

MEDIA RELEASE

Innovative Manufacturing CRC and Germany's Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft partner to deepen Industry 4.0 collaboration

Framework agreement to catalyse uptake of Industry 4.0 within Australia's manufacturing industry



Caption: At an event in Melbourne to mark the signing of an Engagement Agreement between the Innovative Manufacturing Cooperative Research Centre (IMCRC) and Germany's Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft are (from left) David Chuter (IMCRC CEO and Managing Director) and Frank Wagner (Head of Strategic R&D Cooperation, Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO).

MELBOURNE, July 19, 2018 –

A framework engagement agreement (The Agreement), signed today by the Innovative Manufacturing CRC (IMCRC) and Germany's Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, is set to significantly increase awareness and uptake of Industry 4.0 within the Australian manufacturing industry.

Fraunhofer is considered the leading organisation for applied research in Europe, working collaboratively with companies, public-sector bodies and institutions to develop strategies, business models and solutions for digital transformation, including to Industry 4.0.

The Agreement establishes a broad framework governing IMCRC and Fraunhofer projects focusing on the exchange of knowledge and the proliferation of Industry 4.0 technologies and research.

Future projects governed by the framework could include collaborations, technology transfers, joint research projects and exchanges. The agreement also recognises IMCRC as the preferred portal for Fraunhofer engagements on Industry 4.0 within both Australia and New Zealand.

IMCRC's CEO and Managing Director, David Chuter, said the partnership with Fraunhofer is intended to accelerate the awareness and uptake of Industry 4.0 technologies and innovative business models by Australian manufacturers.

"IMCRC is committed to transforming Australia's manufacturing industry from its reliance on capital and labour-intensive production, to an industry realising new commercial opportunities driven by innovation in all aspects of manufacturing," he said.

"The Agreement with Fraunhofer formalises the work already well underway to drive collaboration between Australia and Germany to promote the uptake of Industry 4.0 and other advanced manufacturing best practices and methodologies, particularly with Australian SME manufacturing companies."

Research cooperation based on close working relationship with Fraunhofer IAO

The Agreement builds on the close working relationship IMCRC has established with the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO (Fraunhofer IAO) – a key advocate and driver of the adoption of Industry 4.0 in Germany. Together, both organisations are co-developing a set of specific educational material and workshops that transfer practical expertise to get SMEs on the journey for digital transformation.

Innes Willox CEO of the Australian Industry Group, Chair of the Industry 4.0 taskforce in Australia and Director of IMCRC, said the relationship between the organisations had grown from strength to strength over the last three years, with Fraunhofer contributing to Industry 4.0 initiatives that had already started to benefit Australian industry.

"The IMCRC has been working with Fraunhofer since 2015, so we are delighted to establish this formal arrangement to broaden the opportunities for collaboration going forward," he said. "This also represents an important initiative within our overall research and innovation strategy for industry 4.0 in our region to catalyse investment in advanced and digital manufacturing."

Frank Wagner, Head of Strategic R&D Cooperation at Fraunhofer IAO said, "we see significant potential for Australia's manufacturing sector to increase both its competitiveness and global relevance through uptake of industry 4.0 and advanced and digital manufacturing best practice, and this will continue to strengthen research and innovation links with Germany."

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About the IMCRC

The IMCRC has a vision for Australian manufacturing to be thriving, relevant and globally integrated. As a not-for-profit, independent cooperative research centre, the IMCRC helps Australian companies increase their relevance through collaborative, market-driven research in manufacturing business models, products, processes, and services. More at www.imcrc.org

About Fraunhofer

Fraunhofer is the leading organization for applied research in Europe. Its research activities are conducted by 72 institutes and research units at locations throughout Germany. Fraunhofer employs a staff of more than 25,000. International collaborations with excellent research partners and innovative companies around the world ensure direct access to regions of the greatest importance to present and future scientific progress and economic development. The Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO works together with companies and public-sector bodies and institutions to develop strategies, business models and solutions for digital transformation, including Industry 4.0. More at www.fraunhofer.de and www.iao.fraunhofer.de

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