



# Dantia

Prosperity in Abundance



## **Lake Macquarie City**

Economic Development Strategy

2014-2018



## Executive summary

This Lake Macquarie City Economic Development Strategy 2014-2018 identifies Dantia's mission, vision and strategic direction for achieving the sustainable long-term economic growth creating prosperity for residents and investors.

Leading manufacturing companies, excellent retail and commercial offerings and a solid tourism industry mean Lake Macquarie City is already one of the most diverse and dynamic economies in Australia.

By forming and funding Dantia, Lake Macquarie City Council has established an independently-governed entity to engage with the private and public sectors to encourage investment and enhance job creation.

Dantia's mission is to: "Work with business and government partners to advance the economy of Lake Macquarie City".

Economic growth initiatives supported by Dantia are expected to align with the essential economic elements of the community's vision for a 'quality lifestyle', as captured in the *City of Lake Macquarie Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023* and Council's *Lifestyle 2030* document.

The first four-year strategy for Dantia sets the economic development framework for Lake Macquarie City for the period 2014-2018. The Strategy recognises and embraces the critical advantages and challenges facing the City and establishes the strategic direction of driving employment, nurturing emerging industries, supporting existing industries and building business and investor confidence.

Dantia has identified four strategic drivers that will help shape and drive the City's future economy: identity, investment, infrastructure and innovation.

Over the remaining 2 years of the plan, Dantia will strive to:

- improve the identity and awareness of Lake Macquarie City in the private and public investor and employer markets;
- attract and assist in the realisation of investment in capital, buildings and plant, as well as in the provision of services where money is spent and employment is created in the City;
- work with the public and private sectors to develop social and economic infrastructure to improve quality of life and business outcomes for a growing population; and
- foster a culture of continuous improvement by developing and supporting initiatives that create, enable and promote innovation, particularly through the use of information technology.

This strategic platform will be the basis for strengthening seven key local industries identified by Dantia: manufacturing and engineering, logistics, tourism, retail and commercial, health, education and technology. The platform will also support other industries integral to the City's economy: mining, power generation and construction.

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## Vision

Lake Macquarie City is recognised as a competitive, prosperous and dynamic regional economy in which innovation, investment and business enterprises thrive and are welcome.

## Mission

Dantia will work with business, government, the community and other partners to advance the sustainable economic prosperity of Lake Macquarie City.

## Values and principles

- Strive for economic growth
- Collaborate with all stakeholders
- Embrace innovation and change
- Lead the conversation on economic development
- Be inclusive and transparent
- Provide networks and pathways for success
- Comply with best-practice in corporate governance

## Objectives

Dantia aims to:

- Develop and implement a range of initiatives to attract investment and new businesses to Lake Macquarie City
- Market and promote the City as NSW's largest regional city, and its investment attractiveness
- Represent and promote the interests of local businesses, commercial and industrial landowners and developers, the community and social infrastructure establishments as they relate to employment growth and new investment
- Facilitate the implementation of initiatives to support the growth of local businesses
- Facilitate partnerships with Government agencies and businesses to attract investment in the City



## About Dantia

Prosperity often means different things to different people, but it is commonly defined as "doing well". The normal context is financial, but prosperity can be interpreted more broadly as a healthy or enjoyable lifestyle.

Dantia is a derivative of Abundantia, the Roman goddess of abundance and prosperity. These attributes are key to economic growth - access to and protection of resources (abundance) and satisfactory financial returns coupled with the enjoyable and sustainable lifestyle of the City (prosperity).

# The Board

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## **Trent Bagnall - Chair**

Trent founded Slingshot Accelerator to encourage innovation by providing seed funding and a mentoring program to new high-tech businesses. He has been involved in the growth of a number of companies including as Managing Director of ASX-listed QMASTOR Ltd, which grew to more than 100 employees and which has offices in Australia and overseas. Trent's sound entrepreneurial vision and success in establishing and growing several strong and profitable businesses, particularly in the technology field, are an asset to the Board.

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## **Sandra Hutton - Deputy Chair**

Sandra is Senior Town Planner/Associate with urban planning consultancy ADW Johnson and a Lake Macquarie representative on the Joint Regional Planning Panel. Sandra has extensive experience in land use planning, balancing development with strong urban design principles and social outcomes. She has been involved in a range of key development projects in Lake Macquarie including Caves Beachside Resort, Murrays Beach and numerous mixed-use and multi-storey developments in Charlestown, Warners Bay, Belmont and Cardiff town centres.

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## **Darren Glover - Company Secretary**

Darren is a Director and Client Service Partner of innovative, high-performing business, Evolution Advisers. His experience in financial services, as a Chartered Accountant enabling businesses to achieve sustainable growth, combined with his understanding of investment strategies, brings valuable skills to the Board. He is also a Director on the inaugural Trustee Board for the Lake Macquarie Foundation, which benefits charities and not-for-profit organisations in the City.

