

CEO Report to the Advancing Manufacturing Aotearoa Annual General Meeting

Reporting period: 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Economic Overview:

The past year presented significant challenges for New Zealand manufacturers. The Performance Manufacturing Index (PMI) averaged below the 50-point threshold, signalling contraction in sector activity. Although there were brief periods of recovery early in 2025, these gains were short-lived, with the index slipping below 50 from May onwards as new orders and production softened.

Key Challenges:

Manufacturers contended with persistent weakness in domestic demand, ongoing cost pressures, and cautious employment intentions. Despite these headwinds, sentiment around export orders and future output expectations improved slightly, indicating that firms are positioning themselves for recovery when market conditions stabilize.

Sector Resilience and Positive Developments:

However, the sector demonstrated resilience, underscoring the importance of continued investment in productivity, skills, and innovation to strengthen competitiveness ahead of the next expansion cycle. Notably, the Technology Investment Network's 2025 report released 7th November highlighted a resurgent year for New Zealand's technology export sector, with revenues climbing 9.9% to a record \$20 billion. High-tech manufacturing companies led this growth, recording an 11.5% increase in revenue to \$9.8 billion. Companies such as Fisher & Paykel Healthcare reached significant milestones, and new entrants in cleantech, aerospace, and advanced manufacturing signal the emergence of the next generation of high-growth exporters.

AMA's Progress:

For Advancing Manufacturing Aotearoa (AMA), 2025 marked a year of significant progress. Through targeted initiatives—such as sector visibility campaigns, programs to address labour shortages, and efforts to foster a sustainable talent pipeline—AMA continues to bridge gaps across the ecosystem, spark collaboration, and connect the right people and programs at the right time.

Minister for Manufacturing Awards

The inaugural Minister for Manufacturing Awards, held in Christchurch at SouthMACH May 2025, celebrated excellence, innovation, and leadership in four categories: Excellence in Process Innovation, Apprentice of the Year, Excellence in Manufacturing Leadership, and Manufacturer of the Year. The awards attracted strong interest, with 55

expressions of interest, 38 formal entries, and 16 finalists interviewed. Sector engagement was robust, with an esteemed line-up of 11 Judges, broad geographic representation and support from prominent sponsors such as BNZ, Swell Group, Enztec, Lawson Williams Consulting and The Icehouse. SouthMACH 2025 achieved record attendance, growing by 22% compared to the previous year, which reinforced the awards as a central feature of the event's value.

The Future Makers Campaign

Launched April to June 2025, The Future Makers campaign has contributed significantly to increased sector awareness and engagement with the Platform. The campaign generated over 1.3 million video impressions and 532,550 video views, featuring ten hero businesses including Rocket Lab, Dodson Motorsport, Douglas Pharmaceuticals, Enztec, HamiltonJet. With the new brand identity "Make Your Mark," the campaign leveraged storytelling through hero videos and social media, surpassing engagement benchmarks with high click-through rates of 4,000 per month and 1,400 career guide downloads. These results lay a scalable foundation for future initiatives aimed at enhancing the sector's public perception.

Workforce Development and Youth Engagement Programs

AMA delivered a range of initiatives in 2025 to strengthen the manufacturing talent pipeline and engage youth across New Zealand.

Earn as You Learn Pilot

Launched in February 2025 in Hamilton, the Earn as You Learn (EYL) Level 3 manufacturing certificate pilot enrolled 21 students in a 30-week paid work-and-study program. Endorsed by Hanga Aro Rau in October 2024 and approved by NZQA December 2024, the pilot involved partnerships with Wintec, WECA, Competenz, Hanga Aro Rau and 10 manufacturing businesses. By providing practical training and addressing labour shortages, the program received positive feedback and is now expanding to regions such as Hutt Valley, Canterbury, and Auckland.

