



Geelong
Manufacturing
Council

2025 MANUFACTURING EXCELLENCE CELEBRATION & AWARDS

SOUVENIR BOOKLET

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27 March 2025

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2025 Manufacturing Excellence
Celebration & Awards

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Tonight's Manufacturing Excellence Celebration & Awards Dinner pays tribute to the region's proud manufacturing history and celebrates innovative manufacturers who are driving our future.

The foundations of the Geelong Manufacturing Council for instance date back 150 years to the gold rush when local foundries such as Backwell IXL made stoves for the Ballarat and Bendigo goldfields.

Later Geelong was at the centre of Australia's wool industry, producing textiles for fashion houses around the world from the wool grown by western Victorian farmers.

By the 1960s it was cheap energy that was driving a fresh new manufacturing boom.

Geelong manufacturers continue to adapt and thrive. These innovative enterprises produce the highest-quality materials and goods under world-class conditions, providing safe, meaningful and increasingly knowledge-rich work for regional Victorians.

Greater Geelong is home to 9435 people currently employed in manufacturing, and the sector continues to be the greatest contributor to gross regional product at almost 20% of the total.

We are enormously grateful to all the sponsors and speakers who have generously made tonight possible.

On behalf of the GMC Board, we also take this opportunity to acknowledge the commitment and crucial support of our GMC Major Sponsors and Industry Sponsors – highlighted later in this program – and our GMC longstanding members who continually strive to improve and grow manufacturing in this region.

We are delighted you can join us.

Jenn Conley
CEO

Thys Heyns
Chair



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

The City of Greater Geelong is proud to support and celebrate excellence in manufacturing.

The City has supported the Geelong Manufacturing Council for more than 20 years, recognising the crucial role manufacturing plays in our region's economic success.

With our population set to grow by 120,000 people by 2041, our Geelong on the Rise strategy seeks to create a further 55,000 new jobs in our region and increase our gross regional product by \$9.7 billion. A thriving manufacturing sector supports this growth, driving industry innovation, creating new products, supply chains and markets, and providing long-term, high-value jobs.

Geelong has a long and rich history in manufacturing, and for the better part of a century our city was home to manufacturers such as Ford, Alcoa and International Harvester. While that chapter has closed, our city has pivoted toward an exciting future in advanced manufacturing and, as Australia's only UNESCO Creative City of Design, we have a strong culture of innovation. We are pioneering technological advancements across industries, and utilising cutting edge processes. Across Greater Geelong clever and creative businesses and individuals are making progress in manufacturing advanced materials, medical equipment, products to support the clean economy and in a wide range of other critical industries.

I'm thrilled to see the Geelong Manufacturing Council recognise this innovation and success at its biennial Manufacturing Excellence Celebration and Awards. Congratulations to all of tonight's award winners and nominees, and thank you for your contribution to building a stronger, more prosperous Greater Geelong.

Mayor Stretch Kontelj OAM



Welcome Messages

Ella George MP
On behalf of Victorian Minister for Industry
Cr Stretch Kontelj, Mayor, City of Greater Geelong
Rob Backwell, GMC Deputy Chair

Guest Speakers

Professor Iain Martin, Deakin University
Richard Marshall, Hanwha Defence Australia

Meal service begins

Panel Discussion

AIRCDRE Peter Thompson
Department of Defence Space and Cyber Capabilities Division
John Fry
Kongsberg Defence Australia Managing Director
Ian Irving
American Australian Association CEO

Recognition & Awards Presentations

GMC Directors Lyn George and Glen Pasque, present:
Manufacturing Community Award
New GMC Honour Roll Inductees
Innovation Excellence Award
Sustainability Excellence Award
Manufacturing Excellence Award

Dessert and Networking



gforce employment & recruitment is a for-purpose community organisation dedicated to making a meaningful impact on people's lives and strengthening communities. As a full-service employment and recruitment provider, gforce supports jobseekers, trainees, apprentices, and employers with a passionate and skilled team committed to delivering an exceptional customer experience.

