

Victorian Government Opportunity Café

Turning challenges into opportunities

Melbourne, 04 May 2011 – The Australian manufacturing industry operates in a highly competitive global marketplace, with increasing competition from low-cost producers, global sourcing, fewer supply chains and the emergence of low-cost base economies as global manufacturing centres.

In spite of these challenges there are significant opportunities emerging for Australian manufacturing, particularly in niche industries. It is within these niche industries – including aerospace, defence, renewable technologies, automotive transport and medical – where we must turn these challenges into opportunities. This can only be done through innovation.

A willingness to innovate may not guarantee success unless other conditions are also met, but a refusal to innovate will certainly guarantee failure. Australia has sophisticated manufacturing capabilities, and the sector contributes enormously to our economic and social well-being. It should never be underestimated.

The Victorian Government Opportunity Café

For this reason, the Australian Manufacturing Technology Institute Limited (AMTIL) initiated the Victorian Government Opportunity Café as part of innovateAustralia. The 370m 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 AMTIL, supported through AusIndustry's Industry Cooperative Innovation Program and by the Victorian Government. Victorian Minister for Manufacturing, Exports and Trade Richard Dalla-Riva will also officially open the National Manufacturing Week Conference on 25th May 2011.

The 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 Victorian Government Opportunity Café is a place for manufacturing visitors to discuss business opportunities, connect with innovateAustralia industry leaders and become aware of technologies, methodologies and techniques to assist them to improve and grow," explains AMTIL project manager Greg Chalker. The Opportunity Café 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 café setting. Discussions with AMTIL CEO Shane Infanti, the Federal Minister for Small Business Senator Nick Sherry, the Victorian Government representative David Latina for the Department of Business and Innovation, representatives from HydroGen, Invetech, GippsAero, Thales, Enterprise Connect, FAPM, the Industry Capability Network (ICN) or the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO), just to mention a few.

"We are really excited about the café area," Mr Chalker goes on to say. "There is going to be some great conversations to be heard. This is where Minister for Small Business Nick Sherry, the Victorian Government representative David Latina for the Department of Business and Innovation, the Defence Global Supply Chain and others will sit down, have a coffee and talk about the challenges we face and what we can do. Best part is the conversation will be transmitted to speakers all over the innovateAustralia stand for visitors to overhear."

"We have been lucky enough to attract real industry leaders that can provide hard facts about supply chain issues and opportunities."

Globalisation priorities

Discussion topics will include innovative ways to access opportunities and initiatives that facilitate export market development and encourage manufacturers to focus on the specific advantages of international business, including access to economies of scale and niche growth markets. For example, Australian auto component makers from Victoria are currently looking to tap opportunities in the Indian market by supplying to vehicle manufacturers, which are facing a demand supply gap. The Australian industry body Federation of Automotive Products Manufacturers (FAPM), which will be part of the Opportunity Café, has signed a memorandum of understanding with Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA).

"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 and the Opportunity Café 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."

Aerospace and defence

Home to the largest number of aviation and aerospace companies in the country, Melbourne has been at the centre of both aircraft manufacturing and maintenance in Australia for over half a century. The State's strength in the sector is underpinned by a skilled workforce, including highly experienced design and engineering personnel, outstanding research and development capabilities and a broadly based advanced manufacturing

industry supported by leading edge IT infrastructure.

During the Monday and Tuesday sessions, Tony Quick, who has spent most of his career in general management, international business development and program management within the aerospace and defence industries, discusses opportunities for local manufacturers in this growing industry sector. Mr Quick was appointed Chairman of the DMTC in December 2010 and is Director of the Enterprise Connect Defence Industry Innovation Centre (DIIC). The DIIC focuses on improving the competitiveness of Australian SMEs, primarily through productivity improvements and assistance to access the latest research.

Moreover, the Australian Department of Defence will demonstrate an innovative way for companies willing to tap into the defence supply chain, the Defence + Industry ePortal and its publicly searchable industry capability information system (ICIS). The Internet site, www.dplusi.defence.gov.au, now has over 1200 companies listed and in excess of 3520 registered users, and it is growing daily.

The ePortal allows Australian defence companies to showcase their capabilities to Defence buyers and to multinational companies thereby facilitating Australian industry participation in global supply chains.

innovateAustralia is a Lynx Project activity and funded through the Industry Cooperative Innovation Program. It is designed to help connect Austech and National Manufacturing Week visitors to organisations representative of, and significant to their industry, inform them of possible business opportunities and assist to seed the growth of Australian advance precision manufacturers.

The Victorian Government Opportunity Caf is proudly sponsored by the State Government of Victoria. www.business.vic.gov.au

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