Sydney.

WWII
1939–1945

1947

- Workplace Advice Unit started, where enquiries were received by mail. This would eventually become the Workplace Advice Line, which has taken 188,290 calls in the past decade, giving businesses crucial advice on HR, employment law, WHS and many other issues.

1980s

- Workers' compensation scheme remit expands to include cost containment and injury management.

1987 & 1998

- New workers' compensation structure emphasises injury management and return to work.

1995

- Chamber of Manufactures of NSW becomes Australian Business Industrial and sells its shareholding in MMI (now Allianz Insurance), marking a major financial and structural turning point for the organisation.
- Australian Business Limited is formed, acting as an effective holding company in place of the Chamber of Manufactures of NSW with ABI as its industrial wing.

2003–2004

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) starts Counts of Australian Businesses, reporting 652,461 businesses in NSW.

2005

Karen Wilson became president of Australian Business Ltd, the first female president in the corporation's history.

2006

Australian Business Limited and the State Chamber of Commerce NSW merge to form NSW Business Chamber Ltd.

State Chamber of Commerce NSW becomes Sydney Business Chamber, later becoming Business Sydney.

2008

Australian Business Industrial becomes a federally registered industrial organisation.

2011

Australian Business Lawyers and Advisors opens.

2012

Significant workers compensation system overhaul, including changes to entitlements and claims processes.

WorkCover Independent Review Office is created to handle disputes.

2013

ABI relinquishes its NSW State IRC registration as an employer organisation and NSW Business Chamber Ltd takes over this registration.

2014

Apprenticeship Support Australia (ASA) was established to deliver the Australian Government's Apprenticeship Support Services as an Apprentice Connect Australia Provider.

2015

State Insurance and Care Governance Act creates:

- icare *(insurer)*
- SIRA *(regulator)*
- SafeWork NSW *(work health and safety focus)*

2020

NSW Business Chamber rebrands as Business NSW.

Business Sydney, Business Western Sydney and regional affiliates come under the Business NSW umbrella.

2023

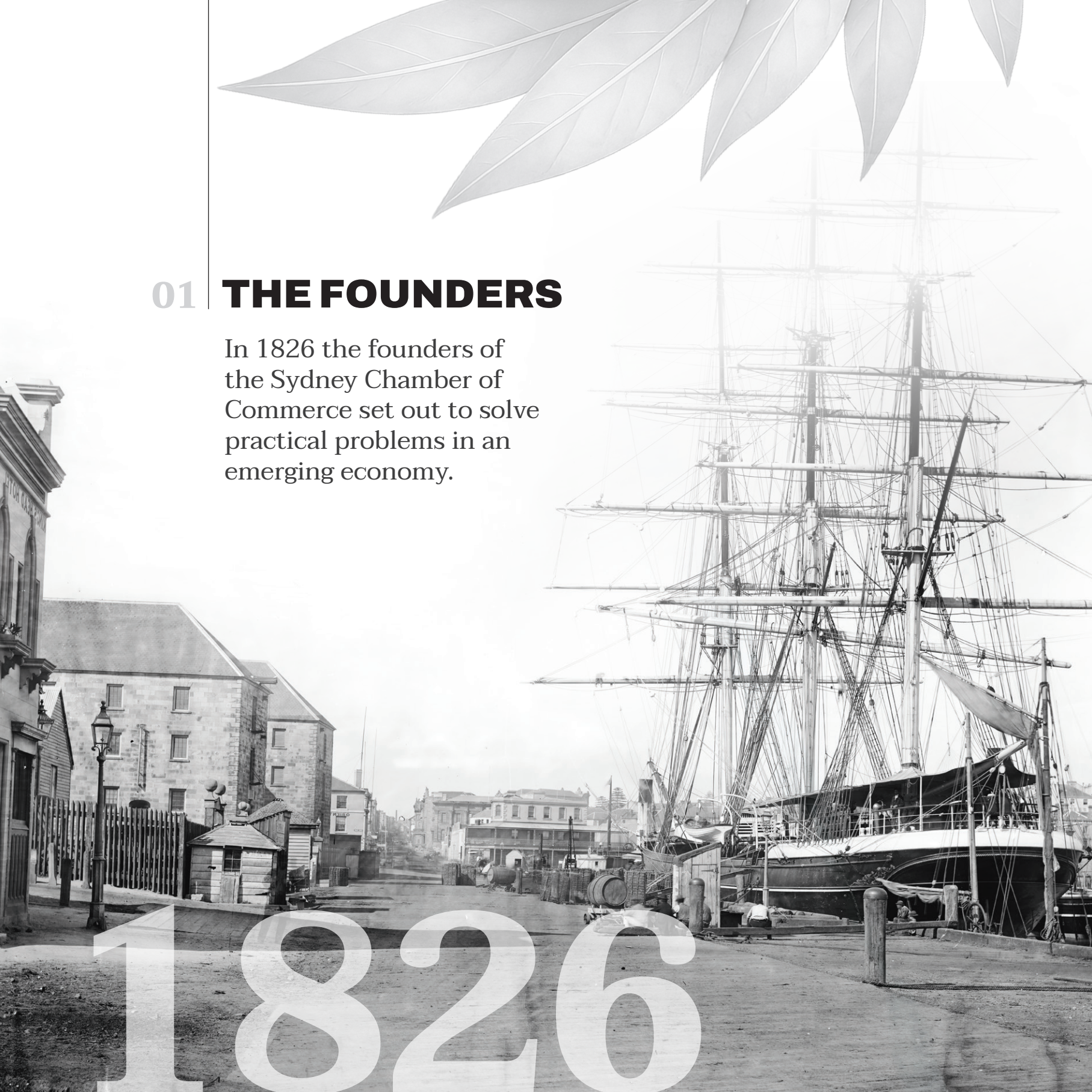
Business NSW headquarters relocates from North Sydney to 8 Chifley, in the heart of the Sydney CBD. Business NSW maintains 10 regional offices across NSW.

