

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 is 38,000 km² 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.

Western Downs Regional Council has brought together 18 industry experts to share insights on future trends, opportunities, and the direction of the manufacturing sector.

The fifth annual Accelerate Manufacturing Conference explores supply chain potential, training pathways, digital innovation, and available grants and funding.

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

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 the regions local manufacturers.



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 conference.

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.



"Since we met last year, the world has changed. The promise (and threat) of AI is more quantifiable, energy prices continue to rise, and manufacturing is at a crossroads. The Western Downs has some natural advantages, but these will be quickly swallowed up without decisive action and strong leadership. Join Marty Moore as he takes you on a journey that touches on global economic forces, AI adoption, and why leadership fundamentals still matter. "

PROGRAM

- 08.15** Doors Open, caffeine, sign-in and 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 and 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 use regional strengths and emerging technologies to build resilient supply chains and pursue diversification, reshoring, and market growth.
- 12.00** **PANEL TWO - NEXT GEN READY**
Training for Tomorrow's Makers (45 minutes)
Discover how regional manufacturers can prepare tomorrow's workforce through modern training and supportive workplace design. Leaders and recent apprentices reveal what young people value most in today's manufacturing careers.
- 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 and 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

Photography/videography may occur during this conference for promotional use by Western Downs Regional Council.



HAVE A QUESTION FOR ONE OF THE SPEAKERS OR PANELS?

Scan the QR code to submit your question.



[wdrc.au/amc-26-questions](https://www.wdrc.au/amc-26-questions)

CONNECT WITH CONFERENCE ORGANISERS

Council's Economic Development Team is keen to build relationships with local businesses and industry through support programs and events. If you have ideas or want to connect, get in touch.

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
White Industries

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)
Digimark

Steve is a digital strategist and systems builder with over 20 years 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 and 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.