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## **Martin Howes**

Martin has extensive knowledge and experience in the retail sector and retail property management. Previously General Manager of GPT Charlestown Square, Martin has worked closely with many large and small local retailers. He is also a qualified Chartered Accountant from an entrepreneurial family and has experience in growing several businesses and retail outlets. His experience in both large and small retail environments will provide insight into the needs of the retail sector in the City.

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## **Beth Webb**

Beth received the Lake Macquarie Young Business Person of the Year and Excellence in New Business awards in 2012 in recognition of her successful enterprise, Webb's Gallery, in Kahibah. Her previous roles in government included relationship management, growing corporate accounts, minimising operational expenses and boosting profits.

Beth is dedicated to increasing the vibrancy and appeal of Lake Macquarie and supporting small business and retail. She is actively involved with local community groups such as the Kahibah Business and Community Alliance and the Dudley Sustainable Neighbourhood Group.

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**Wayne Lowe**

Wayne has founded and run a number of successful financial services companies using his skills as a qualified accountant and experienced superannuation professional, and is currently National Executive, Strategic Partnerships with The Link Group.

A local business owner who has lived in Lake Macquarie with his family for 13 years and enjoys a sporting lifestyle that includes bike riding, kayaking, boating and jet skiing on the lake, Wayne is also a Director of the Lake Macquarie Foundation, Hunter Founders Forum and the Hunter Angels Trust, supporting local businesses and charitable causes in Lake Macquarie and the greater Hunter Region.

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**Councillor Jodie Harrison - Mayor of Lake Macquarie City**

Councillor Harrison played an integral role in establishing the inaugural Lake Macquarie Economic Development Board. Her vision for a prosperous economy that balances growth with the environment and community motivated her to promote this innovative plan for the City.

Jodie lives in Charlestown and is passionate about maintaining the balance of green space and quality development in Lake Macquarie for future generations to enjoy.

Cr Harrison will provide valuable input to the new Board and will help drive the strategic direction of economic development during her term as Mayor of the City.

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**Brian Bell - General Manager of Lake Macquarie City Council**

Brian Bell has extensive experience across multiple organisations delivering growth and sustainability. He currently sets and manages implementation of the long-term direction for Council and the City.

He has been the General Manager of Lake Macquarie City Council for eight years, focusing on continuous improvement in all areas. These efforts recently saw Council named NSW Council of the Year, winning the prestigious Bluett Award for excellence in all-round performance.

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**Derrek Lush - acting CEO**

Derrek joined Dantia in 2015 direct from the private sector where he held a variety of senior strategy, business improvement, and program management appointments in both the private and public sectors, working closely with senior stakeholders across Australasia, Europe, the United States, and United Kingdom.

Delivering significant infrastructure projects for the transport industry, long-term service contracts, and high value supply chain improvements with some of the regions largest organisations Derrek has developed an extensive network of executive level contacts across multiple industries and all levels of Government.

Before his successful transition to the private sector Derrek served for over a decade as an Officer in the Australian Defence Force, leading organisations on operations and in disaster relief. Choosing to focus on technology and transformational projects Derrek was posted to the ADFs Capability Development Group successfully managing a \$3.5 billion portfolio of programs across infrastructure, facilities, weapons systems, communication technology, training systems and vehicles.

Derrek holds a Master of Management Studies from the University of New South Wales School of Business and is a graduate of the Royal Military College Duntroon.

With a breadth of private and public sector experience, and as a local resident Derrek is highly dedicated, motivated, and uniquely equipped to help Dantia facilitate a platform for sustainable economic growth in Lake Macquarie City.

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## City profile

Lake Macquarie City is the largest regional city in NSW, with a diverse and dynamic economy in which thousands of enterprises thrive.

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**60 minutes**  
to Sydney on the M1



**13,000**  
thriving businesses



**40 minutes**  
to domestic airport



**50ha+**  
industrial land available



**#3**  
regional city in NSW  
by population



**\$8.9b**  
estimated  
annual GDP



**2,000 new**  
businesses set  
up yearly



**25 minutes**  
to international  
harbour



**>85%**  
broadband  
coverage



**8,000**  
new businesses in  
past five years



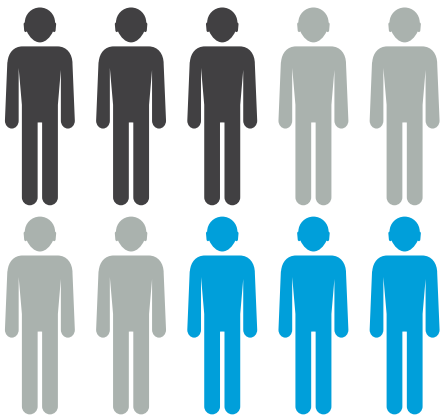
**36,000**  
City target for  
new dwellings



