



Paul Fletcher

Federal Minister for Urban Infrastructure and Cities



Stuart Ayres

NSW Minister for WestConnex

Joint Media Statement

27 February 2018

WestConnex driving employment across Hunter region

Small businesses across the Hunter are benefitting from contracts with Australia's largest transport infrastructure project, WestConnex, which is also boosting local employment.

Minister for WestConnex Stuart Ayres visited Hunter based business DSI Underground today, one of hundreds of businesses across NSW benefitting from the project.

"Eighty per cent of contracts awarded for the New M5 are with NSW based companies and suppliers, highlighting the vital role this project is playing in providing opportunities for communities across the state," Mr Ayres said.

"From the production of specialised tunnel equipment to recruitment, WestConnex continues to drive new opportunities for Hunter workers and businesses and stimulate local economies," Mr Ayres said.

Federal Minister for Urban Infrastructure and Cities Paul Fletcher said the site of the former Hunter Expressway precast yard brought back to life by WestConnex last year, has now reached peak production and is supporting 60 local workers.

"It's great to see the precast yard back in operation thanks to WestConnex, as work continues to build 600 concrete pieces for eight bridge structures on the New M5 section," Mr Fletcher said.

"The economic boost from WestConnex stretches far beyond Sydney, the project is providing a massive shot in the arm in the Hunter economy.

"This massive project has meant job security for local steel fixers, concreters, supervisors and office staff and on the job training to ensure local workers are continuing to be upskilled."

Regional Chief Executive of DSI Underground Derek Hird said its Newcastle based company has diversified from mining to provide tunnelling equipment for major road projects including WestConnex.

"WestConnex is one of the largest projects we've worked and has enabled us to expand our business to add 20 new manufacturing jobs to our 150-strong workforce to meet demand," Mr Hird said.

"We've secured around \$10 million in contracts to produce more than 150,000 rock bolts for the New M4 and New M5 projects which are used to reinforce these massive tunnels."

Asquith Workforce Solutions is an indigenous owned and operated recruitment business based in Newcastle which has signed a two year contract with the New M5 to place skilled labourers in trades like machinery operation and building.

"Securing a contract to work on a project of this scale has enabled us to open a Sydney office earlier this year," Asquith Workforce Solutions Director Jillian Asquith said.

“In the two years we’ve been operating we’ve been able to hire additional personnel to be able to place employees in roles on WestConnex.”

Media Contacts

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Dropbox link to footage of work underway to build concrete girders, timelapse footage of the Hunter precast yard, rockbolting/roadheader activity and New M5 animation:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/4n9siz8gd55sqv0/AAA-s38bWB2jkrsQNv7VfqG4a?dl=0>