2025–2026

Business NSW supports legislative reforms to the workers' compensation scheme, including measures to improve financial sustainability and clearer definitions for psychological injury.

01 THE FOUNDERS

In 1826 the founders of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce set out to solve practical problems in an emerging economy.



1826

Trade was uncertain. Currency was unstable. Rules were inconsistent. Disputes were common. Sydney was also in the grip of a recession, triggered by a stock market crash in London. Against this backdrop, the decision to establish the chamber was all the more ambitious.

The chamber was created to bring order to a rapidly growing commercial community. It gave merchants a place to settle differences, share information and act collectively to improve trading conditions.

At its centre was Edward Wollstonecraft, one of the colony's leading merchants and a driving force behind the chamber's creation. A successful businessman, he understood the importance of coordinated business influence and helped shape what would become one of Australia's most enduring institutions. Contemporaries described him as persuasive, but not without faults, noting he had "a naturally defective temper."

Under Wollstonecraft and his peers, the chamber promoted resolving disputes through arbitration rather than litigation, reflecting a belief that business could better regulate many of its own affairs.

The early years were shaped by debates that would help define the colony's future. Among the most significant was the campaign to end transportation and move from a convict-based system towards a free-settler economy. Another was the push to replace the improvised 'holey dollar' with British sterling as the standard currency for commerce.

These were not abstract policy questions. They went to the heart of how the colony functioned, influencing the stability and credibility of its economy.

The chamber also emerged during a period of profound political change. As demands grew for greater representation and limits on colonial authority, business leaders increasingly sought a seat at the table. It became an important vehicle through which those views could be expressed.

But the chamber was not without its critics. Membership was restricted to men, and some saw it as an exclusive club serving the interests of a privileged merchant class. Even so, the idea that organised business advocacy could shape economic outcomes proved remarkably resilient.

The chamber vs the holey dollar

One of the chamber's early advocacy positions helped change the way business was conducted across the colony.

Back in 1813, New South Wales faced a serious shortage of coins. To solve the problem, the British Government shipped 40,000 Spanish silver dollars to Sydney. In a uniquely colonial solution, the centre was punched out of each coin, creating two new forms of currency – the outer ring became the famous holey dollar, worth five shillings, while the centre piece – known as the dump – was valued at 15 pence.

As the colony's economy developed, the chamber argued that commercial transactions would be better served using British sterling rather than improvised local currency. Within a few years, the holey dollar was on the way out and, by 1829, it had been officially withdrawn from circulation.

Not everyone celebrated the outcome. Those who had accumulated large holdings of holey dollars suddenly found themselves holding currency that had lost much of its value – a reminder that even two centuries ago, shifts in economic policy could create winners and losers.

Hyde Park Barracks, Macquarie Street, Sydney.

02 A VOICE TAKES SHAPE

Samuel Lyons.

As the colony grew, so too did the influence of the chamber.

Its meetings were likened by contemporaries to a form of “parliament” for business, before NSW had its own representative parliament.

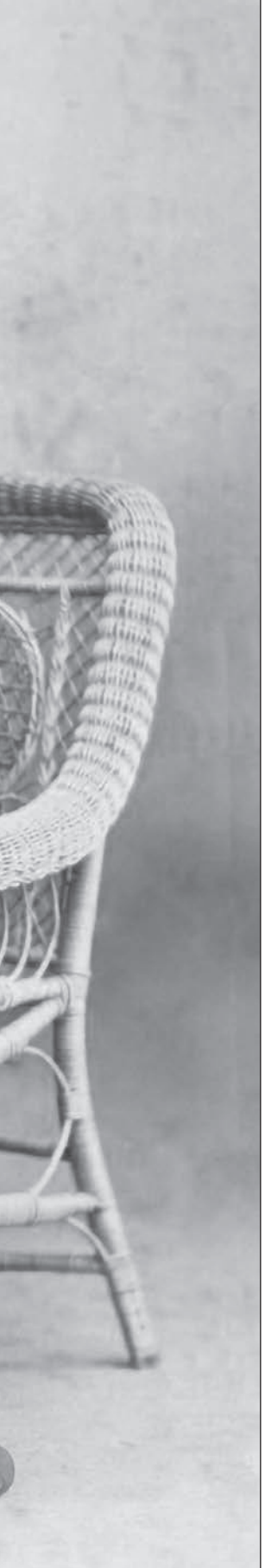
Its members were an eclectic group who also left their imprint on several early institutions, including a royal exchange and the still prominent Royal Agricultural Society of NSW.

Figures such as John Lamb, a Royal Navy hero, and Samuel Lyons, a former convict, helped re-energise the organisation at key points. Their leadership reflected the changing nature of the emerging economy, as commerce expanded and new industries emerged.

