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Strong Hunter representation in new state cabinet

The region's peak industry body, **Business Hunter** has welcomed strong Hunter ministerial representation in the New South Wales government, with five out of 22 Cabinet Ministers in the Minns Ministry appointed from the region.

Business Hunter CEO, Bob Hawes commended the new state government for increasing diversity on its frontbench, with gender parity achieved for the first time in New South Wales, and significant regional representation.

"Achieving gender parity in New South Wales is a historic step, and the Hunter has played a significant and proud role, contributing four of the eleven women who collectively represent this wonderful milestone for our state and for the nation," said Mr Hawes.

"The inclusion of regional voices also bodes well, and five Cabinet Ministers from the Hunter is extraordinary and more than double the last time Labor was in government, despite holding a similar number of seats," said Mr Hawes.

"We know from consultation and discussion leading into the election that our Hunter representatives have a very good handle on the opportunities and challenges confronting the region, and that augers well as they take to their ministries," said Mr Hawes.

Business Hunter congratulates:

- Swansea MP Yasmin Catley, the first female to be appointed as Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism
- Maitland MP Jenny Aitchison, the first female to be appointed as Minister for Regional Transport and Roads
- Port Stephens MP Kate Washington, Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Disability Inclusion
- Newcastle MP Tim Crakanthorp, Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education and Minister for the Hunter
- Charlestown MP Jodie Harrison, Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Mr Hawes said he was pleased to see the government follow through on their election commitment to re-introduce the portfolio of a Minister for the Hunter.

"We've ticked this important recommendation off the list, and we hope Tim is provided the necessary administrative resources to support him to succeed in this portfolio," said Mr Hawes.

Mr Hawes also welcomed moves to support Greg Piper MP, Member for Lake Macquarie, as the next Speaker in the lower house.

“We look forward to hopefully seeing Greg elected as Speaker when Parliament returns in May and acknowledge his recent efforts to advocate for important issues for the Hunter and surrounding regions,” said Mr Hawes.

Mr Hawes said there was a lot at stake and Business Hunter looked forward to supporting the new government to realise the ambition of the region.

“There’s a lot of work ahead of us. The opportunities and challenges in energy cannot be overstated, persistent workforce and housing shortages continue to limit opportunities to thrive, and this is all playing out against a gloomy and uncertain economic backdrop,” said Mr Hawes.

“We know the region has a bright future, but it’s going to take a substantial collaborative effort from government, business, and community to realise this potential,” said Mr Hawes.

“Our State Election Platform consolidates the position of more than 4,200 businesses across the region and offers a clear picture of the key constraints and opportunities. We know what we need to do, now it’s time to start ticking these priorities off the list,” said Mr Hawes.

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