

Media Release

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IPI Packers in \$9million WA Innovation Boost

Perth, Western Australia: Inflatable Packers International Pty Ltd (trading as IPI Packers) has been recognised for its contribution to national innovation, job creation and manufacturing export this week, receiving a \$1million grant from the federal government.

The grant, which was delivered as part of the second round of the government's Manufacturing Modernisation Fund with the goal of encouraging 'transformative manufacturing technology' from enterprises which support economic growth and development, forms part of a three-year investment program in IPI Packers worth over \$9million.

Founded in Perth, IPI Packers is a Western Australian developer and manufacturer of market-leading inflatable packer technology which has been used in 64 countries to date - covering every continent, including Antarctica - to transform work in the mining, energy, water and geotechnical sectors.

The \$9million investment program, which began last year with a contract for the construction of a new purpose-built IPI Packers facility in Bayswater's Tonkin Industrial Estate, will continue with significant spending on plant and technology, including a robot-assisted machine shop and systems for agile production management and inventory control - necessary measures to support a growing business that consistently exports over 80% of its product. The new facility will be operational in October, with the company set to move from its home of 20 years in Osborne Park.

IPI Packers, previously recognised through a Western Australia Innovator of the Year Woodside Oil and Gas Award, conducts the majority of its product research, design and specialist manufacturing in Perth, with significant positive implications for flexibility, product quality and process monitoring.

The company's technology was on display during the June APPEA conference in Perth, which [included a presentation](#) on the use of IPI inflatable plugs to ensure environmentally secure permanent capping and abandonment of old oil wells in ecologically sensitive areas such as WA's Thevenard Island. The company supports similar projects in the Gulf of Mexico and offshore California. Oilfield clients include Schlumberger, Halliburton and Baker Hughes, while mining clients include Newcrest and Chile's CODELCO, as well as government backed research institutes globally.



June also saw local Managing Director (and Group Engineering Director) Francis Ford attend the Australian Centre for Geomechanics to present IPI's pure water hydraulic fracturing technology, used in the worlds' largest underground copper and gold mines for vital tasks such as seismic event protection.

IPI's core inflatable packer technology has been evolving for over three decades in Western Australia, with much of the initial work done by company founder (now CEO) Clem Rowe and more recent developments being led by Francis Ford.

Increasingly popular in resources industries worldwide, IPI's products are also being used in fields such as flow control, where annular seals are required, as well as carbon sequestration, geothermal projects (providing artificial lift) and gas storage testing and maintenance work. The company holds several patents and will shortly be adding to these to cover its contribution in the field of high-pressure curtain grouting for tunnelling in civil engineering and mining.

"We are constantly researching and refining our offerings," says Commercial Director Howard Kenworthy. "We have a state-of-the-art elastomer testing laboratory capable of chemical resistance and mechanical property testing at temperatures up to 200 degrees Celsius, which we use for developing new elastomers for inflatable packers. Because we offer custom designs, we receive expressions of interest from all directions."