Sydney was a place where both free settlers and former convicts could rise to the top. Francis Greenway is a clear example – transported as a convict, he later became the architect of St James’ Church and Hyde Park Barracks.

Within this landscape, the chamber became more than a forum for settling disputes. Over time, it found its voice in broader economic debates, often shaped by events far beyond the colony.

Father of Federation Sir Henry Parkes is pictured with his wife Eleanor.



> *That one industry or several industries are protected at the cost of all other industries is a gross injustice to all others, and a loss to the community".*
>
> - Statement under Sydney Chamber of Commerce President Jacob Montefiore

One such influence was the political principle associated with Britain's loss of its American colonies – "no taxation without representation." These ideas resonated in a colony where questions of authority, taxation and representation were becoming increasingly significant.

John Lamb, then head of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce drew on these broader imperial debates in opposing the continuation of convict transportation. He argued that the policy risked repeating past errors in Britain's colonial governance.

Another defining debate was the contest between free trade and protectionism. At times, it was literally visible on the ground, with armed customs officials patrolling both sides of the Murray River, marking the divide between free-trade NSW and protectionist Victoria.

The chamber consistently backed free trade, describing protection as a "gross injustice" that hurt everyone. Even as national policy later shifted towards protectionism, the chamber maintained its support for free trade as a matter of principle.

These debates placed the chamber at the centre of conversations on Federation, where economics, governance and national identity were closely intertwined. Federation also helped drive closer coordination between chambers across Australia, laying the foundations for what would eventually become the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1901.

The chamber's influence was also reflected in its membership. Figures such as Sir Henry Parkes, later a key architect of the Commonwealth, moved between business and public life, reflecting how closely economic and political decision-making were linked in the colony's development.

Through it all, one theme remained constant: business needed a stronger voice in shaping policy to help drive collective prosperity.

> *It was the kind of treatment from Downing Street, which first alienated the affection of the American colonies, and eventually drove them to rebellion."*
>
> - John Lamb, Head of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce

1885

Chamber of Manufactures parade float, Elizabeth Street, Sydney, 1934.

03 FROM CHAMBER TO MOVEMENT

The journey from the original Sydney Chamber of Commerce to today's Business NSW was anything but direct.

Over time, different organisations formed, dissolved, merged and were re-established, each reflecting shifts in the economy, from early trade, to manufacturing, and later a modern services-based economy.

A major turning point came in 1885 with the formation of the Chamber of Manufactures of NSW. It played a leading role in shaping industrial policy and supporting the growth of manufacturing, with its influence expanding into areas such as insurance and employer representation.

For much of this period, the commerce and manufacturing streams developed in parallel. They shared a common goal, but not always the same priorities – particularly on issues like tariffs and trade.

It wasn't until 2006 that these two strands converged, forming the foundations of Business NSW as it exists today.

Alongside this evolution, regional leadership played an important role in strengthening local representation. Leaders such as Ellie Brown helped establish the Central West Business Chamber and ensure advocacy reflected the realities of businesses outside metropolitan Sydney.

Since then, Business NSW has grown to have 10 regional offices and 208 chambers of commerce across the state.

Together, these developments reflect an organisation that has continually adapted, staying true to its core purpose while evolving with the needs of a changing economy.

Stand in O'Connell Street and you're looking at a key part of this organisation's 200-year history. There, a heritage-listed art deco building marks the former home of the Chamber of Manufactures of NSW.

Inside those walls, many of the big decisions were made, including continued support for workers' compensation and the administration of MMI, the chamber's insurance arm.

It was also a place where influence was on display. Prime ministers, premiers and senior ministers regularly passed through its doors, reflecting the chamber's standing in public life.

The eventual sale of the insurance arm, and later the head office itself, helped lay the financial foundations that continue to support Business NSW today.

> *"Some of my most valued moments were on the road with the team on our regional trips, the car chats between visits, sharing a laugh and getting to know each other beyond the work."*
>
> - Ellie Brown

Ellie Brown, former Business NSW board member.

1930
MANUFACTURER'S HOUSE
J. H. BUCHANAN & COWPER · ARCHITECTS

2026
MANUFACTURERS HOUSE

CROKER
CROKER

CASE STUDY

Croker Oars

MEMBER SINCE 1973

For more than 60 years, Croker Oars has helped athletes around the world chase speed, precision and excellence on the water, growing from a small regional workshop into one of the world's leading oar manufacturers.

