



OPINION

HAPPY NEW YEAR

THANKS TO THE INCREDIBLE EFFORTS OF OUR LOCAL MINING WORKFORCE AND OUR MINING SUPPLIER BUSINESSES WE WERE ABLE TO KEEP OUR MINES RUNNING THROUGHOUT 2020 WHILE KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES COVID-SAFE.

Now, we can look forward to the potential opportunities that 2021 has in store for our region.

Coal prices have recovered from last year's lows resulting from the global economic impact of COVID, and solid demand is expected to continue across export markets in the Asia-Pacific region during 2021.

The November 2020 NSW State Budget promised some real benefits for Hunter communities, with a further \$75 million from the Resources for Regions program for eligible mining-related local councils to potentially invest in projects to improve the community during 2021.

While there have been some mining jobs lost in the Hunter due to the pandemic, there was a very positive sign for jobs in the Hunter just before Christmas with approval given for the Maxwell underground mining project.

This project had strong community support as well as support from the Department of Planning. The Maxwell mine will create around

250 construction jobs and 350 ongoing jobs for the Hunter region worth \$55 million in annual wages once up and running.

THERE ARE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOBS AND INVESTMENT IN THE HUNTER'S MINING SECTOR IN 2021 WITH NINE LOCAL MINING PROJECTS IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM WITH THE POTENTIAL TO DELIVER AROUND 3,500 JOBS AND AROUND \$1.6 BILLION IN INVESTMENT FOR THE REGION.

2020 demonstrated once again that the Hunter mining sector is resilient and able to meet whatever challenges come our way, and there are positive signs that 2021 will be a better year.

Whatever 2021 might bring, the challenges we all faced last year have made us stronger together.

I wish all of our miners, their families, our suppliers and everyone living across the Hunter a safe, happy and prosperous 2021.

**Stephen Galilee, CEO,
NSW Minerals Council**