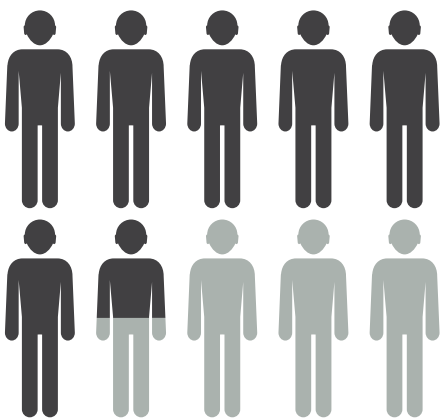
**1,000+**  
development applications approved  
each year

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Total population  
**198,348**  
 31.6% are aged over 55  
 37% are aged 25-54  
 31.4% are under 24



Total workforce  
**103,200**  
 64.5% are working full-time  
 35.5% are working part-time  
 5.3% of population are unemployed

**A diversified economy**



|                               |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 10%<br>real estate services   | 10%<br>construction  |
| 6%<br>financial and insurance | 13%<br>mining        |
| 5%<br>retail                  | 24%<br>manufacturing |
| 5%<br>healthcare              | 28%<br>other         |

# Strategic platform

Dantia has identified four drivers that will power the City's future local economy: **identity, investment, infrastructure** and **innovation**. Together these form the strategic platform from which we will build our targeted industries over the next four years.

## 2016 Update

### Identity

- Develop and promote Lake Macquarie City as a prosperous business and investment area
- Leverage the City's geographic, demographic and natural qualities
- Differentiate and identify Lake Macquarie City as a high profile regional city
- Work with all layers of government to elevate awareness of the relevance and importance of the City's economy to the regional, State and Commonwealth economies
- Create awareness and engage with corporations to invest in and create jobs in the City
- Consult widely on economic development imperatives and provide targeted briefings on strategic goals to the public and private sectors

Working closely with local and state level stakeholders Dantia has secured Lake Macquarie as host city for 2017 & 2018 NSW Surf Life Saving Championships. These championships will be held at Blacksmith beach and are forecast to return an economic benefit of \$24.96 million in each year of competition, also delivering a temporary increase in employment of 69 jobs during that same period. In addition to the forecast 10,000 visitors per day of competition the championships will be televised nationally, attracting additional news media coverage and raising the profile of Lake Macquarie as a premium destination for major sporting events.

Launching the Hunters first at scale, and largest co-working innovation hub in Charlestown during April 2016, Dantia has been able to generate significant interest from local, state, national and international organisations across both public and private sectors. The impact of this initiative has reach far beyond innovation in the business environment and has attracted interest from local Government across Australia seeking advice and support to replicate the Lake Macquarie Economic Development Company model.

A state first collaboration between NSW Business Chambers and Local Government economic development organisations has seen Dantia form a strategic partnership with Lake Macquarie Business Limited. This business chamber entity is the first Lake Macquarie to cover the entire city and offer a suite of membership packages that do not exclude any businesses regardless of size, market segment, or physical location. Dantia has sponsored the LMB engage membership; enabling every business within Lake Macquarie City to access the benefits of business chamber membership with no up front cost. Prior to this initiative chamber membership was less than 3%, and distributed across 9 independent chambers.

Through targeted briefings with newly created Federal Estate & Infrastructure Groups Dantia has been able to market the city's attributes and unique positioning to support strategic industry capabilities across the resource, agri-business, and defence sectors.

Continued support for local business as major sponsor of the Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards. The awards are an opportunity for Dantia to support and encourage more than 13,000 businesses in Lake Macquarie to pursue and achieve excellence in their chosen field.

## Investment

Work with government and the community to create a setting of business-friendly investment certainty

Partner with Council to ensure clarity and consistency in the planning process as it relates to business

Facilitate strategic growth projects for the City as they relate to economic development and job creation

Strive for growth in existing businesses in the City

Seek to ensure employment and investment diversity does not create a local economy overly dependent on a single industry

### 2016 Update

Early engagement by Dantia with the owners Lake Macquarie Airport and Westpac Helicopter Rescue Service assisted the successful contract award and relocation of the Hunter's Helicopter Rescue Services operation base to Lake Macquarie City. The Development Application for the facility at Lake Macquarie Airport was approved in April 2016, and modelling from the proposal indicated the following economic benefits:

*Construction phase:* During the period of construction it is predicted that the project will deliver an economic benefit of \$12.7 million and employment increase of 19 jobs.

*On-going operations:* Once operational it is predicted that the facility will deliver an economic benefit of \$15.9 million (annually) and employment increase of 32 jobs.

The process of facilitating investment will be strengthened and streamlined through development of a detailed investment profile of the city. Currently under development with REMPLAN and the Hunter Research Foundation the investment prospectus will incorporate an active info-graphic, live demographic and economic data, and a public data base for us by investors to better inform their decision making and due diligence.