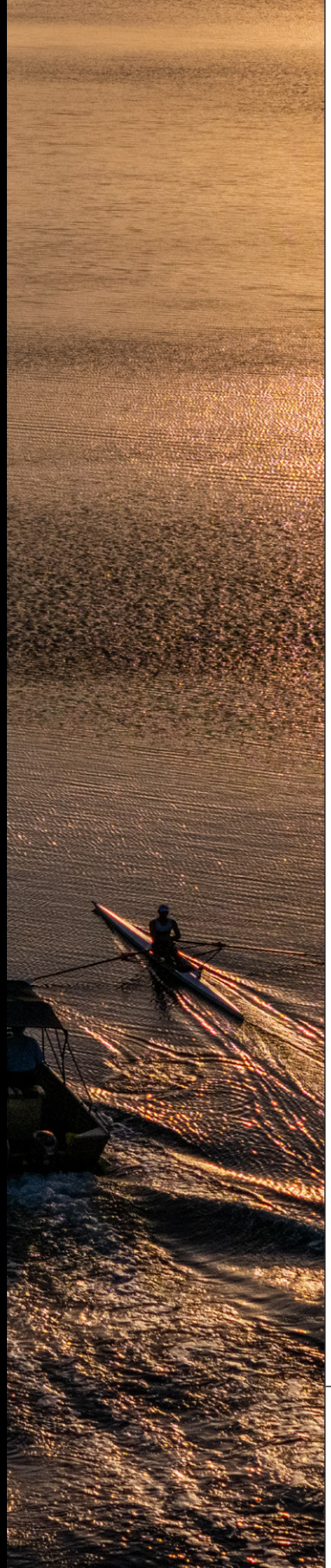
The business began in the early 1960s when founder Howard Croker started his apprenticeship in boat building. A passionate rower from a rowing family, Howard recognised a gap in the market for high-quality crafted oars. "No one liked making oars," he recalls. "It was physically hard work, and I wasn't scared of hard work. That's how I got started."

After completing his apprenticeship, Howard established Croker Oars and, in 1977, relocated the business from Sydney to Oxley Island near Taree. The company remains there today on the 70-acre property affectionately known as "REMO" – Spanish for rowing – on the banks of the Manning River.

Early on, Howard's father gave him advice that would stay with him throughout his business journey: "Son, you must join Business NSW." Howard did just that, and Croker Oars has remained a member since 1973, relying on the organisation for advice, support and guidance as the business expanded into international markets.

From handcrafted wooden oars shaped one at a time to world-class carbon fibre designs used by elite athletes across the globe, Croker Oars has continually evolved through innovation and determination. The company's oars have been used by Olympic champions and rowing teams worldwide, including during the Sydney Olympics where athletes using Croker oars won five gold medals.

Today, Croker Oars exports thousands of oars annually while remaining proudly regional and family focused. "Rowing is a total passion for us," Howard says. "It's in our family. It's in our bloodline."



from 1926

04

A COMMON THREAD: WORKERS' COMPENSATION

If there is one thread that runs most clearly through the organisation's history, it is workers' compensation.

The original founders did not design the modern system, but they did set early principles that would later underpin it – shared responsibility and mechanisms for managing commercial risk.

That thinking came early. Through its insurance arm, the chamber recognised the need for formal risk protection well before workers' compensation schemes existed.

When NSW introduced its first workers' compensation legislation, the Workmen's Compensation Act 1910, that foresight quickly took shape. Within two years, the Chamber of Manufactures had established Manufacturers Mutual Insurance (MMI) – an employer-backed, limited liability insurer designed to respond to the new system in practice.

What might have seemed a bold step at the time proved to be a practical one. It aligned directly with a changing regulatory environment and helped employers manage risk while still supporting injured workers.

By 1926, workers' compensation had become compulsory, and over time the system expanded through ongoing reform and development. Major infrastructure projects, including the Sydney Harbour Bridge, brought both the importance and the human cost of workplace safety into sharp focus.

In 1995, the chamber sold its shareholding in MMI (now Allianz), ending a long association with the insurer. The move coincided with the rebranding of the organisation as Australian Business Limited and significantly strengthened its financial position, making it one of the most financially robust business bodies in the country at the time.

Business NSW's predecessor organisations played an active role throughout this evolution – balancing cost pressures for employers with the need for effective protection for workers. That balancing act has remained a constant feature of its advocacy.

Most recently, in 2025 and 2026, sustained advocacy contributed to major reforms to the scheme, including measures aimed at stabilising premiums and improving affordability for employers – delivering immediate relief while strengthening long-term system sustainability.

Business NSW's involvement in both the creation and modern reform of the workers' compensation system represents a rare full-circle moment across two centuries of advocacy.

