

Manufacturing Network Interim Advisory Board meets for the first time

The Manufacturing Network Interim Advisory Board held its first formal meeting recently, after a workshop in June, to consider developments and the ongoing progress of the Enterprise Connect Manufacturing Network.

Chaired by Jim Walker, who is also Chief Executive Officer of QMI Solutions, the board examined three main areas:

- The challenges for SMEs in the manufacturing sector;
- The long term model of the Enterprise Connect Network; and,
- Immediate issues

Mr Walker said he was unable to go into the specifics of any decisions reached by the Board as they had to be put to the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr, for his approval.

"But generally there were three areas that we looked at in some detail with a view to ensuring the Enterprise Connect Manufacturing Network is doing the job that industry wants it to do," Mr Walker said.

"The first area we looked at was the challenges for SMEs in the manufacturing sector and what the needs of these companies are.

"The primary reason we examined this area was to ensure we understand what those challenges are and as a result we understand what the SMEs expect from the Enterprise Connect Manufacturing Network."

The second major topic at the Board meeting was an examination of the long term model of Enterprise Connect.

"Based on the information from the first part of the Board meeting, the examination of the challenges facing SMEs, we then looked at what the Network should look like in its mature form," he said.

"What we were looking for was the vision of the network, and its goals are and how those goals will impact on industry."

In discussion on the future of the Network, the principles by which it operates were spelled out, especially in regard to collaborative work and world best practice.

"And then we looked at the service offerings of the Network and how they should be managed and delivered," Mr Walker said.

The third major area of discussion was on immediate issues facing SMEs in the manufacturing sector and how Enterprise Connect can help address these.

"We have a system and we were looking at how to move it along in areas such as eligibility criteria, and who we should be serving," Mr Walker said.

The Board established three sub groups in each of the above areas who will meet outside of the formal Board meetings to progress their areas of responsibility.

Mr Walker said the Board was then addressed by John Dean, General Manager of Enterprise Connect, who reported on the establishment of Enterprise Connect centres and related issues.

"The Board is very pleased with the work of the Business Advisers and of Enterprise Connect as a whole," Mr Walker said.

"We feel the performances have been very professional and targeted."