## 2016 Update

### Infrastructure

Work with Council to identify and plan for strategic land use opportunities within the City

Work with government, business and partners to ensure planning for infrastructure such as: broadband, telecommunications, parking and transport solutions, to support economic growth

Seek to ensure infrastructure is delivered in a timely manner to support economic development and population growth

Lake Macquarie's unique location and diversity of industry have made the area an ideal location for enhanced logistics infrastructure, both in support of exiting business and interconnected with state and federal transport networks. A detailed pre-feasibility study has commenced with investigation of market demand, industry drivers, economic return on investment, and site feasibility becoming the subjects of data collection, analysis, and discussion between stakeholders. A real-time capability gap assessment has been completed, validating assumptions relating to logistics growth potential along with geographic analysis. The Hunter Development Corporation is now collaborating with Dantia and LMCC to further develop an infrastructure assessment tool that will be used to complete a case study on potential site in Lake Macquarie for a major logistics, freight forwarding and distribution facility.

Dantia has successfully facilitated accelerated roll-out of NBN infrastructure across Lake Macquarie City, achieve a coverage of greater than 95% (NBN Co. figures) by 2016 year end. Prior to Dantia's involvement NBN Co. did not have an approved roll-out plan covering the two critical areas of Glendale (Industrial hub) and Charlestown (retail hub). Supporting connection of more than 2,000 business premises representing the largest employment zones within the city.

The approval of the Helicopter Rescue Services DA for Lake Macquarie Airport has provided the stability for the airport owners to begin strategic master planning. Early engagement from HMRI, UON, and the Defence sector has centred discussion around development of an industry focussed R&D hub located on the airport site. Dantia continues to facilitate these discussions and master planning in conjunction with LMCC lifestyles 2050 and the NSW Hunter regional plan.

## 2016 Update

## Innovation

Foster innovation and the digital economy as a key enabler of economic growth for the City

Encourage renewal of urban centres

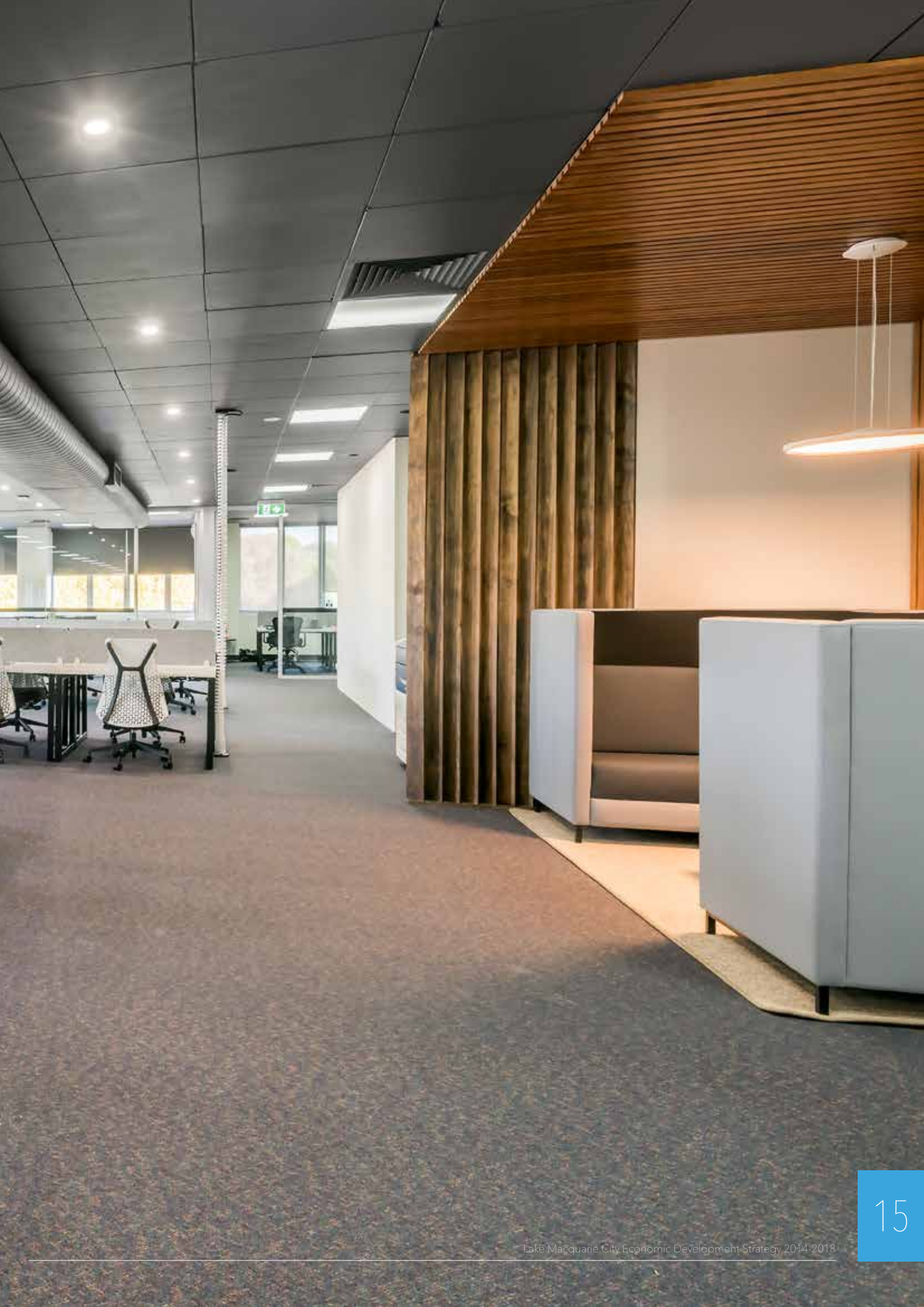
Work closely with educational institutions as drivers of innovation in Lake Macquarie City