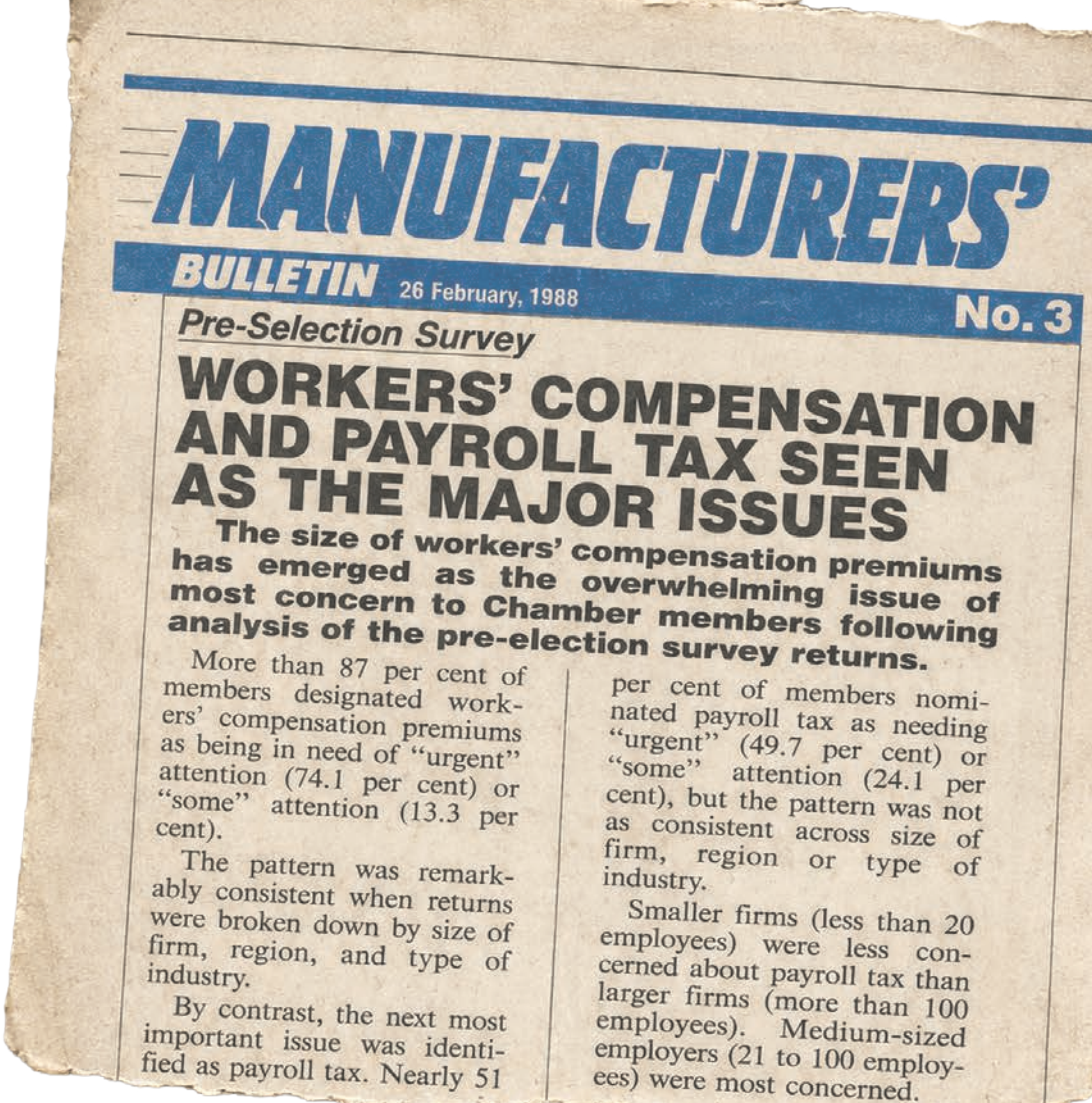
Difference.

There's one insurance company that is prepared to be different. To fly apart from the sameness of most insurance companies. To offer you more in Workers Compensation, Domestic, Commercial and General Insurance cover.

A new standard of service, a new standard of insurance.

Talk to your broker or us about what MMI can do for you.

MMI



MANUFACTURERS' BULLETIN 26 February, 1988 No. 3

Pre-Selection Survey

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND PAYROLL TAX SEEN AS THE MAJOR ISSUES

The size of workers' compensation premiums has emerged as the overwhelming issue of most concern to Chamber members following analysis of the pre-election survey returns.

More than 87 per cent of members designated workers' compensation premiums as being in need of "urgent" attention (74.1 per cent) or "some" attention (13.3 per cent).

The pattern was remarkably consistent when returns were broken down by size of firm, region, and type of industry.

By contrast, the next most important issue was identified as payroll tax. Nearly 51 per cent of members nominated payroll tax as needing "urgent" (49.7 per cent) or "some" attention (24.1 per cent), but the pattern was not as consistent across size of firm, region or type of industry.

Smaller firms (less than 20 employees) were less concerned about payroll tax than larger firms (more than 100 employees). Medium-sized employers (21 to 100 employees) were most concerned.

05

BUILDING A STATEWIDE NETWORK

What started in Sydney has grown into a statewide network, driven by a simple reality – business conditions vary widely across NSW.

Over time, Business NSW brought together local and regional chambers, each grounded in its own economy and priorities. From capital cities to regional centres, the model gives businesses a direct local voice, while still linking into a broader state agenda.

01 Riverina Murray
02 Illawarra & Shoalhaven
03 Far South Coast
04 Western Sydney
05 Sydney
06 Western NSW
07 Central Coast
08 Hunter
09 Mid North Coast
10 New England North West
11 Northern Rivers

Tamworth town centre.
Courtesy of Destination NSW.

That local-to-state connection extends further. Through Business NSW, regional and metropolitan chambers connect into the national business voice via the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (established 1901). It means issues raised locally can reach decision-makers in Canberra.

Growth across the state has reinforced this structure. Gold rush expansion, post-war migration, and ongoing population movement have all brought new workers and new pressures on infrastructure and services.

Western Sydney now stands as a major economic centre, while regional NSW continues to drive key sectors including agriculture, tourism, resources and advanced manufacturing.

Across all of this, the role of Business NSW has stayed consistent: making sure local realities are heard where decisions are made, and that regional priorities aren't sidelined.

Business Western Sydney Executive Director David Borger.

Western Sydney International Airport.

Building tomorrow's workforce

Building the next generation of skilled workers is a core part of Business NSW's mission. Alongside advocating for businesses, we have long recognised that addressing skills shortages also means investing in the next generation of workers. That's where Apprenticeship Support Australia (ASA) comes in.

The apprenticeship provider now known as Apprenticeship Support Australia began in NSW on 1 May 1998 as the Australian Business Employment Network (ABEN) when NSW Business Chamber was awarded its first contract from the Australian Government to provide apprenticeship services. As the organisation evolved alongside changes to Australian Government apprenticeship programs, it became Australian Business Limited New Apprenticeships Centre, then Australian Business Limited Apprenticeships Centre.

