

Experience Western Downs

It's the
people that
make it.



Accelerate **MANUFACTURING**

25 MARCH 2026

DALBY EVENTS CENTRE

Western Downs Manufacturing Conference

WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL
COUNCIL

WELCOME TO THE 2026 ACCELERATE MANUFACTURING CONFERENCE

On the Western Downs you can find a strong and thriving manufacturing sector, taking advantage of the abundance of opportunities presented by industries, like energy and agriculture.

Our motto, *"It's the people that make it,"* which rings especially true in the manufacturing space. In a region where there's 38,000km² of open space, the Western Downs is home to 148 manufacturing businesses which support 1,221 skilled workers.

Strong transport infrastructure, fast council approval processes and low land acquisition costs have served the manufacturing sector, making the Western Downs an attractive base to connect with national and international markets.

Today, Western Downs Regional Council has gathered 18 industry experts to provide their insight into the future trends, opportunities, and direction of the manufacturing industry.

The fifth annual Accelerate Manufacturing Conference will cover supply chain opportunities, training opportunities, gaining a digital edge, as well as unlocking grant and funding pathways.

Today's program offers valuable perspectives designed to inform, inspire, and support your work in this dynamic industry.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

MARTIN G. MOORE

Renowned leadership expert and host of the No Bullsh!t Leadership podcast, Martin G. Moore, will headline this year's Accelerate Manufacturing Conference as the keynote speaker.

The former CEO of CS Energy will be drawing on decades of experience to inspire local manufacturers to thrive in an industry enduring constant change and technological advancement.

Martin is a global thought leader, whose wisdom was forged in the cauldron of high-performance leadership.



QMI/ICN PRESENTATION

Outcomes: Shape Western Downs Energy Program

Mike Swart, Industry Capability Network (ICN) will discuss the outcomes of the Shape Western Downs Energy Future Program, and how this has benefited some of our local manufacturers.



PROGRAM

- 08:15:** Doors Open, Caffeine, Sign-in & Seat Taking
- 08:45:** MC Housekeeping
- 09:00:** Official Welcome - **Councillor Megan James**
- 09:15:** QMI/ICN Shape Western Downs Energy Future Program
Mike Swart - National Strategy Director, Industry Capability Network (ICN)
- 09:45:** **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**
Martin G Moore - Founder & CEO, Your CEO Mentor
- 10:45:** Morning Tea
- 11:15:** **PANEL ONE - CHAIN REACTION**
Unlocking New Supply Chain Opportunities (45 minutes)
- This panel explores how manufacturers can build stronger, smarter, and more resilient supply chains by leveraging regional strengths, industry collaboration, and emerging technologies to unlock new opportunities in diversification, reshoring, and market expansion across the Western Downs and Southern Queensland and beyond.
- 12:00:** **PANEL TWO - NEXT GEN READY**
Training For Tomorrow's Makers (45 minutes)
- This panel explores how regional manufacturers can prepare the workforce of tomorrow by designing training pathways and workplaces that meet the needs of a rapidly evolving industry, blending strategic insights from industry leaders and training providers with the real lived experience of two recently qualified apprentices to highlight what young people value most in a modern manufacturing career—including purpose, progression, upskilling, mentoring, and a supportive workplace culture.
- 12:45:** Lunch
- 13:45:** **PANEL THREE - THE DIGITAL EDGE**
Where Innovation Meets Industry (45 minutes)
- This panel explores how digital technologies are transforming manufacturing. Experts in automation, AI, robotics, data analytics, and smart systems will discuss practical and cost-effective adoption approaches. They will share real-world examples, emerging trends and what digital transformation looks like on the factory floor in the Western Downs and across Queensland.
- 14:30:** **PANEL FOUR - FUELLING INNOVATION**
Unlocking Grants & Funding Pathways (45 minutes)
- This panel gives manufacturers a clear snapshot of the grants, incentives, and funding pathways available to drive innovation, adopt new technology, and accelerate business growth.
- 15:15:** MC Wrap-Up, Conference Close



HAVE A QUESTION FOR ONE OF THE SPEAKERS OR PANELS?