In 2024, gforce played a pivotal role in supporting Geelong's manufacturing sector, with 325 trainees and apprentices placed across local businesses. This included 56 trainees and 269 apprentices, covering 26 different qualifications, from traditional trades like boiler making, engineering, and fitting and turning, to critical business areas such as work health and safety, IT, and accounting. A strong advocate for women in non-traditional trades, 20% of these placements were female apprentices hosted by Geelong manufacturers.

gforce is a driving force in workforce development, ensuring Geelong's manufacturing sector thrives with skilled and capable talent.



20+ YEARS

Air Radiators
City of Greater Geelong
Deakin University
Geelong Port
Godfrey Hirst
The Gordon
Gforce Employment Solutions
Incitec Pivot
InfraBuild
IXL Group
Viva Energy Australia
Barwon Water (new in 2025)

10+ YEARS

Austeng
Barrett Burston
Boomaroo Nurseries
Carbon Revolution
CMTF
Cobram Estate Olives
CSIRO
Dow Chemical
Geelong Galvanizing
GHD
Malteurop
Marand
Programmed
Quantem
Rendine
RPC Technologies
Worley
AKD Softwoods (new in 2025)
Farm Foods (new in 2025)
SNF Australia (new in 2025)

GMC presented 20+ year distinguished contribution awards and 10+ year recognition awards at our biennial Manufacturing Celebration Dinner in 2023. These Long Standing Members listed in our GMC Honour Roll above are critical to the ongoing growth and success of manufacturing in the region and we thank them for their unwavering commitment. We salute our new inductees in 2025.

The Manufacturing Community Award (previous page) is periodically awarded, at the discretion of the GMC, to recognise distinguished services to the local manufacturing and broader Geelong communities. The success of manufacturing – because of its place-based nature – depends entirely on strong bonds and authentic relationships with our many communities. In 2023, this award went to Northern Futures.

INNOVATION EXCELLENCE AWARD FINALISTS



Austeng is a boutique engineering firm specialising in custom electromechanical machinery. Owned by Ross & Lyn George, it employs ~30 staff, including engineers, and various trades .

Austeng focuses on high-value, emerging industries like new materials, recycling, industrial hemp, and renewable energy. Some projects are in collaboration with startups, universities, and industry players, while others, like its hydrogen prototype, are its own developments.



Modularity by Rendine is the Modular Manufacturing Division of Rendine Constructions, a 50 year old regional Geelong company, focusing on local and state government clients, delivering projects across the education, housing and public infrastructure. Modularity delivers fully integrated, bespoke solutions fast, refining modular construction methods, reducing timelines, and increasing efficiency while maintaining the highest standards of quality and sustainability.



SNF Australia is part of a global network of the world's largest flocculant manufacturer, the SNF Group. Within Australia they serve a broad cross section of industries, including mining, waste water, oil and gas, paper, agriculture, textile and personal care.

The products produced at the Lara manufacturing plant support potable and wastewater treatment, mining, agriculture, and paper industries across Australia, as well as several countries worldwide.

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MANUFACTURING EXCELLENCE AWARD FINALISTS



Farm Foods, a family-owned food manufacturing business based in Geelong, specialises in value-added meat products like sausages, kebabs, burgers, and meatballs. Founded in 2003 as a butcher shop in Birregurra, the business quickly expanded. Now one of Australia's leading private-label meat manufacturers, the award-winning company processes over 100 tonnes of meat weekly and produces nearly 10 million trays of value-added products annually, with 150 employees.



The Godfrey Hirst name is truly synonymous with Geelong, dating back to 1865 when the Victorian Woollen and Cloth Manufacturing company was established as one of Victoria's first textile mills.

The mill was purchased by Godfrey Hirst in 1888 and produced blankets and other wool textile products. The business was purchased and converted into a carpet mill in 1966 and has been making carpet ever since.



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Hanwha
Defence Australia

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SUSTAINABILITY EXCELLENCE AWARD FINALISTS

The logo for Godfrey Hirst, featuring the company name in a white, cursive script font on a solid red rectangular background.

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*Thank you for joining us as we pay tribute
to the region's proud manufacturing history
and celebrate innovative manufacturers
who are driving industry growth.*



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