Encourage creative and forward-thinking land use planning to facilitate innovation





Delivery of the Hunter's largest co-working space in Charlestown has generated significant interest from both the public and private sectors. Resulting in excellent media coverage supporting the city's profile as an innovation hot spot and region of excellence. Modelling and analysis of the business model suggest an annual economic benefit to the city of \$8.3 million and creation of 12 - 35 jobs annually. In the first 4 weeks of operation the Dantia Smart Hub (DaSH) has 8 businesses (24 members) operating from the facility, employing more than 30 people. This membership level was forecast for the first quarter of operation, and has been reached within the first month.

Dantia has worked closely with LMCC to develop the city's digital economy strategy. Supporting community engagement and testing critical assumptions to provide a greater level of clarity and certainty around proposed line of operation. Through a network of corporate connections Dantia has presented the "Smart City" program and concept national infrastructure owners and operator and raised the city's profile as an innovation focal point through targeted presentations at "Cisco Live".









# Target Industries

| Industry   | Drivers and rationale  | Strategies   |
|--|--|--|
|  <p>Engineering and manufacturing</p> | <p>The City's manufacturing and engineering sector stands to benefit from Dantia's support of the development of industrial lands, investment in major roads and freight rail infrastructure, new research and development facilities, skills development and training, and the rollout of the National Broadband Network.</p> | <p>Forge a stronger awareness and <b>identity</b> of the City's industrial-zoned areas through effective marketing.</p> <p>Support <b>innovation</b> through industry awareness programs that promote opportunities arising from broadband connectivity.</p> <p>Work with stakeholders to seek funding for critical <b>infrastructure</b> projects and facilitate development approval processes for industrial buildings.</p> <p>Work with the education sector to establish a more industry-aligned supply of trainees who assist with driving <b>innovation</b>.</p>  |
|  <p>Logistics</p>                     | <p>Direct links to national freight networks and industrial-zoned land neighbouring transit corridors makes Lake Macquarie City an ideal location for freight services and distribution infrastructure.</p> <p>Dantia supports the development of the Morisset area, to the south-west, as a key logistics hub.</p>            | <p>Market the <b>identity</b> of Lake Macquarie as a City with land available to the logistics industry, and work with stakeholders to streamline development approval processes.</p> <p>Foster <b>innovation</b> through industry and education sector roundtables to explore better alignment of industry, research and graduates.</p> <p>Build a case for <b>investment</b> by gathering data and market intelligence on the key logistics industry needs and dynamics, and Lake Macquarie City's potential as a logistics hub.</p> <p>Ensure the City's position is considered in the planning of freight <b>infrastructure</b>.</p> |
|  <p>Tourism</p>                     | <p>The growing demand for tourism infrastructure, as well as opportunities for growth in events and visitor services, makes the City an ideal location for tourism-based investment.</p>   | <p>Identify deficiencies in tourism-based <b>infrastructure</b> and pursue funding and <b>investment</b> strategies to address key gaps.</p> <p>Improve the <b>identity</b> of the City as a visitor destination through better coordination of marketing efforts.</p>   |
|  <p>Retail and commercial</p>       | <p>Servicing NSW's largest population base outside Sydney, Lake Macquarie City has unique and attractive features defining its core retail and commercial sector. Dantia will seek to maximise sustainable development opportunities in this sector while fostering strategic growth in the City's town centres.</p>           | <p>Identify town planning opportunities that will provide <b>infrastructure</b> and strengthen the identity of the City's town centres and commercial hub in Charlestown.</p> <p>Market the <b>identity</b> of the City as a growth economy with opportunities in the retail and commercial sector.</p>  |



