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Australia is patently good at advanced manufacturing

A new report on patent activity highlights Australia's positive global ranking in advanced manufacturing patent applications, showing healthy levels of innovation within the sector.

Patents for new products, processes and technologies are a useful indicator of innovation performance within an industry.

The report, produced by IP Australia, assessed patent activity to provide an insight into innovation in the advanced manufacturing sector, and benchmarked Australia against other nations.

The report found a 15 per cent increase in advanced manufacturing patent applications between 2000 and 2013. This was largely driven by increases in patents for medical devices, up 46 per cent, along with strong growth in chemical and mechanical engineering patents (33 per cent and 29 percent respectively).

Australia's global position in advanced manufacturing patent applications is positive at 14th, outranking high performing countries such as Israel, Denmark, Austria and India. This is significant given Australia is ranked 53rd in population.

The report also found that Australia ranked 10th out of 36 countries for specialisation in medical device patents and is middle-ranked globally for chemical engineering patents. The majority of advanced manufacturing patents filed in Australia are in the electrical technology category, a key driver for advanced manufacturing innovation.

Australia also demonstrates innovative expertise in transport, mechanical engineering and pharmaceuticals, areas of significant growth and global opportunity.

Notably, Australia has a higher number of applications spread across the other technology categories than other countries, demonstrating the diversity of our advanced manufacturing sector compared to many other nations.

The Australian Government is supporting capability growth and fostering industry and research collaboration through initiatives like the Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre (AMGC) and the Innovative Manufacturing Cooperative Research Centre.

AMGC has established innovation hubs to develop and drive the development and uptake of new technologies, including in the key technological breakthrough areas of 3D printing, carbon fibre and Industry 4.0.

With Australia adding over 10,000 additional manufacturing jobs in the last 12 months to February 2017—along with the Ai Group’s Australian Performance of Manufacturing Index indicating solid expansion at 57.5 points in March 2017—the sixth consecutive month of expansion—there is cause for optimism on our manufacturing future.

The Australian Government, through its National Innovation Science Agenda and other measures, remains committed to ensuring that our manufacturing industry is internationally competitive, with high levels of innovation to keep us ahead of the pack globally.

To access the report, visit www.industry.gov.au/A-patent-analytics-study-on-the-Australian-advanced-manufacturing-industry.pdf

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About IP Australia

IP Australia is the Australian Government agency that administers IP rights and legislation relating to patents, trademarks, designs and plant breeder's rights. They contribute to the innovation system more broadly by using their skills and experience to advise government and Australian businesses to make the most of their IP.

The report was produced by IP Australia’s Patent Analytics Hub which aims to help Australian innovators make the most of their intellectual property.