

MEDIA RELEASE

PhD internship program delivers new jobs in manufacturing

Melbourne, 20 October 2022: The Innovative Manufacturing Cooperative Research Centre (IMCRC) has funded 23 PhD research internships, successfully fulfilling its partnership with Australia's national all-sector, all-discipline PhD internship program, Australian Postgraduate Research Intern ([APR.Intern](#)).

The partnership, which commenced in 2019, was designed to help small to medium enterprises (SMEs) lift their advanced and digital manufacturing capabilities in the wake of the fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0).

With the support of a skilled PhD student over three to six months, SMEs sought to address specific business challenges using smart technologies such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, automation, robotics and additive manufacturing.

Of the 23 interns placed, nine have gone on to secure ongoing employment with their internship partner, eight in newly created roles and one in an existing position.

The 23rd IMCRC co-funded intern, Bui Quoc Huy (Tony) Nguyen, a student from Swinburne University, recently commenced his internship with [Norden Body Works](#), a Melbourne-based converter of buses for wheelchair accessibility. Tony is supporting Norden with its research into the application of technology to optimise wheelchair passenger transport.

Norden Body Works General Manager Leo Driessen said that Tony, with his expertise in electronics and information technology, would help Norden accelerate its research and development (R&D) into an Internet of Things enabled solution, which has the potential to deliver a commercially viable product to offer benefits to wheelchair accessible bus operators.

"In addition to delivering tangible benefits for our business and customers, this internship will help an Australian researcher get industry-literate and career ready. It's a win-win situation," he said.

APR.Intern National Program Manager Lisa Farrar said the partnership with IMCRC had received overwhelmingly positive feedback from industry and universities alike.

"The subsidy that IMCRC provided has undoubtedly strengthened industry-university collaboration within the sector. 90% of businesses that utilised the subsidy were start-ups or SMEs, providing them with much-needed support to engage in research collaborations and fast-track innovative R&D," she said.

"Upon completion of the internship, 87% of industry reported that project outcomes were directly implemented in the company, and 75% reported they were seeking co-funding to continue the research."

IMCRC CEO and Managing Director David Chuter was proud to deliver on IMCRC's commitment to supporting industry-university research collaboration and driving manufacturing innovation.

"By subsidising the cost of the internship, IMCRC and APR.Intern have enabled manufacturing SMEs to harness the expertise of Australia's emerging research talent to solve very specific challenges within the R&D of their business," he said.

“It’s incredibly pleasing to see this program not only deliver ongoing employment for many of the students, but also create opportunities for the majority of businesses to continue or invest in new collaborative R&D projects.”

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About IMCRC

IMCRC is an independent and for-impact cooperative research centre with a successful, proven and scalable model for catalysing research and business partnerships that drives transformative commercial outcomes for participating Australian manufacturers. To date, IMCRC has successfully co-invested in more than 70 R&D projects, catalysing more than \$230 million in transformative manufacturing research. More information is available at www.imcrc.org/.

About APR.Intern

Australian Postgraduate Research Intern (APR.Intern) is Australia’s only national PhD and Masters by Research internship program spanning all sectors and disciplines. The industry engagement arm of the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI), the program connects postgraduate research students with industry through short-term placements, empowering students to thrive in a practical research environment. For businesses, APR.Intern is a platform to access Australia’s brightest emerging research talent and accelerate innovation. More information is available at <https://aprintern.org.au/>.

About Norden Body Works

Norden Body Works is one of Australia’s leading converter of buses for wheelchair accessibility. Norden modify standard minibuses by fitting accessibility enhancing features such as wheelchair lifters, steps, handrails and modified seating. Its major customers are disability support organisations, aged care homes, schools and disability transport providers. More information is available at <http://www.norden.com.au>.

For more information, please contact:

Jana Kuthe, Communications, Marketing and Events Manager, IMCRC
+61 416 735 666
jana.kuthe@imcrc.org