On 1 July 2015, Business NSW joined forces with other state chambers to establish Chambers Apprenticeship Support Australia (CASA), creating a nationally coordinated approach to apprenticeship support. Operating as Apprenticeship Support Australia (ASA), the organisation continues to deliver Australian Government Apprenticeship Support Services across Australia, combining national capability with strong local knowledge.

By strengthening trade and technical career pathways, ASA helps businesses build the skilled workforce they need today while investing in Australia's future workforce. In NSW alone, ASA has supported more than 80,000 businesses and signed up over 450,000 apprentices and trainees since 1998, demonstrating the scale of Business NSW's long-standing commitment to helping businesses build the skilled workforce they need.

MIGHTYWHITE
GLASS
HANDLE WITH CARE
AUSTRALIAN GROWN
SHELF READY

PICKLES
LEMON
BUTTER
TRY
333
"THREE THREES"
CHUTNEY
SPICEÉ
SAUCE

CASE STUDY

Three Threes Condiments

MEMBER SINCE 1930

Three Threes Condiments began in 1919 as a family venture led by Stanley Roy McAlpine and his wife, Winifred Grace McAlpine. Like many businesses of its era, it started close to home – quite literally. From their kitchen in Redfern, the couple produced small batches of pickles, relishes, jams and sauces using traditional preserving methods.

In those early years, production was hands-on and deeply personal. Ingredients were prepared by hand, recipes refined through practice, and finished products delivered to local grocers by horse and cart. It was a business shaped by its neighbourhood, built on close relationships with customers who came to recognise – and trust – the quality of what the McAlpines were making.

As demand grew, production moved into larger premises in Woollahra and later Darlington, marking a shift from kitchen-scale production to a more structured manufacturing operation. Even as it evolved, the business remained firmly family-run, guided by long-held values. A major milestone came in 1955 with the establishment of a permanent manufacturing base in Lidcombe, where Three Threes continues to operate today, enabling it to modernise and scale while preserving its trusted flavours.

Today, that legacy continues, with Stanley's great-grandson Michael McAlpine, alongside his wife Justine and daughter Sophie, leading the business. That balance between tradition and progress defines Three Threes. Its products are staples in pantries across NSW and beyond, supported by modern production processes, strong retail partnerships, and a continued commitment to consistency and quality. Still family-owned, its core philosophy remains unchanged: to deliver products that stand the test of time.

Three Threes has been a member of Business NSW since 1930, reflecting a long-standing commitment to the state's business community. As Business NSW marks 200 years of enterprise, Three Threes stands as a proud example of what can grow from small beginnings – and of the lasting impact family businesses have on the economic and social life of NSW.

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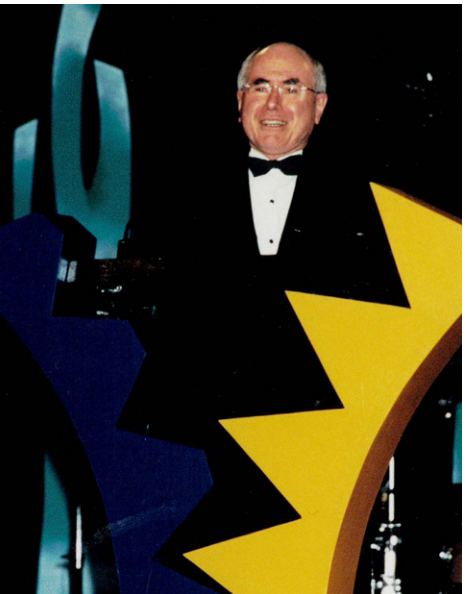

06

ADVOCACY AND IMPACT

In recent decades, Business NSW has focused on one clear goal – delivering practical outcomes that improve the operating environment for businesses across the state.

Much of its impact is most visible in times of pressure – during the COVID-19 pandemic, after natural disasters, and through periods of economic disruption.

Infrastructure has remained a constant focus, including long-term advocacy for projects such as Sydney's second international airport, led in part by Business Western Sydney.

Across all of this, Business NSW has acted as a bridge between business and government.

Our members are our strength. At its core, Business NSW translates the realities of operating a business into practical policy solutions and long-term structural reform agendas.

Steve Pastor, Kings of Neon. Member since 2025.

Ian Turner and team, Saxbys Soft Drinks. Member since 1958.

Shefali Pall, Alkalizer and Campbelltown Chamber of Commerce. Member since 2012.

07

BUSINESS NSW TODAY

Today, Business NSW operates as both an advocacy body and a statewide network of chambers, connected across metropolitan, regional and rural NSW.

That network is its strength. Local chambers feed in insights from their own communities and industries, ensuring business conditions on the ground are understood at the highest levels of decision-making.

It includes Business Sydney, Business Western Sydney, Business Hunter and Business Illawarra. Business NSW also has a strong presence on the Central Coast, Far South Coast, Mid North Coast, New England North West, Northern Rivers, Western NSW and Riverina Murray.

Together, they give voice to a diverse business community – from global exporters and manufacturers to family-run regional firms.

Women now play a central role across leadership, governance and advocacy, reflecting a more inclusive organisation than at any point in its history.

