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BHP's LOCAL BUYING FOUNDATION INVESTS IN SINGLETON BUSINESS CHAMBER'S BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

When it comes to sustainability and growth, Singleton's small to medium business owners know the power of having the right support.

That's why the Local Buying Foundation has matched \$35,000 in Singleton Business Chamber funding to ensure the ongoing support of the Business Development Officer for another year.

The funding, which is effective as of June this year, enables the Business Development Officer to build on the momentum of the Chamber's important Building Connected Business Communities program.

Local Buying Foundation Chairperson Deirdra Tindale said the funding meant an important resource in the Singleton business community could be maintained and small to medium business operators would continue to have access to what had become a vital source of information, guidance and development opportunities.

Ms Tindale said the Local Buying Foundation was an initiative of BHP's Local Buying Program, which was delivered in partnership with C-Res.

She said at the heart of the Foundation's values was a commitment to strengthening the capacity and capabilities of small to medium businesses in the regions it operated – namely, the Mt Arthur Coal footprint through the shires of Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter and Singleton.

"The Foundation supports funding for the implementation of strategic initiatives which build the capacity and capability of businesses," Ms Tindale said.

"The investment supported by the Local Buying Foundation Advisory Committee demonstrates the commitment to building sustainable business communities for the future while acknowledging the great work already being done by the Business Development Officer."

The Building Connected Business Communities program will see the Business Development Officer support local businesses in facilitating connections and opportunities to grow responsive, viable, business ready and sustainable businesses across BHP's (namely, Mt Arthur Coal) operational footprint.

The position will continue to facilitate the identification of gaps and opportunities for training, technology and innovation initiatives; coordination of training and development for small and medium enterprises; and development

Address

QEI Building
Cnr Bridge & Market St
Muswellbrook NSW 2333

ABN: 61 158 250 992

Phone

1800 536 663

Email

info@localbuyingfoundation.com.au

Web

www.localbuyingfoundation.com.au

of networks and alliances with local government, private enterprise and other local chambers of commerce and industry groups.

Ms Tindale said the Local Buying Foundation's capacity to resource projects and sponsor events was only possible due to the success of the Local Buying Program, which was established in New South Wales in 2016. It was initiated by BHP as a sustainable local procurement program, to help small to medium businesses more easily and directly connect with the Mt Arthur Coal operation.

The Local Buying Program is an innovative approach to increasing the local supply chain effectiveness and supporting regional economic development. It also reflects BHP's genuine desire to demonstrate a long-term commitment to the social and economic well-being of the local communities in which it operates and the broader shires.

Singleton Business Chamber President Sue Gilroy welcomed the matched funding from The Local Buying Foundation.

"We are very excited that Singleton Business Chamber is working in partnership with the Local Buy Foundation to deliver a business development program for Small and Medium Enterprises," Ms Gilroy said.

For more information: please visit www.localbuyingfoundation.com.au

Media Contact:

Deirdra Tindale, Local Buying Foundation Chairperson (0437 353 719)



Image: Left – BHP's Deirdra Tindale - Local Buying Foundation Chair, Darlene Flockhart – Singleton Business Chamber Business Development Officer & Sue Gilroy – President of the Singleton Business Chamber.