Recent Australian Election Results Focus on Manufacturing

From London to Whyalla there is a call for more Government intervention

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This has been strongly evidenced in the recent Australian election results were minority parties like the Nick Xenophon Team have shocked the two major Australian political parties to capture several key seats in the Senate and Lower House. As I write this they are narrowly contesting the seat of Grey, which is a traditionally staunch conservative Liberal seat. The fight in Grey hinges on Government funding to keep the steelworks industry alive there, which employs 6000 people.

According to Australian Senator, Nick Xenophon, his political aim, as an independent is to “drag both parties back to the center.” The growing
popularity of minor political parties follows a global trend of popular disillusionsment with the establishment that has spawned the likes of Brexit, Trump, Sanders and now the election of minority parties in Australian politics. It is clear that people are worried about their jobs and the future.

In Australia, the manufacturing sector has been a key focus of this concern. While the country had a robust manufacturing sector in the past, recently Australia has slipped behind Luxembourg to take the last place in the OECD nations in terms of manufacturing jobs as a share of total employment, according to a report from the new Centre for Future Work. The report, released in June 2016, identified policy settings that have contributed to the dramatic and unusual decline in Australian manufacturing and made some key recommendations.

“What is inevitable, is that any developed country which opts out of manufacturing will be opting out of over two-thirds of world merchandise trade,” said Jim Stanford, Director of the Centre for Future Work.

“There is abundant international evidence that smart, pro-active government engagement, aimed at deliberately enhancing strategic, high-value, export-oriented manufacturing, is not only possible – it is essential for modern industrial success.” Prophetically, Mr Stanford added that “Governments are not powerless in this area. There are clear policy options to encourage manufacturing, and there is strong community support for politicians to take them up.”

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www.logisym.com/events/logisym-malaysia-2016/
The Future Work report makes a good argument for the promotion of manufacturing and its importance to the Australian economy. It puts forward a case for a more focused and interventionist contribution by Government to further develop this sector.

It will be interesting to see how the new Government in Australia shapes up and whether the lessons have been learned. It is hoped we will see a major policy shift and investment in the Manufacturing and Supply Chain sectors. A staunching of the “Brain Drain” of Australian Professionals in Supply Chain, Logistics, Manufacturing and Innovation disciplines who, due to the decline of their sector, have been moving off-shore for career opportunities. While this has been of enormous advantage for emerging economies around the world, it will eventually lead to a decline in-country if it proceeds.

If you are a Logistics, Supply Chain professional I would be interested to hear your thoughts.

Maria has been working in the Supply Chain and Logistics Industry for almost two decades in her capacity as a Human Resources and Communications Professional. In that time, she has managed a variety of diverse challenges, including: project management, corporate communications and content management, and human resources initiatives.