At a national level, Business NSW connects into the broader business system through Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ensuring NSW business priorities contribute to federal policy conversations.

As CEO Daniel Hunter has noted: “With an intricate network of city and regional chambers, Business NSW is in an unrivalled position to understand the hopes and challenges faced by the thousands of businesses that we represent and for whom we advocate.”

49,000+
NSW members

95,500+
Network of businesses

450
Regional leaders

145,000+
Customer service calls

208
Local chambers in NSW

10
Regional offices

BE BOLD.
THE DIGITAL DROP
OFFICE VIBES

2023 BUSINESS AWARDS
2021 BUSINESS AWARDS
BUSINESS AWARDS 2024
HALL OF FAME
2022 BUSINESS AWARDS

CASE STUDY

LEP Digital

MEMBER SINCE 2022

Founded on the Central Coast in 2015, LEP Digital began the way many great small businesses do – at a kitchen table, with an idea and a determination to do things differently. What started as a one-person start-up has since grown into an award-winning boutique digital marketing agency working with clients across Australia and internationally.

Director Laura Prael launched the business after a career in large marketing teams, with a simple but ambitious goal: to bring high-level strategy and creative capability to small and medium-sized businesses that often don't have access to it. In the early days, it was just Laura and a handful of contractors. Within two years, that grew into the company's first full-time hire. Today, LEP Digital is a team of 10 experienced marketers delivering digital content, websites and advertising campaigns that help businesses cut through online.

Based in Terrigal, the agency now works with organisations of all sizes – from local SMEs to national brands – helping them build visibility, sharpen their message and grow in an increasingly competitive digital world.

A defining part of LEP Digital's journey has been its connection to the broader business community, including its membership of Business NSW.

Through that membership, LEP Digital has tapped into a statewide network of events, connections and practical business support that has helped accelerate its growth.
For Laura, the real value has been being plugged into a community that understands the realities of running and scaling a business.

The Business NSW State Awards became a standout moment in that journey. In 2022, Laura was named Outstanding Business Leader of the Year – a recognition she describes as both unexpected and career-defining, elevating both her profile and the business.

As Business NSW celebrates 200 years, LEP Digital's story shows how membership helps regional businesses grow, connect and unlock opportunity.

> *"Being a member of Business NSW has been central to my success. It's opened doors to people I may not otherwise have met."*
>
> - Laura Prael

THOSE WHO LED THE WAY

Honouring the presidents who shaped our past and inspired our future.

Sydney Chamber of Commerce

Edward Wollstonecraft
John Lamb
Joseph Willis
Thomas Breillat
Robert Towns
Jacob Montefiore
John Watt
George King
Charles Smith
Samuel Joseph
Thomas Littlejohn
William Murray
Sir William M. Mcmillan
J.H. Storey
H.C. Fraser
James Inglis
Thomas Keigwin
Walter Friend
Sir Alfred Meeks
Augustus Robinson
Sir John French
Edward H. Rogers
J. Barre Johnston
George Littlejohn
George Wall
John Mcarthur
George Merivale
Frederick Winchcombe
John Paxton
Sir Henry Braddon
George Parkes
Sir Arthur Cocks
Charles Devenish Meares
William Macpherson
Charles Henty
Sir Mark Sheldon
James Dunlop
John Meeks
R.J. Hawkes
Spencer Watts
Sir Reginald Clark
Hon. Sir Archibald Howie
Albert Heath
Joe Cockshaw
Sir Kenneth Coles
F.C. Moat
Leslie Atkinson
Leslie Davis
J.C. Harris
John Kenny
George Mcclymont Hastie
George Clark
Hon. Federick Hewitt
Walter Lambert
Hume Mcpherson Collie
Staveley Hickson
Alfred Job Smith
Stuart Mcallum
Reginald Lamble
Peter Dunstan
Christopher Cullen
Maxwell Sandow
John Jenkins
John G. Collins
Graham W. Byrne
Roger Amos
Barry E. Alchin
Jeremy Bingham
Leonard A. Gainsford
Llewellyn Russell
Trevor Cairney

Chamber of Manufactures

Archibald Forsyth
Charles Hoskins
Sir Hugh Dixson
Charles Ludowici
Sir William Vicars CBE
John Plant Wright
Octavius Beale
Jeffrey Denniss
Dr. R.R. Hardman
Hon. John Farleigh MLC
Alfred Wunderlich
Herbert Pratten
William Willington JP, OBE
Arthur Walker
Sir Joseph Love
F.G. Kerr
S.F. Newlands
R.A. Marks
Harry Sevier
Major Bennett CMG, CB, DSO
Charles Potts
Hon. Frederick Kneeshaw OBE, MLC
James Hendry
Joseph Jones
Harold Hendy
Basil Roy Orr
Major John Adamson
Sir John Tivey
Sir Robert Webster CBE, CMG
Richard Okeden CBE, CMG
Captain George Hutcheson CBE
Sir John Hurley OBE
John Burnett CBE
John Walker OBE, AM
Harold Herford
Sir Harold CMG
Sir William Pettingell OBE, CBE
M.I. Ian Mactaggart
Frederick Buckley OBE
Archibald White
Clifton Love AM
Warren Adcock OBE
John Philip Slater
Herman Huyer AO
Colin Bull AM
Robert Paterson
Wal Cryer DFC
Major Pat Donovan AM
Murray McNair
John T. Cameron
Brian Smith
Roger Pysden AM

Australian Business Limited

Bill Farrands
Anthony R. Bates AM
Neville Sawyer AM
John Gillis Broinowski AM
David Michaelis
Karen Wilson

NSW Business Chamber

Ian Penfold
Roger Hood
Terry Wetherall
Tony Dormer
Trevor Cairney
Nola Watson

Business NSW

Lyall Gorman
Joseph Carrozzi AM

TWO LEADERS, LASTING IMPACT

Every President has left their mark on our organisation's story. Here, we shine a spotlight on two remarkable leaders whose vision and dedication continue to influence us today.