Scan the QR code to submit your question.



wdrc.au/amc-26-questions

CONNECT WITH CONFERENCE ORGANISERS

Council's Economic Development Team is interested in building relationships and working with businesses and industry to offer business support programs and events. If you have ideas, or want to speak to the team, get in touch!

WDRC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM

☎ (07) 4679 4000
✉ info@wdrc.qld.gov.au

PANEL ONE - CHAIN REACTION

Unlocking New Supply Chain Opportunities



MIKE SWART (Moderator)
Industry Capability Network

Michael is the National Strategy Director at ICN, where he spearheads strategic initiatives and manages relationships with key stakeholders



LEVI JENKINS
Queensland Manufacturing Institute

Levi is the Program Manager at the QMI, where she designs and delivers industry-aligned engagement initiatives.



LANCE MACMANUS
TSBE

As the Strategic Partnership Manager, Lance specialises in supply chain engagement, tendering and investments while creating opportunities for members and industry outcomes.



LOUISE MCMAHON
MFE

Louise is the Founder and Executive General Manager of MFE, with over 15 years experience in the manufacturing sector.

PANEL TWO - NEXT GEN READY

Training for Tomorrow's Makers



ROBYN FRASER (Moderator)
TAFE Queensland

Robyn is an experienced vocational education leader with more than 30 years at TAFE Queensland.



SAMANTHA D'ANGELO
Kinetik Global

Samantha has over 20 years of people development experience on a global scale, spanning across many industries.



JACE WILLOCKS
Faculty Director Manufacturing

After a decade working hands-on in the engineering and fabrication industry, Jace transitioned into education, teaching at TAFE Southwest.



RUSSIEN NISPEROS
Trade Qualified Fitter/Machinist

In 2019, Russien was awarded the Apprentice of the Year. He completed his apprenticeship in 2024 and is now a qualified mechanical fitter and turner.

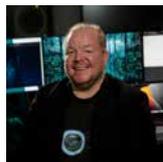


BRYLIE JONES
Kent

Brylie left school in Year 10, and enrolled in a Certificate II in Engineering at a nearby TAFE, where she first discovered her passion for the trade.

PANEL THREE - THE DIGITAL EDGE

Where Innovation Meets Industry



STEVE JAENKE (Moderator)
Digi Mark

Steve is a digital strategist and systems builder with over 20 years of experience in marketing, digital strategy, and automation.



DR GEOFF AUGUTIS
Queensland Computers

Dr Augutis is founder and director of Queensland Computers, his organisation supports regional businesses throughout the state.



GAVIN DUNWOODIE
Products For Industry

Founder and Managing Director, Gavin's focus on innovation and client-centric solutions has positioned PFI as a trusted partner for complex industrial projects nationwide.



ZAC MCNALLY
Robot Solutions Qld

Zac is the Founder and Director of a Toowoomba based automation and robotics company helping manufacturers improve productivity, safety and competitiveness.

PANEL FOUR - FUELLING INNOVATION

Unlocking Grants & Funding Pathways



AMANDA MAURICE (Moderator)
Business Navigator Western Downs

As Lead Coach, Amanda is dedicated to growing the capacity and revenue of small businesses in the Western Downs region.



MALAIKA INGRAM
CSIRO

Malaika is an experienced technical leader and innovation strategist with over 20 years of driving collaborations between academia and industry.



NATALIE GRUENFELD
Department of Natural Resources and Mines

Natalie is the Manager of the Toowoomba Manufacturing Hub, part of Queensland's advanced manufacturing hub network.



MICHAEL SHELFORD
White industries

Michael is the CEO with over 36 years' experience, producing Australian made metal castings.



CARLI HOMANN
NAVIGATE Business Solutions Australia

Director, strategic advisor, and grants specialist, Carli works with businesses and organisations across Australia to turn good ideas into funded, deliverable projects.