

Austech/NMW2011: innovateAustralia to spark opportunities for manufacturers

Innovation will play its part in improving Australia's manufacturing productivity, and Austech/National Manufacturing Week organisers AMTIL and Reed Exhibitions hope to support local manufacturers to be at the forefront of any change.

The 250m innovateAustralia showcase is designed to help connect visitors to organisations representative of and significant to their industry. It will inform them of possible business opportunities and assist to seed the growth of Australian advanced precision manufacturers. The innovateAustralia showcase will be located within Australia's premier advanced precision manufacturing and machine tool exhibition held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre from 24 to 27 May 2011. innovateAustralia is an initiative of the Australian Manufacturing Technology Institute Limited (AMTIL) and has received funding support through AusIndustry's Industry Cooperative Innovation Program.

The showcase will highlight vital future growth sectors including aerospace, defence, renewable technologies, automotive transport and medical, and provide leading companies in these sectors a platform to discuss supply barriers and opportunities with Australian precision engineers and advanced manufacturers.

"The need for companies to be thinking about innovation and better ways of producing components and products has never been more important than it is today," says AMTIL CEO and Austech Exhibition Director Shane Infanti. "innovateAustralia is about showcasing some of the major projects that Australia is currently involved in, highlighting these opportunities and the capabilities that our manufacturers need to have to be in that space. What we want to do is get more companies to a level of technical capability that allows them to access the supply chains of these projects."

"Manufacturers tell us that one of their largest challenges is staying ahead of the innovation curve," adds NMW Exhibition Director Paul Baker, Reed Exhibitions, an innovateAustralia partner company. "In response, innovateAustralia has been developed as a tool to help manufacturers get hands-on with technologies that could become the mainstream industries in the future."

"In addition to background information and a cafe-style area – which is intended as a place for conversations about these new technologies – innovateAustralia will dissect some of these technologies, to start identifying the commercial opportunities for local industry."

As part of the technology dissemination activities, organisations will display typical manufactured components in their industry, providing Australian component manufacturers, precision engineering firms, toolmakers, advanced manufacturers or general engineering companies visiting the stand with a unique opportunity to discuss their manufacturing capabilities and to network.

"Visitors can sit down in the Opportunity Cafe area and discuss prospects, barriers to entry and the future for the industry in Australia," explains AMTIL's Projects Manager Greg Chalker, organiser of innovateAustralia. "This is an exciting part of the showcase because the participants will have a microphone and be transmitted to those around the Cafe area and stand. There may be half a dozen occasions this would happen over the four days of Austech/NMW."

The Opportunity Cafe area will feature a timetable for visitors to sit down and listen to industry leaders discuss relevant supply chain and major project topics in a relaxed informal caf setting. Discussions with AMTIL CEO Shane Infanti, the Federal Minister for Small Business Senator Nick Sherry, representatives from HydroGen, Radotec, Invetech, GippsAero, Thales, Enterprise Connect, the Industry Capability Network (ICN) or the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO), just to mention a few.

"AMTIL's project team has always taken the view that if we can promote the adoption of leading manufacturing technologies, educate companies in advanced management methodologies and process techniques, then expose them to opportunities will place them on a steady foundation for competitive growth," Mr Chalker says.

"innovateAustralia is going to be a unique opportunity for everyone who participates in NMW 2011 and Austech," Mr Baker adds. "I'm excited about its potential to spark discussion and real opportunities for manufacturers."

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