



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ECONOMICS,
FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
MANUFACTURING SECTOR REPORT RELEASED

MEDIA RELEASE

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Chair: The Hon Bruce Baird MP
Deputy Chair: Ms Sharon Bird MP

House Economics Committee releases report on the state of manufacturing

The House of Representatives Economics Committee called on the Government to develop a national manufacturing strategy to address the changing nature of the manufacturing sector in an increasingly globalised market, in a report tabled today.

Australian Manufacturing: Today and Tomorrow is the result of a fourteen-month inquiry into the state of Australia's manufactured export and import competing base—now and beyond the resources boom.

"Australia needs to respond to existing and predicted changes in the manufacturing sector," said committee chair, the Hon Bruce Baird MP. "The evidence we received suggests that after the boom, the manufacturing sector will survive and thrive, as long as it plays to its innovative, creative strengths."

To promote a brighter, more efficient industry, the report contains a further twenty recommendations addressing the increasingly global and scientific nature of the manufacturing sector. Ranging across government, industry, individual business, education, research and technology, they include:

- Harmonising national occupational health and safety standards through COAG;
- Increased funding for exporters and better resources for innovators;
- Ongoing Australian Government funding for the Australian Synchrotron;
- More focus on emerging technologies and practical skills in primary and secondary school science curricula;
- More partnerships between vocational education providers and businesses with state-of-the-art-equipment;
- Ensuring Australian Industry Productivity Centres maintain a manufacturing focus;
- Increased funding for the CSIRO to liaise with businesses;
- Reviewing the R&D tax concession scheme; and
- Developing an online manufacturing portal.

"There will always be challenges, but there are also great opportunities for Australian manufacturing to seize in global markets," said Mr Baird.

The manufacturing sector is a key component of the Australian economy, accounting for over a fifth of the country's exports and employing 1.1 million people, approximately half of whom work for firms of less than 100 people. The inquiry was announced in May 2006. The committee received 50 submissions and conducted 13 public hearings and 11 site visits around Australia.

Electronic copies of the report are available online at:
www.aph.gov.au/house/committees/efpa/manufacturing/report.htm.

Hard copies of the report are available from the committee secretariat. To obtain a hard copy please email efpa.reps@aph.gov.au or phone (02) 6277 4587.

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