



THE HON MAXINE MCKEW MP
Federal Member for Bennelong

Thursday, 20 November 2008

NSW MANUFACTURING CENTRE OPENS FOR BUSINESS

More than 31,000 small and medium-sized NSW manufacturers can now access world-class services that will help them become more productive and competitive, with the opening today of the NSW Enterprise Connect Manufacturing Centre at North Ryde.

Opening the centre, the Member for Bennelong, Maxine McKew – representing the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr – said the centre was an integral part of the Rudd Government's \$251 million Enterprise Connect initiative.

"Enterprise Connect is a national network of manufacturing and innovation centres offering practical assistance to help firms become stronger by focusing squarely on innovation, creativity and excellence," Ms McKew said.

"In the face of a global financial crisis and extraordinary competition, this centre enables manufacturers to tap into the latest ideas and technologies and tackle these challenges head on."

Through the centre, businesses can apply for an expert business adviser to conduct a free onsite business review. Businesses can then apply for grants of up to \$20,000 to make improvements identified by the review.

The centre also provides ongoing mentoring and access to the latest thinking and technology through its growing connections with leading-edge research organisations.

Ms McKew said that Enterprise Connect has been embraced in NSW, with over 380 applications for business reviews – out of over 1100 nationally – coming from the state.

"These companies had a combined turnover of some \$3.25 billion, with companies from the Greater Western Sydney region accounting for about \$1 billion of this amount.

"In addition, the centre is co-located with the CSIRO, giving unique access to that organisation's expertise and research capabilities.

"Enterprise Connect is about partnering with firms to develop their capabilities and make them internationally competitive. Today's opening is the next step in the partnership," Ms McKew said.

For more information on Enterprise Connect, visit www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au or call the Enterprise Connect hotline on 131 791. Photos of the launch are available on request.

Media Contact: Patrick Pantano, Senator Carr's Office, 0417 181 936
Patricia Drum, Ms McKew's Office, 0434 652 582