| Industry  | Drivers and rationale   | Strategies   |
|---|---|--|
| <br>Education    | <p>Dantia seeks to facilitate growth of the local tertiary education sector, including research and development capabilities necessary to support the needs of other target industries in Lake Macquarie City.</p> <p>Increased investment in training and research development will drive entrepreneurialism and improve the productivity of local industries.</p> | <p>Work with government and business to increase <b>investment</b> in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public and private education <b>infrastructure</b> in the City; and</li> <li>• initiatives that support <b>innovation</b> through continuous improvement in research and development.</li> </ul> |
| <br>Health       | <p>Dantia will focus on healthcare investment that recognises the excellent infrastructure that is already available within the City. It will seek to establish equal and enhanced quality of care across all areas of Lake Macquarie.</p>  | <p>Work with Hunter New England Health, private operators and health-related technology providers to <b>identify</b> the needs and target investment to improve the health of the City's population by delivering high-quality, accessible and financially-sustainable healthcare.</p>                               |
| <br>Technology | <p>Technology-driven economic development and industry focus is an established regional growth strategy for Lake Macquarie City. Known as LakeConnect, this strategy is aspirational and core to Dantia's mission.</p>  | <p>Implement LakeConnect to foster <b>innovation</b> and <b>investment</b> in sustainable, technology-enabled and technology-focused industries that capitalise on the rollout of broadband <b>infrastructure</b>.</p>   |
| <br>Other      | <p>Lake Macquarie City has a diversity of industries and a broadly qualified and experienced workforce. Dantia will support other industries, such as coal mining and power generation, that are integral to the City's economy.</p>  | <p>Engage with and support existing and newly-arrived local industries and businesses as opportunities arise.</p>  |

# Engineering and manufacturing

Development of industrial lands, investment in major roads and freight rail infrastructure, new research and development facilities, skills development and training, and the rollout of the National Broadband Network are together paving a dynamic future for manufacturing and engineering in Lake Macquarie City.

With close to 15,000 people employed locally in advanced manufacturing, this technology-driven industry sector is recognised as a significant provider of employment in the City.

## Competitive advantages

- Lake Macquarie's location on the M1 Motorway and the north-south rail line provides quick and easy access to Australia's busiest freight and transport corridor.
- Proximity to the Hunter Valley, Central Coast, Newcastle and Sydney population centres make it an ideal strategic location.
- World-class infrastructure, from certified industrial sites and centres, to reliable utilities designed to support manufacturing industries.
- Workforce development that is proactive in matching industry needs with skilled and experienced talent and job-ready programming is on offer at local educational institutions.
- Local government is demonstrating a strong commitment to the manufacturing sector with master-planned industrial parks.
- State, private and local roads support truck movements and serve to streamline the manufacturing and logistics chain.

## Strategies

### Local

- Work with Lake Macquarie City Council to better define the various industrial-zoned areas in the City so they can be marketed more effectively.
- Foster development of a more industry-aligned supply of trainees by working in conjunction with industry and local education providers, such as TAFE.
- Generate workshops on facilitating development approval processes for industrial buildings in pre-defined zones.

### Regional/State

- Work with the stakeholders to seek funding for critical infrastructure projects that will enable efficient supply chain management for the industry.
- Facilitate roundtable discussions with local manufacturing and engineering industry leaders and relevant educational bodies.

### National/International

- Drive industry awareness programs on opportunities associated with broadband connectivity and installation.
- Market the City to identified manufacturing and engineering companies that are not active in the area.



# Logistics

Lake Macquarie City is already engaged in the logistics industry and the potential for growth is significant.

Natural advantages provide scope for meaningful growth of freight movements in, out of and through the City. Direct links to national freight networks and industrial-zoned land neighbouring transit corridors makes it an ideal location for freight services and infrastructure.

Dantia supports the development of western Lake Macquarie as a key logistics hub. Strategically located on the M1 Motorway with exit/entry ramps providing easy access to land earmarked for logistics and light industrial purposes, it has access to large population and business centres.

## Competitive advantages

- Land values are extremely competitive for developers and operators wanting to take advantage of the ideal location and infrastructure the City has to offer.
- A growing population base of more than 1,000,000 people within one hour of Morisset is creating increasing demand for logistics services.
- Lake Macquarie is the gateway City for the Hunter Valley from Sydney. Connected by the M1 Motorway, the drive is less than 60 minutes from Sydney's North Shore and will soon be closer (by time) when NorthConnex provides faster transit times along Sydney's existing Pennant Hills Road and Pacific Highway transport corridors.

## Strategies

### Local

- Work with property owners and Lake Macquarie City Council to identify and market land available to the logistics industry.
- Facilitate workshops on streamlining development approval processes for industrial buildings in the Morisset industrial area.

### Regional/State

- Gather information about the competitive landscape in the Central Coast and Hunter Valley to better understand Lake Macquarie City's potential as a logistics hub.
- Facilitate a manufacturing and engineering roundtable discussion with local industry leaders and the University of Newcastle about ways to achieve a better alignment of industry, research and graduates.

### National/International

- Undertake an industry fact-finding mission on key logistics industry needs, drivers, dynamics and trends.
- Work with industry to shape the role of Lake Macquarie City and its relevance to the industry.
- Ensure the City's position in the logistics industry is considered in state and national planning of freight infrastructure development.



“Dantia supports development of key logistics hubs in the City.”

# Tourism

Lake Macquarie City is blessed with an abundance of natural beauty. Nature-based tourism, from beach, to lake, to forest, is supported by a range of high-quality accommodation, food and entertainment options.

