

The Future of Manufacturing in Australia

Could Australia's manufacturing industry be the perfect avenue for driven workers? Below, we take a look at how the industry is faring and what opportunities it has to offer.

Since the 1960s, Australia's manufacturing sector had been in a state of decline and stagnation. However, the recent shift towards a high-tech society has created a manufacturing revival.

Activity in manufacturing has risen at a startling pace throughout 2017 and 2018. This is because of a parallel increase in Australian civil engineering, commercial building, and residential construction projects. Manufacturing's ability to provide advanced building materials and prefabricated construction components makes it a critical partner for the construction industry.

Current Trends

Rising Salaries

A shortage of qualified candidates has created a competitive market among employers in the manufacturing industry. However, not all companies have caught on to this trend. This has led to a widening gap between the market's highest and lowest salaries.

Tech Advancement

Technology has driven manufacturing to quickly evolve. No longer about simple production, companies now have to be on the cutting edge, developing tomorrow's innovations and using ever-advancing tech to do it.

- **Robotics**

Low-skill labourers are being replaced by automated robots in many manufacturing roles. Additionally, manufacturing itself has a major part to play in the production of commercial and industrial robotics.

- **IoT: Internet of Things**

The industry is shifting toward "smart manufacturing", which uses tech systems to streamline production processes. In manufacturing, this is being implemented through the IoT: machines connected and controlled by the internet.

- **Data-driven**

With the IoT, manufacturing companies are able to collect helpful data from their machines. This data can be analysed to identify opportunities for greater improvements and efficiencies.

The National Energy Guarantee

Currently being considered by the government is the "National Energy Guarantee", a policy that will provide cheaper energy to Australia. The manufacturing sector is strongly hoping for this policy to be approved, as the country's expensive and unreliable power situation has cost the industry substantial investments.

Current Challenges in the Industry

Lacking Labour

Australia's trades are in the midst of a serious labour shortage. This is due to a few contributing factors:

- **Ageing Workforce**

The majority of current candidates are ageing out of the workforce and into retirement.

- **Fewer Young Workers**

There are far too few apprenticeships available, making it harder for young talent to gain entry.

- **Decrease in Skilled Migration**

Tightening VISA restrictions have led to a lack of candidates coming in from overseas.

Leading figures in manufacturing are trying to resolve this labour shortage by creating more apprenticeships, pushing for expansion of the TAFE program, and lobbying for loosened migration policies.

Welcoming More Women and School-leavers

Both women and school-leavers tend to feel as if manufacturing isn't a viable option for them. Women are wary of gender discrimination in male-dominated workplaces, while recent high school graduates assume they need a college degree before they can begin a career.

The manufacturing industry must work to raise awareness among both women and youths, letting them know that a welcoming work environment with promising opportunities awaits.

Top Jobs in Demand

The manufacturing and operations sector serves a variety of industries, from food and pharmaceuticals, to packaging and plastics. The current boom in robotics, automation, and other tech- and equipment-heavy innovations has led to a sharp increase in demand for the following jobs:

- **Electricians**

Maintenance electricians are needed to keep manufacturing machinery running, conducting reactive and preventative maintenance. Additionally, many are being sought for installing and upgrading new equipment to increase productivity or accommodate new manufacturing methods.

- **Fitters**

Also known as maintenance fitters, fitters are needed to repair, service, and install industrial machinery. Companies are seeking talents with a strong knowledge of mechanical engineering and the ability to quickly solve equipment problems, as well as the capacity to make equipment upgrades.

Find Your Future in Manufacturing

Jobseekers will find plenty of promise within Australia's manufacturing industry. Whether just starting out or boasting impressive qualifications, manufacturing has high demand for workers at all levels.

Those who enter the industry can find well-paying jobs with generous benefits and plenty of upward mobility. They can also expect rewarding work, as manufacturing's role in technological innovation makes it an exciting field.

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