



ADVANCED MANUFACTURING GROWTH CENTRE

MEMBER PROFILE



ANCA was founded in 1974 by Pat Boland and Pat McCluskey, and since then has grown by about 17 per cent a year, on average.

ANCA's growth is example of the possibility and the right approach for an Australian manufacturer to lead the world.

A genuine "manufacturer's manufacturer", the Bayswater North-headquartered maker of cutting and grinding tool machines and associated automation technology has succeeded by solving the toolmaking problems of some of the world's biggest industrial names. CEO Grant Anderson puts this down to significant investments in R&D, which makes up around 9 per cent of revenues, "and scouting the world for new technologies and how we can apply some of those to our own equipment. That has enabled us, over time, to really go to the world."

Going to the world was a conscious decision ANCA made after a recession in 1980s, when the founders realised that relying solely on Australian customers wouldn't guarantee prosperity. Today, 99 per cent of what it makes is exported, and customers include various Apple suppliers, Rolls Royce and Boeing.

It manufactures elsewhere, though retains crucial, high value-add activities in Australia; over a quarter of the 450 staff at Bayswater are engineers.

"As other countries have industrialised, we followed the industry into those countries," says Anderson of the company's growth.

“One of the key focusses of our activities is to retain all of the R&D and engineering and product development within Australia. We have manufacturing plants in Thailand, Taiwan and Australia, but we retain the critical component manufacture here.”

Their global customer base is increasingly requiring productivity improvements such as increased automation and even lights-out production which can be remotely monitored via IoT.

This has been met by solutions including a dual robot cells, originally developed for a high-profile space industry client in the US, which allows for multiple production line steps (such as grinding, metrology and laser etching) to occur within one cell. There is also a Management Suite set of solutions, enabling an ever-increasing number of functions, currently including real-time monitoring and analytics, to be carried out remotely.

ANCA has developed a host of firsts in its industry, generally driven by customer problems, and has achieved numerous export awards, including entry into the Australian Exporter Hall of Fame in 2016.

Besides setting an example of what is possible for local companies, it is an enthusiastic supporter of Australian manufacturing. It makes sense to be.

"We source a number of components in the Australian sector and rely upon suppliers to manufacture parts for us," offers Anderson.

"We rely upon universities to assist us with developing the skills and in some cases, do some research collaboratively."

The capacity of Australian manufacturing and the ecosystem supporting it needs to be grown, he believes. A challenge for ANCA continues to be finding high-technology skills within Australia, such as in software, systems automation and mechanical design.

"There are not enough manufacturers at the high end of manufacturing technology in Australia," he adds bluntly.

Improving on this is among the reasons ANCA is a member of the Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre.

"The AMGC wants to support the growth of high-profile, high-technology manufacturers, and we need to collaborate with other manufacturers so that we can build, together, some of these aspects, particularly around automation," says Anderson.

"We have a number of collaborations in Victoria in particular to develop, test, prototype our new pieces of technology. So, all of that really fits under the theme of what the AMGC is trying to achieve as an outcome, and that is to grow Australian industry through technology."





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