

4 October 2022

MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE ADDRESSES WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

The region's peak business organisation, Business Illawarra, is today hosting the NSW Minister for Skills and Training, the Hon. Alister Henskens SC MP, at a Major Projects Skills Roundtable in Wollongong to discuss how to find and skill the necessary workers to deliver on the region's enviable pipeline of major projects.

As part of a partnership with i3net, and hosted by the University of Wollongong at its Innovation Campus, the roundtable will feature updates from the proponents of the region's largest industrial projects, including:

- BlueScope (Blast Furnace number 6 reline),
- Squadron (Port Kembla Energy Terminal and Power Station),
- Energy Australia (Tallawarra B Power Station); and
- South32 (Illawarra Metallurgical Coal extensions).

Business Illawarra Executive Director Adam Zarth said that given the significant investments coming to the region in coming years it is critical that these projects be given every opportunity to succeed, and it will be people and skills that are needed most in the current climate.

"There are huge opportunities coming the Illawarra's way in coming years in terms of major projects, and so it is important for us to engage with the Minister to highlight the size of the opportunity and to discuss solutions to some of the workforce and skills challenges being experienced across the region in almost every sector," said Mr Zarth.

"Aside from these exciting projects being discussed today, we expect investments in major projects to continue to come to our region; whether they be through the hydrogen hub, for offshore wind farms, for clean manufacturing or as part of the significant increase in defence-related industrial activity."

"It is critical for our future prosperity that Industry, government, education and training providers all work together with such unprecedented investment coming our way and today is a strong demonstration of that happening", Mr Zarth said.

From 5 August 2022, Minister Henskens has been assuming the role of Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, and Minister for Sport in addition to his prior responsibilities as Minister for Skills and Training and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology in the NSW Government.

Today's roundtable follows a previous event held by i3net, facilitated by KPMG Wollongong, and hosted by Wollongong City Council that brought together the major project proponents with the local skills and workforce development experts from government and private enterprise.

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About Business Illawarra

Formerly the Illawarra Business Chamber, *Business Illawarra* is the region's peak business organisation; a not-for-profit advocacy group dedicated to the economic development of the Illawarra.