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Downer on the up with Whitehaven

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Downer says its new 12-month project will employ 300 people, most of whom will be in the Hunter.

DOWNER EDI says its \$100million works contract win at Whitehaven Coal's Maules Creek project will bring new jobs to the Hunter.

The company, which employs 1700 people in the region in its rail, infrastructure and mining divisions, has secured the contract to construct all buildings, facilities, equipment and services associated with a new coal handling and processing plant at the Maules Creek site near Narrabri.

Work on the project will begin immediately and a company spokesperson said the 12-month project would employ 300 people at its peak, the majority being existing Downer employees in the region.

"There will be some new roles created and our aim is to target locals in the Hunter," she said.

Downer's contract win follows the announcement this week by shipbuilder Forgacs that it will be forced to lay off more than 900 skilled workers in 18 months unless the federal government makes a decision on future naval hardware projects.

Whitehaven operates the Narrabri underground mine and three open-cut mines in the Gunnedah Basin, exporting its coal through the Port of Newcastle.