Youth Without Borders STEM Camp

In January 2025, the University of Auckland School of Engineering hosted the Youth Without Borders – Ignite STEM Camp, engaging high school students with interactive STEM experiences and career pathways in manufacturing & engineering. Student volunteer led, AMA Industry partners collaborated to provide immersive activities, virtual reality expos, workplace tours, and networking events. The camp successfully inspired student interest in technical careers and strengthened education-industry links. Of the 30 high school students who participated in the Programme, 43%

expressed interest in tertiary education prior to the Camp as opposed to 100% at the completion of the Camp.

Manufacturing Industry 'Passport' Programs

Regional initiatives in Hutt Valley and Bay of Plenty connected students to manufacturers through site visits, digital badges, and certificates. The Hutt Valley Passport program culminated in 60 students from 4 high schools gathering 240 passport stamps across 16 visits to manufacturers. Throughout the programme, students learned firsthand about the innovation, technology, and opportunities that drive the manufacturing industry. To celebrate their achievements, students from Naenae College, Wainuiomata High School, Heretaunga College, and Upper Hutt College were presented with custom hoodies featuring the logos of participating manufacturers.

From the programme the students:

- Developed a greater awareness of the Hutt Valley's incredible manufacturing sector
- Learned about the potential pathways and careers available in the industry
- Built connections with local businesses - with some students going on to do work placements at these companies.

We are scaling expansion of the programme into Bay of Plenty and Canterbury for FY26.

InZone World of Work Kiosks and Student Videos

AMA partnered with InZone Experiences to deploy World of Work kiosks featuring manufacturing career videos nationwide at 35 high schools, libraries, youth hubs and seven regional career expos. The Future Makers video series features on the Kiosk platforms. Additionally, Papanui High School students produced professional videos showcasing two Christchurch manufacturers, now used nationally to promote manufacturing careers. These initiatives increased sector visibility and engagement with youth audiences.

National Conferences and Educator Engagement

AMA supported the 2024 CATE National Conference and SouthMACH 2025, engaging over 500 careers advisors, educators, and trainers. These events facilitated strategic discussions on manufacturing career pathways and featured hands-on showcases with leading manufacturers. Follow-up engagements with schools and partners ensured sustained impact and regional collaboration.

Workforce Planning and Sector Insights

In 2025, comprehensive workforce plans for manufacturing sub-sectors were developed, building on the foundation of Hanga Aro Rau plans and incorporating new

survey data from 145 manufacturing firms who responded to AMA's Talent Survey. This analysis revealed critical gaps in high-skilled technical roles and projected workforce needs from the immediate future through to the long term. Notably, changes to the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) policy resulted in significant worker losses and financial challenges for manufacturers. In response, the Workforce Development Plan was submitted in July 2025, establishing a framework for ongoing collaboration between industry and government to address these workforce challenges and support sector growth.

Advisory Input and Sector Advocacy

AMA played a key role in amplifying the manufacturing sector's voice through the Ministerial Advisory Group for Manufacturing (MPAG). Over three meetings, AMA facilitated strategic discussions and contributed to government submissions on procurement rules, science reforms, and growth strategies. These efforts embedded industry perspectives in policymaking and built momentum for a stronger manufacturing sector, positioning AMA as a trusted connector and advocate.

Membership Growth

To strengthen AMA's influence and relevance, membership increased from 501 individuals at 30 June 2024 to 1,235 at 30 June 2025. This growth reflects the sector's confidence in AMA's leadership and its commitment to supporting New Zealand manufacturing.

Acknowledgements and Sector Progress

We acknowledge the dedication of our Board, team, and partners, whose commitment ensures New Zealand manufacturing remains innovative, productive, and globally relevant. Together, we are building the foundation for a stronger manufacturing future.

Looking Ahead

Continued collaboration and investment will be key to sustaining momentum and attracting new talent and innovation. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this collective effort to realise the sector's full potential!

Catherine Lye
Chief Executive Officer
Advancing Manufacturing Aotearoa