

## PRESS RELEASE

26 March 2018

### **Connectivity Centre wraps up at Green Hills; celebrates more than 180 local jobs**

The Maitland community joined together today to celebrate the Green Hills Connectivity Centre, as it wraps up following the stage 4 opening of the newly redeveloped \$414 million Stockland Green Hills shopping centre last week.

The Connectivity Centre is an employment initiative of Multiplex and Stockland that brings together employment services groups, employers, job seekers and community groups in response to the high level of youth unemployment in the Maitland area.

Builder, Multiplex, and shopping centre owner, Stockland, were joined by Maitland City Council, local employers, employer services organisations, community groups and government departments, all actively engaged in the project.

Mr David Ghannoum, Managing Director of Multiplex NSW, said he was thrilled with what had been achieved at the Connectivity Centre as a collective group.

“The Connectivity Centre was a whole of community response to a genuine need. We are hugely thankful to the community for their support, in particular to the organisations involved including yourtown, Maitland City Council, NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet, Department of Social Services and the Department of Jobs & Small Business for their tremendous support.”

Matt Newcomb from Mai-Well Labourforce Solutions, a disability employment service involved with the Connectivity Centre, added that what had started as a concept and an empty building had ended in a fine example of collaboration.

“It put a group of intelligent and well-intentioned professionals together in a room and gave us the chance to forget our star ratings for a while, and to combine our talents and do something exceptional,” he said.

Building on previously successful initiatives coordinated by Multiplex throughout New South Wales, the Green Hills Connectivity Centre was set up as a way to link local job seekers with construction and retail employment opportunities arising from the \$414 million shopping centre redevelopment, as well as opportunities from other employers in the Hunter region.

Over the course of the redevelopment, which spanned two years, The Connectivity Centre placed more than 180 people in jobs, exceeding its initial target of 100. This included 10 local Multiplex trainees who all completed their traineeships and have since been offered full time work. Importantly, the majority of placements were in sustainable employment.

“The aim of the Connectivity Centre was to have a genuine and long term impact in the community – both in terms of jobs and community connections more broadly,” said Mr Ghannoum.

“We had extensive discussions with the community about what kind of assistance they needed. One great outcome was the ‘The Impressions of Maitland’ art competition which we held at the Connectivity Centre to celebrate and nurture the creative talents of local job seekers.

This really has been a holistic approach.”

John Schroder, Stockland Group Executive and CEO of Commercial Property, said: “The Connectivity Centre was not just about finding and filling jobs for now, but providing the skills for later. We wanted to ensure we were helping people in this region be job ready for years to come and are very proud to see over 150 people placed in jobs through this positive employment initiative.

“Our \$414 million redevelopment of Stockland Green Hills was a commitment to the Maitland region and we are pleased to see our investment creating new jobs for the local region, not only during construction and retail but also creating an important multiplier effect on the regional economy.”

The redevelopment of Stockland Green Hills has more than doubled its size to around 74,000 square metres. It features the first new format David Jones department store in the Hunter, as well as more than 225 specialty shops and a vibrant new dining and entertainment precinct, the biggest and best in the region.

-ENDS-

For more information contact:

Multiplex: Karen Gampenov - (02) 8880 9377 / 0411 795 131 / [Karen@prpartnership.com.au](mailto:Karen@prpartnership.com.au)

Stockland: Monique Brown – 0438 995 791/ [Monique.brown@stockland.com.au](mailto:Monique.brown@stockland.com.au)