> *Adaptation and innovation are not discretionary – they are essential."*
>
> - Nola Watson

Nola Watson

Nola Watson helped shape the organisation into what it is today. Serving on the Board from 2014–2026 – including as President from 2018–2020 and interim CEO in 2020–2021 – she led the first enterprise-wide digital strategy, strengthening member engagement and introducing a more data-led approach to advocacy. She also supported a shift toward targeted, grassroots social media campaigns that expanded reach, particularly among SMEs.

Her work strengthened Business NSW's ability to represent business to government, contributing to greater focus on skills investment in TAFE and VET, and reforms including changes to payroll tax thresholds for small business. For Nola, leadership always comes back to people – building an inclusive, purpose-driven culture grounded in trust. She was a strong supporter of women in leadership and went on to become the first female President of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Lyall Gorman

Lyall Gorman has played a long-standing role in Business NSW, serving on the Board since 2014. His presidency from 2020–2025 spanned the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery that followed. He now continues as Immediate Past President and Board Director and is also President of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Throughout this time, his focus has remained firmly on members – understanding their concerns, strengthening advocacy for small and medium businesses, and ensuring their voices are represented in government.

> *What makes Business NSW enduring is simple – it listens, it adapts, and it stands with business when it matters most."*
>
> - Lyall Gorman

Bill Cloros (centre) and family. Mongrel Boots. Member since 1973

Anita Kumar, ECTARC Early Childhood Education Services and Training. Member since 2017.

AKUBRA HATS

Member since 1924

CANOWINDRA PRODUCE

Member since 1979

LONGEST-SERVING MEMBERS

These names tell only part of our story. To every member who has stood with us, shared our journey, and helped shape Business NSW, thank you.

1924

Goodearl & Bailey Pty Ltd
Akubra Hats Pty Ltd
James Cumming & Sons Pty Ltd
Unilever Australia Pty Ltd
Fuchs Lubricants (Australasia) Pty Ltd

1930

Three Threes Condiments Pty Ltd

1935

P F Brady Pty Ltd Inc Industrial Brush Co

1943

Edgar Edmondson Pty Ltd

1945

Basil V R Greatrex Pty Ltd

1950

Paragold Distributors Pty Ltd

1955

Roche Products Pty Ltd
Young Apparel Sales Pty Ltd
Ricegrowers Ltd

1957

GWA Group Holdings Ltd

1958

Saxbys Soft Drinks Pty Ltd
Australian Bakels Pty Ltd

1959

Lillyman Bros

1960

Norco Co-Operative Ltd
Dynamic Music

1961

Pride Leather Products Pty Ltd
Lubrizol Australia

1962

RBM Plastic Extrusions Pty Ltd
Kraus & Naimer Pty Ltd

1967

Unasco Pty Ltd
Schlegel Australia Pty Ltd
Beiersdorf Australia Ltd

1968

Precision Valve Australia Pty Ltd

1969

PwC
Trendpac
Latham Australia Pty Ltd
Newcastle Herald

1971

Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing Company
Coffs Harbour Blinds & Awnings
Simped Foods Pty Ltd

1972

Agrana Fruit Australia Pty Ltd
Metplas Pty Ltd
Felton Global Logistics

1973

Croker Oars Pty Ltd
Mongrel Boots Australia
Blackmores Ltd
Hepworth Industrial Wear Pty Ltd

1974

Conectiv Pty Ltd
R I Taleb (Australia) Pty Ltd
GR Davis Pty Ltd

1975

Hako Australia Pty Ltd
Port Waratah Coal Services Ltd
Access Industries
Jands Pty Ltd

1976

Brentwood RM Pty Ltd
Q&R Industrial Hoses Pty Ltd

1977

Kemet Australia Pty Ltd
Bubblegum Clothing Pty Ltd

1978

Devro Pty Ltd
Amway of Australia
Stylecraft & Co.

1979

Westhaven Ltd
Newkem
O'Brien Glass
NIB Health Funds Ltd
Canowindra Produce Co Pty Ltd

08

WRITING THE NEXT CHAPTER

Two centuries of history offer perspective.

The challenges facing businesses today differ from those of 1826, but the need for representation, practical policy and collective action endures.

The Sydney Chamber of Commerce's establishment paved the way not only for the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, but also for business chambers in every state and territory and their regional counterparts.

The years ahead will bring new pressures – from economic uncertainty to technological change and intensifying global competition.

Business NSW will continue to drive reform, support growth and advocate for businesses across the state.

Two hundred years ago, a small group of merchants envisioned a more prosperous future for business. Every generation since has built on that. The next chapter is now being written.

2025
BUSINESS
AWARDS

Scan to explore the full history of Business NSW.

BUSINESS NSW | 200 YEARS

businessnsw.com