



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **BHP Billiton's Local Buying Program tops \$1.3 million**

BHP Billiton's Local Buying Program, launched in March this year, is off to a very strong start with work packages totalling more than \$1.3 million issued in just four months.

The programme is aimed at increasing the number of work opportunities for local small to medium businesses that are capable of providing a range of goods and service to BHP Billiton's Mt Arthur Coal mine.

BHP Billiton's NSW Energy Coal Asset President James Palmer said the early success of the programme was pleasing and he encouraged more businesses to get involved.

"We place a strong emphasis on trying to source goods and services from the local communities in which we operate," Mr Palmer said.

"The fact we've had such a strong response from the Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook and Singleton gives us every confidence this programme will continue to grow."

A number of key outcomes have been recorded since the programme was launched:

- Work instructions for 21 packages of work have been issued;
- The value of work issued so far is \$1.36million;
- The spread of work across the region is approximately Muswellbrook (62%), Singleton (33%) and Upper Hunter (5%); and
- The variety of goods and services is diverse – engineering, road construction, land rehabilitation, signage/decals, stationary, and hardware.

"The early signs are very encouraging and we know that sourcing local suppliers can be a mutually beneficial business objective," Mr Palmer said.

"We now want to continue to grow the number of businesses participating in this programme to strengthen the local supply chain."

#### **Testimonials from local suppliers**

*"Becoming an Approved Supplier was very easy. From registration to quoting and claiming, the whole process is structured in a way that maximizes efficiency while being easy to use. Any time I've had a question, the answer has only ever been a phone call or an email away."*

*"The program is a good way to meet new clients within BHP Billiton and give them that option to buy local and support local businesses. The payment terms are also a big benefit, especially for small business."*

*"The program also offers opportunity: a way to advertise your products and skills to a company that may not have had the resources to do so previously."*



*“My advice to others in the local business community? Give it a go. What have you got to lose?”*

Scott Turner – Hunter Prosigns

*“The Local Buying Program makes it easy to interact with Mt Arthur Coal on local projects.*

*“Knowing that our business is being heard and that local staff have greater job security as a result of the extra work that this Program is bringing in has definitely been the biggest benefit to participating.*

*“I would definitely recommend the Program to others in the local business community as the online quote request gives everyone a level playing field to submit a price for a scope of work.*

*“I think this is a great initiative that allows local businesses to get more of the mining dollar share in the local community. It also gives local businesses a direct line into the company.”*

Daniel Lewer – Muswellbrook Forest Nursery

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**Image:** (L-R) Scott Turner, Hunter Pro Signs & Shaelie Carroll C-Res