The growing demand for tourism infrastructure makes the City an ideal location for tourism-based investment, as well as opportunities for growth in events and visitor services.

## Competitive advantages

The City's natural assets include:

- Lake Macquarie - Australia's largest saltwater lake.
- Watagan National Park - a bushwalker's haven.
- Beaches, rocky points and cliff tops - along the majestic east coast of NSW.
- Creeks, estuaries, outcrops and beaches - tailor-made for fishing adventures.
- Multiple State Parks - offering diverse camping and bushwalking alternatives.

## Strategies

### Local

- Work with Lake Macquarie City Council to identify deficiencies in existing tourism-related infrastructure and pursue funding strategies to correct deficiencies.
- Encourage local industry to capture the value of major events and developments.
- Seek to coordinate local activities for better marketing of the City as a visitor destination.

### Regional/State








- Approach tourism bodies and operators to boost the City's identity as a tourism destination.
- Facilitate cooperation with state and regional marketing activities to incorporate City destination marketing.
- Increase awareness of the City as a destination with relevant State bodies and seek tourism-related funding for relevant and appropriate tourism infrastructure.

### National/International

- Contact and inform investors in tourism-based infrastructure and services.
- Pursue major events to be hosted in the City.



**The City's natural assets are supported by tourism services and infrastructure, which include:**

-  four patrolled beaches with clubhouses, amenities and parking
-  four marinas and 60 boat ramps providing water access for sailing and power boat enthusiasts
-  Lake Macquarie Airport, with joy flights and charters available
-  Lake cruises
-  100km of dedicated and shared cycleways, including the famous Fernleigh Track
-  100km of dedicated and shared walking tracks, some lakeside, others coastal and in forests
-  six public swimming pools open all summer as well as most public and school holidays

## Retail and commercial

Servicing NSW's largest population base outside of Sydney, Lake Macquarie City has unique and attractive features defining its core retail and commercial sector.

### Competitive advantages

The City has 10 main town centres serving as hubs for the local communities that circle Lake Macquarie. Each of these centres has its own uniquely identifiable and community-based retail and commercial precincts. Geographic dispersal makes each independently viable and successful, and facilitates access to economically and socially-diverse markets around the Lake.

In addition to the town centres is Charlestown, the City's hub for commercial and retail activities. Located close to Lake Macquarie City's border with Newcastle, it is home to GPT's \$840 million major regional shopping centre, Charlestown Square, as well as a significant number of commercial and mixed-use (commercial/residential, retail/commercial and retail/commercial/residential) developments.

Charlestown's master plan identifies 22ha of available or under-developed land. With Charlestown Square regularly securing more than 98 per cent occupancy, there is plenty of room for further profitable economic development in Charlestown and around the Lake.

The Glendale and Morisset areas are two additional growth centres identified in the *Lower Hunter Regional Strategy*.



### Strategies

#### Local

- Work with Lake Macquarie City Council and businesses to identify town planning opportunities, boundaries and zoning issues and create long-term collaborative planning objectives.
- Support local Combined Chamber of Commerce initiatives to increase membership and promote their relevance to small, medium and large businesses.

#### Regional/State

- Use State planning guidelines and policies to maximise sustainable development opportunities in the retail and commercial sector.

#### National/International

- Target marketing to major developers and operators in the retail and commercial sector.
- Market Lake Macquarie City as a growth economy with sustainable opportunities in the retail and commercial sector.

# Education

Dantia seeks to facilitate the growth of local tertiary education and research tailored to support local businesses across all identified target industries.

Tertiary education, including research and development capability, is a critical component in driving economic growth. It provides direct training for those employed in key industries and, more importantly, it provides the intellectual input to drive innovation and entrepreneurialism in our businesses. These are the cornerstones of new product development, efficiency and value-added productivity and service.

The educational needs of the people and workers of Lake Macquarie City are broad, as is the infrastructure available to them. Although the City has access to quality research and education programs at the nearby University of Newcastle campuses and excellent local TAFE facilities, there is a particular need for increased investment in tertiary education in Lake Macquarie.

Dantia is an advocate for continuous improvement in the provision of educational facilities and services and will work with government and businesses to increase investment in this critical long-term expansionary industry.

## Competitive advantages

Population growth, combined with a growing proportion of residents attaining trade and industry-related post-secondary school qualifications, is placing unprecedented demands on private and public sector education infrastructure in the City.

## Strategies

### Local

- Work with local industries to understand educational needs, shortfalls and potential growth areas and requirements.
- Facilitate industry roundtables with education experts.
- Communicate industry needs to existing local education providers and develop local strategies to meet educational needs.

### Regional/State

- Ensure the needs of industry are communicated strategically to the State Government to make informed long-term education planning decisions.

### National/International

- Target education providers to attract investment and services to the City.



# Health

Lake Macquarie City Council's mission is to deliver a quality lifestyle and maximise the wellbeing of visitors and all who live and work in the City. Aligned with this mission is one of Dantia's core strategic objectives: to promote and facilitate public and private investment in healthcare infrastructure and services.

