

Long standing history with ICN Victoria proves lucrative for Geelong's Austeng.



Established in 1984, Geelong engineering company Austeng pride themselves on manufacturing special purpose equipment for industry. They offer innovative 'one stop' solutions to its clients challenges by providing a complete service from design through to manufacture, installation and commissioning.

With such unique capabilities and being boutique in size Austeng faced very real challenges in locating clients that needed their expertise. Luckily for them, the first ICN office in Australia opened in Geelong in 1985.

In addition, the ICN's earliest advisers in the Geelong office worked closely with Austeng from the inception to get to know their business and capabilities. They also accompanied Austeng to visit prospective clients. As a result Austeng received many quality leads and inquiries that often turned into on-going business. According to Managing Director, Ross George "Certainly in our early days the ICN had a key role in assisting us establishing our business".

Case Study – Cemetery & Crematoria Industry

In 1989 a U.K company, Furnace Construction Co. Ltd (FCC) had a large order for the supply of 17 cremators at Necropolis, Springvale but had no local support for maintenance. ICN was able to identify this as an opportunity for Austeng to approach FCC to offer assistance. Despite having no experience in the industry Austeng was successful in winning the on-going maintenance contract. From there, Austeng subsequently negotiated a Licence Agreement to manufacture the cremators themselves locally. Although the value of the initial inquiry may have only been worth a few thousand dollars on-going work resulted in many millions of dollars over the ensuing 25 years.

Furthermore, its involvement in the industry arising from this contract has resulted in it developing many other products to improve performance and safety standards in the industry such as:-

- o Modern Burial System - a complex system of interlocking underground crypts

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**- Ross George,
Managing Director,
Austeng**

- o Outdoor coffin & interment device - designed to eliminate manual lifting
- o Transfer Van Modules - to allow for safe handling of coffins
- o Catafalques

Similarly in the last 18 months, again due to Austeng's involvement in the industry, it has also secured international contracts with:-

- o Orthometals – a metal recycling provider located in The Netherlands
- o Matthews International – a global player in the industry located in the U.S.

Austeng's initial contract with FCC still stands 25 years later and this industry is an important part of Austeng's business – accounting for about 20% of its turn-over on an on-going basis. It is estimated over the 25 year period, the initial referral has resulted in over \$30 million worth of work.

ICN continues to provide referrals

Apart from FCC, ICN has opened up many leads to Austeng some examples being companies such as Prodef Ltd (high viscosity dispensing equipment), ACI (fibre-glass batt packers), Unalex (ageing oven), Shell (Catalyst cooler removal unit), Rocklea (bobbin handling), BHP (hot gas sampling), and RESA (wind turbines).

Mr George comments, "Given Austeng is a SME, it is very difficult to make contacts with large companies and the ICN was instrumental in opening these doors for us. In general Austeng has had a far higher success rate with ICN contacts (about 50%) rather than "background" contacts (about 33%)". Mr George explains that this was probably due to two factors:-

- o Enquiries were qualified and better matched
- o ICN nomination carries weight

Austeng now employs 22 staff including engineers, draftsmen and tradesmen.

"It is difficult to quantify the overall financial benefits to this company of the ICN involvement but it certainly exceeds tens of millions of dollars. Even apart from this obvious benefit these contacts have resulted in development of new technologies and technology transfer from overseas resulting in Austeng better able to offer tailored solutions to its clients and able to offer significant import replacement.", said Mr George.

Austeng's outstanding reputation and track record on industry was recognised when it was inducted into the Victorian Manufacturing Hall of Fame in 2009.

For almost 30 years Austeng has been reaping the benefits that ICN can provide to industry. Register your capability now at www.icngateway.com.au and discover how you can grow your business too.

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