



John Barilaro

Deputy Premier

Minister for Regional NSW, Skills and Small Business

Niall Blair

Minister for Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

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AEROSPACE PRECINCT TO CREATE OVER 5,500 HUNTER JOBS

Deputy Premier John Barilaro today announced \$11.7 million in funding to create a transformational defence, aviation, aerospace and technology precinct set to generate over 5,500 jobs in the Hunter region.

Mr Barilaro made the announcement at Newcastle Airport with Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter Scot Macdonald and Newcastle Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock, while overlooking the site of the new precinct near the RAAF Base Williamtown.

Mr Barilaro said the new 'Astra Aerolab' will house maintenance and support services for Australian fighter jets and drive \$246 million into the NSW economy.

"This investment will capitalise on the existing economic strengths of the region, securing 76 hectares of special purpose land committed to defence and aviation-related industry and employment," Mr Barilaro said.

"Over its lifetime, this new precinct will create thousands of direct and indirect jobs including roles for aviation IT and avionic specialists, mechanics and engineers, in the Hunter.

"This is an exciting announcement in one of the state's most exciting industries and regions," he said.

Australia's combat aircraft, like the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and Hawk 127 require significant long-term maintenance and upkeep and the new precinct will create an opening for businesses to address that demand.

Minister for Trade and Industry Niall Blair said the news couldn't come at a better time with the NSW Government's recent commitment of \$400,000 for the STEMship Program, which will equip Hunter students with the technical skills they need to work in the defence and aviation industries.

"The precinct will deliver employment opportunities across a range of professions, creating jobs in industries with an important future," Mr Blair said.

"With this project we are actively creating attractive, engaging career pathways for people living in the regions, supporting local economies and backing our local defence industry," he said.

Newcastle Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock said he was very proud to be working with the NSW Government on Astra Aerolab.

“As a community-owned asset, we take our role in generating economic and social outcomes seriously. We want to create a precinct that fuels pride as well as growth – a place where people and businesses want to work,” Mr Cock said.

“In the Hunter, Astra Aerolab, adjacent to the Newcastle Airport, RAAF Base Williamtown, coupled with our unbeatable lifestyle will do just that,” he said.

Newcastle Airport will use the NSW Government funding to pay for water, sewer, gas, electrical and broadband connections, as well as construction of a major access road. Newcastle Airport will co-contribute \$7.86 million to the \$19.66 million project to activate the lead in road and initial site preparation.

Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast and Hunter Scot MacDonald said the precinct is in prime position to tap into existing manufacturing and supply chain businesses for trade and distribution with Newcastle Airport and major rail and road links nearby.

“This a fantastic project that will give our local economy a boost and secure the long-term viability of both the Williamtown Base and Newcastle Airport,” Mr MacDonald said.

“The NSW Government is working hard to make our regions a great place to start a career, to live and to raise a family and this kind of project could have been overlooked if it weren’t for the Growing Local Economies Fund,” he said.

The \$500 million Growing Local Economies Fund part of the NSW Government’s \$1.6 billion Regional Growth Fund delivering essential infrastructure to spur job creation, improve connectivity and support community engagement and culture.

Growing Local Economies was established under the NSW Government’s Restart NSW fund to improve economic growth and productivity in NSW.

For more information, visit: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/regional-nsw/regional-growth-fund/>.

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