

Australian Business Growth Fund announces \$15 million investment in WA-based aviation and tourism group – HMC Group

22 NOVEMBER 2022: The Australian Business Growth Fund (ABGF) is pleased to announce its investment in regional Western Australian company HM Consolidated Pty Ltd (HMC Group), one of Australia's largest and fastest-growing general aviation and tourism providers. ABGF will invest \$15 million into the business.

ABGF has a unique profit-for-purpose investment model providing growth capital to Australian SMEs. The Fund was founded with initial capital of \$540 million as a public-private partnership between the Federal Government and six leading banks in Australia, designed to stimulate growth in the SME sector.

HMC Group has experienced exceptional growth over the past decade, underpinned by its commitment to servicing regional Western Australian businesses, communities, and the tourism sector. This growth has been delivered through strategic acquisitions and ongoing re-investment by the business in growing its accommodation and tourism offerings, rotary-wing, and fixed-wing aviation services. Scale has given HMC Group the voice to advocate for the continued economic development of the Kimberley and Pilbara regions and the ability to attract an exceptional team to its regional operations.

Anthony Healy, Chief Executive Officer of ABGF said: “We’re excited about this investment in the HMC Group. The business is supporting the connectivity and economic development of regional Western Australia and beyond. HMC Group has built an impressive operation and reputation and has great potential to continue to further scale.

“HMC Group continues to grow by providing transportation services to geographically dispersed communities, direct local employment opportunities (including indigenous employment opportunities), and through its continued and ongoing investment in the region.”

The HMC Group operates a group of companies across the tourism and aviation sectors including Aviair, HeliSpirit, Bungle Bungle Savannah Lodge, Bungle Bungle Guided Tours, Freshwater East Kimberley Apartments, Kimberley Experiences, the Australian Helicopter Academy and the PumpHouse Restaurant.

- Aviair is a leading fixed-wing aviation business that services regional Western Australia, and special mission operations in South Australia. It provides corporate charter, scheduled air services, and some of Australia's most spectacular scenic flights.
- HeliSpirit is the Kimberley's largest scenic helicopter flight operator and also provides specialised charter, airwork and emergency support services.
- Bungle Bungle Savannah Lodge, Bungle Bungle Guided Tours, Freshwater Kimberley Apartments and Kimberley Experiences form the company's offerings of accommodation and unique tourist experiences.
- Australian Helicopter Academy is a provider of helicopter training services.
- The PumpHouse Restaurant is an iconic hospitality venue on the banks of the Ord River in Kununurra and is the most recent acquisition of the HMC Group.

The HMC Group seeks to connect regional Western Australia and beyond through:

- The provision of essential transport services for residents of regional and remote communities to access employment opportunities within large scale national projects and worksites, thereby enabling regional employment
- Offering regular passenger transport services that connect regional towns and cities
- Enabling community access for health and social services
- Providing tourism experiences for local, intrastate, interstate and international travelers to explore regional WA

The HMC Group was recently recognised for excellence at this year's WA Tourism Awards. The company received Gold Awards in two categories: Cultural Tourism and Unique Accommodation for Bungle Bungle Savannah Lodge. Additionally, Silver Awards were given in the categories of EcoTourism and Tour & Transport Operators (again for Bungle Bungle Savannah Lodge) and also Major Tour & Transport Operators (HeliSpirit).

Michael McConachy, Managing Director of HMC Group said: "We are delighted to partner with ABGF. I know their team will challenge us on our ideas and provide invaluable corporate experience to assist our businesses to grow. The investment will support the growing demand for our high quality aviation and tourism services and assist HMC to continue to grow its aviation fleet and expand its network infrastructure. My aim is to leave a worthwhile legacy in the state of WA, knowing that we have contributed something of value to the regional communities in which we live and operate, and the State as a whole. We look forward to further increasing our regionally based operations."

