

# **Enterprise Connect Brisbane Manufacturing Centre**

**Senator Kim Carr  
Minister for Innovation, Industry,  
Science and Research**

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The \$251 million Enterprise Connect network is a central plank of the innovation policy the Government took to the last election.

It consists of manufacturing and innovation centres around the country dedicated to giving small and medium-sized businesses better access to new ideas, knowledge and technologies.

Businesses can then apply what they take away from the centres to build their internal capacities and become more innovative, efficient, productive and competitive.

The network was launched in May, and last month I opened the first Manufacturing Centre in Adelaide and the first Innovation Centre in Geelong.

## **QMI**

Today I have the pleasure of launching the latest Enterprise Connect Manufacturing Centre here at the QMI Solutions campus.

QMI has been at the heart of my thinking about Enterprise Connect from the beginning.

I first visited QMI before the election last year, and I was deeply impressed by Jim Walker's passion and commitment to manufacturing, and the services offered by this organisation.

I was especially taken by the focus on innovation and the idea of the journey to excellence.

Two particular ideas I stole from Jim were:

- first, that Enterprise Connect should develop an effective partnership with firms as they work to develop their capabilities; and
- second, that Enterprise Connect centres should maintain the highest standards of service and program delivery.

Enterprise Connect continues to work with QMI around Australia, and I am delighted that Jim Walker has taken on the job of chairing the Enterprise Connect Manufacturing Network Interim Advisory Board.

## **Progress to date**

Enterprise Connect is still under construction, but with so many individuals and organisations contributing to the building process, we are making great progress.

We have called for proposals from organisations interested in running our innovation centres for Creative Industries and Clean Energy, and the response has been overwhelming.

Work is also well advanced on the Mining Technology Innovation Centre to be established in Mackay.

In fact, the network is up and running in every state, and over 1,000 firms have applied for or received business reviews – 82 per cent of them manufacturers.

At last count, 155 Queensland firms had applied, of which sixty-eight have already received a business review.

Thirty-five have gone on to apply for a tailored advisory services grant.

Twenty-five of these applications have been approved, with the firms in question to receive a total of \$442,228 in Commonwealth funding.

## **Thanks**

None of this would have been possible without the business advisors and partner organisations who have been instrumental in developing and delivering Enterprise Connect's service offerings.

The Manufacturing Network Interim Advisory Board has helped to define Enterprise Connect's vision and the way it works on the ground.

The board brings together representatives from business, universities, unions, the CSIRO and industry associations.

All have done a fantastic job.

I also want to record my thanks to the Queensland Government, which has made it possible for QMI Solutions to participate in Enterprise Connect.

## **The future**

Just about everybody agrees that we need to lift the innovation performance of our SMEs and address the challenges facing manufacturing and other industries.

The question is, how do we do it?

Enterprise Connect is one answer to that question.

It is the critical link between our SMEs and the national innovation system.

It is a bit like the national broadband network, providing accelerated access to ideas, technology and support – and like any network, the more firms and institutions we get plugged in, the more useful it will be.

Over time I see the Enterprise Connect network bringing businesses, researchers and education institutions together in ever-more extensive and effective collaborations.

It will allow the Brisbane Manufacturing Centre to link firms here to expertise anywhere in Australia.

I see Enterprise Connect centres as places where people can not only discuss new ideas, but put them into practice.

It is a great initiative, and it is great to have Brisbane on board.