Focused investment to improve the health of the City's population through the delivery of high-quality, accessible and financially-sustainable healthcare underscores Dantia's strategy for the local health industry.

In recognition of the increasing health and lifestyle demands of the region's ageing population, Dantia will seek to ensure that the needs and wants of the over 55 demographic are captured in infrastructure investment planning.

## Competitive advantages

- A simultaneously growing and ageing population increases demand and opportunities across a broad healthcare spectrum.
- A population spread around 10 town centres, as opposed to a centralised population density, provides for a range of diverse, smaller-scale and decentralised healthcare investment opportunities.

## Strategies

### Local/State

Working with the State Government's Hunter New England Health executive and board, along with private sector operators and health-related technology providers, Dantia will seek to facilitate access to an adaptive and sustainable health system that delivers quality of life for Lake Macquarie City residents and workers.

### National/International

Dantia will focus on targeting evolutionary, not revolutionary, healthcare investment. For example, the City already has excellent infrastructure that provides for emergency and acute care to the north and south-east bounds of the City, but lacks such infrastructure in the south-west. Dantia will seek government and private participation in innovative solutions for the south-west, that does not reduce the existing quality of care elsewhere.



## Technology

Technology-driven economic development and industry focus is an established regional growth strategy for Lake Macquarie City. Known as LakeConnect, this strategy is aspirational and core to Dantia's mission.

LakeConnect is about building a prosperous region driven by sustainable, technology-enabled and technology-focused industries.

Dantia is seeking to grow a resilient and vibrant connected community by encouraging collaboration between business, government and industry, and fostering and recognising innovation and leadership.

## Competitive advantages

- The City already nurtures a strong work ethos and willingness to embrace technology.
- By 2015, the National Broadband Network will service about 75 per cent of businesses and residents in Lake Macquarie City. Internet connectivity will become standard in Lake Macquarie City and the local workforce will expect innovative and technology-focused business investment in the City.
- An extremely diverse City-wide economy has created an entrepreneurial business base with more than 12,000 prospering businesses.
- By 2020, successful implementation of LakeConnect will deliver additional and identifiable technology-driven jobs over and above business-as-usual outcomes.

## Strategy

### Local/State/National

Develop LakeConnect with Lake Macquarie City Council and market the City's connectivity and investment potential to targeted industries and businesses.

Working with the NBN Co rollout team, Dantia's aim is to apply sector-based strategies that generate job growth, leverage existing expertise and build on local success stories.



“High speed internet connectivity will become standard ... and the local workforce will expect innovative and technology-focused business investment in the City.”



## Other industries

Lake Macquarie City has a diversity of industries and a broadly qualified and experienced workforce. In addition to identified target industries, the following sectors form an integral part of the City's economy.

### Mining

The City has a proud coal mining history and coal remains a robust and significant contributor to the state and national economies. Coal mines are a major direct employer and the industry generates employment and economic growth in integrated support industries such as engineering, manufacturing, service and logistics.

### Power generation

Lake Macquarie City is home to the Eraring Power Station. Eraring is the largest power station in Australia, with a generating capacity of 2,880mW. Fuelled by black coal, it is a highly efficient and flexible power station that plays a crucial role in maintaining a reliable supply of electricity to NSW.

### Construction and trades

Servicing the local region plus the Hunter Valley and beyond, Lake Macquarie City has many small- to large-scale construction and maintenance companies, partnerships, joint ventures and sole practices.

## Competitive advantages

- Lake Macquarie has access to abundant natural coal and quarrying resources, which has driven local mining since the 1800s. Similarly, local coal supplies provide thermal coal for Eraring Power Station.
- Connection to world-class rail, road and port infrastructure provides for low-cost operational and export and import advantages.
- Easy and fast road connectivity (30-90 minutes) to Central Coast, Sydney, Newcastle and the Hunter Valley's major construction projects provides for centralised access to construction companies that are located in Lake Macquarie City.

## Strategy

Engage with and support existing local and new businesses in core industries as opportunities arise.



“The City has a proud coal mining history, and coal remains a robust and significant contributor to the state and national economies.”

## Monitoring and reporting

Dantia will report annually to government, industry and the community on its performance during the four-year period of this Economic Development Strategy for Lake Macquarie City.

The Lake Macquarie Economic Development Strategy 2014-2018 provides a strategic framework for Dantia in its first four years of operation.

In April each year, Dantia will provide an update to Council on its progress in achieving the Strategy and propose amendments, if required.

In July each year, Dantia will provide a one-year plan to Council which sets out proposed actions to deliver the Strategy in the coming 12 months.

The Lake Macquarie Economic Development Operational Plan 2014-2015 has been developed in tandem with this strategy document and outlines the actions Dantia plans to take in the first 12 months of operation. It also defines the key indicators and other measures against which Dantia's performance in delivery of the Strategy and Plan will be assessed.

Dantia will provide a formal annual report to government by 31 August each year.





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