The HMC Group was founded in 2014. Managing Director, Michael McConachy, has extensive entrepreneurial experience across agribusiness, construction, aviation and tourism. Michael has a deep connection to regional Western Australia and remains committed to providing services that will support businesses, communities and people in the regions.

ABGF Co-Head of Investments, Ghazaleh Lyari, said: "ABGF plays a vital role in filling the funding gap between late-stage venture capital and larger buyout funds. The fund leaves control in the hands of the founders through a minority only investment mandate. ABGF has a long-term investment horizon and supports its investee businesses by connecting them to capital, expertise, and wider local and international networks. We are excited about partnering with Michael and his experienced team who have built an impressive business serving a unique region of the country with considerable growth potential through improved connectivity."

HMC Group's banking partner is the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. Commonwealth Bank Group Executive of Business Banking, Mike Vacy-Lyle said: "CBA is proud to play a role in supporting the ABGF's first west coast investment.

"CommBank has been supporting the progress of regional Australia for over 100 years and is excited to be a part of HMC Group's continued expansion, growing its aviation fleet and expanding its network infrastructure to increase regional connectivity.

"As the first pure bank referral to the fund, this announcement highlights the opportunity CBA's partnership with ABGF creates for Australian businesses to scale and thrive."

ABGF is building an investment pipeline of SMEs with \$2 to \$100 million in revenue, a proven business model and considerable growth potential.

ABGF will be a minority investor in the HMC Group, and the business will continue to be majority owned and managed by Western Australians.

ABGF was founded on a model that was established over 10 years ago in the UK to drive economic recovery and long-term growth as the economy emerged from the Global Financial Crisis. Since then, the [Business Growth Fund \(BGF\)](#) in the UK has invested over GBP3 billion in more than 450 companies, making them the most active private equity investor, by number of transactions, in the UK.

For more information on ABGF visit <https://www.abgf.com.au/>

Additional information

About ABGF

ABGF was founded with an initial capital of \$540 million as a public-private partnership between the Federal Government and six leading banks. The fund operates commercially and makes investment decisions independently of its shareholders.

ABGF was set up to act as a catalyst for growth in the Australian SME sector by connecting founders and entrepreneurs to the capital, expertise, and wider networks they need to succeed.

The fund bridges the gap between late-stage venture capital and private equity. It provides minority-only, patient growth capital that allows owners and founders to retain control of what they've built, while leveraging the fund's capital and expertise in achieving their growth aspirations.

ABGF provides a proven investment model that has generated hundreds of successful growth outcomes for businesses in the UK and Canada.

About HM Consolidated Pty Ltd

The HMC Group is a collection of aviation and tourism businesses under common ownership that has expanded rapidly in both geographic location and size of operations during the past seven years.

The HMC Group currently has offices in Perth, Kununurra, Broome, Karratha and Adelaide, and has an expanding team of approximately 260 employees, with further and substantial business growth forecast over the next five years.

Enterprises within the Group include:

Aviair - One of Australia's largest and leading fixed wing general aviation operators with charter, scheduled services and scenic flights operating throughout the Kimberley and Pilbara regions for corporate, mining, government, and tourism clients.

HeliSpirit – HeliSpirit offers tourism helicopter services from eleven spectacular locations in the Kimberley, Pilbara, and Esperance regions, as well as a range of corporate and charter helicopter services in the northwest of WA

Australian Helicopter Academy - Provides specialist helicopter training in the East Kimberley

Bungle Bungle Savannah Lodge & Guided Tours - Eco-accommodation in the heart of Purnululu National Park & Guided walking tours with a focus on indigenous training and employment whilst also providing authentic indigenous tourism experiences

Freshwater East Kimberley Apartments - Kununurra's leading accommodation offering with sixty resort style apartments

Kimberley Experiences – Provides specialist and personalised Kimberley travel itineraries by highly experienced travel designers

PumpHouse Restaurant –An iconic dining destination located on the banks of the Ord River in Kununurra

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