

FEATURE: VITAL & ADAPTIVE

THE 2022 AUSTRALIAN STEEL CONVENTION

With the theme of Vital and Adaptive, the 2022 Australian Steel Convention was held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Sydney from 9 to 11 October. Over the course of three days, the Australian Steel Convention brought together key industry leaders and innovators to discuss opportunities, showcase industry successes and examine what the future can, and will, look like.

The 2022 Australian Steel Convention was a long time in the planning. Unfortunately, with business—and life in general—disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the ASI was forced to postpone the Convention not once, but twice. After what has been 'unprecedented' times, the Convention proved to be a fantastic way to once again come together as an industry. The event was attended by over 260 people, making this year's Convention one of the largest to date.

THE CONVENTION THEME

Australian steel is vital to this country's economy, stability, and growth. While the global stage is learning to adapt to an ever-changing landscape, Australia's steel industry has an opportunity to thrive by delivering high-quality products through a robust and effective supply-chain.

As billions of dollars are being invested in both civil infrastructure and domestic homebuilding, the opportunities for the steel sector are immense. From research to design, manufacturing, and fabrication, through to installation and construction, the future of Australian

steel looks bright. Brighter still when consideration is given to the ever-growing dependence on steel across sectors and the burgeoning of a new era of endless innovative uses to propel Australia towards a new economy. In an everchanging global landscape, the Australian steel industry needs to be prepared to adapt to advancing technologies, sustainability, and environmental concerns and a rapidly changing economic outlook.

It is these themes that the 2022 Australian Steel Convention focused on. The Convention featured sessions on:

- How Australia's steel industry presents a global competitive advantage via its ability to influence key market sectors such as agriculture, defence, energy, and healthcare.
- The future of steel in a post-Coronavirus world; how Australia's manufacturing pivot can create a new era for the economy.
- The sustainability effect: How resource scarcity, climate change and community expectations are changing government and

industry priorities for more local manufacturing, traceable and sustainable processes, and operating models.

- The emergence of SMART technologies in optimised operations and trusted supply chains.

WELCOME RECEPTION

As always, the Steel Convention program featured a range of social events, designed to help delegates network with other industry experts. Sponsored by Combilift, the Welcome Reception was held at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Overlooking the Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Reception was a fitting start to the Convention.

The night's festivities provided those in attendance with the opportunity to chat informally, and compare notes ahead of the formal Convention program. Those who attended were treated to delicious food and drinks, as well as live music. Attendees were welcomed by Mark Cain (Chief Executive, Australian Steel Institute) and heard from Chris Littlewood (Country Manager Australia, Combilift).



The Convention Welcome Reception at the Museum of Contemporary Art.



RENEWABLE ENERGY MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

ASI Chief Executive, Mark Cain, gave a keynote address at the Convention, focused on the renewables market opportunity for the steel industry.

According to Mark, "Australia's transition to clean energy and net zero emissions by 2050 will be steel intensive; the challenge is to foster and develop local supply chain capability to ensure the economic benefits within Australia are maximised. By boosting local steel supply, we relieve pressure on Australian energy providers competing for limited overseas supply, and keep the financial benefits in Australia."

The call comes on the back of figures recently released by BHP that demonstrate that global steel consumption in the renewable energy sector will triple by 2050, with demand from wind and solar five times larger.

"To generate investment in manufacturing and fabrication capability suppliers need certainty of demand. Creation of this demand needs to be developed with the support of Government, project investors and developers and OEMs," Mark said.

The ASI is calling on state and federal governments to impose local steel content targets modelled along similar lines to the Victorian Renewable Energy Targets (VRET) or the New South Wales Renewable Energy Sector Tender Criteria (NRESTC). Minimum local content requirements set by the Victorian Government under the VRET are 64% for renewable energy facilities, including 90% steel products from locally milled steel.

In addition, the ASI is also urging Australia's governments to provide industry development support along similar lines to the Federal Government's \$1.3 billion Modern Manufacturing Initiative, which helps Australian manufacturers scale-up, collaborate and commercialise.

"The sheer volume and opportunity in particular within wind and solar is staggering," Mark said. "We want to work with government to ensure the economic benefits of this development come back to Australia." Mark said the jump in demand for renewables over the next 30 years would see existing renewable energy generation of 25.0GW grow to 143.1GW by 2050. This will comprise 33.4GW of onshore wind, 35.3GW

ASI CHAIR ADDRESS

Tony Schreiber
Chair, Australian Steel Institute

Tony Schreiber (Chair, ASI) opens the Convention.



Mark Cain (Chief Executive, ASI).

of offshore wind, 36GW of solar, 10.6GW of water, 27.2GW of battery storage, and 0.6GW of other sources.

"Grid transmission upgrades will be required across all states. Steel will be a major component of the 25,000 towers needed to support an extra 10,000km of high voltage transmission lines by 2030," Mark said.

"It is estimated that each 1MW onshore wind tower requires 124 tonnes of steel (mainly plate and reinforcing), with offshore wind increasing generation scale and steel consumption further. Each 1MW offshore wind tower requires 190 tonnes of steel. It is estimated that each 1MW of hydro power will require 161 tonnes of steel."

"Australia currently has limited local capability and has missed out on substantial economic value in recent years with renewable projects highly reliant on established overseas supply chains. Some incremental local investments have recently been initiated but without further investment and government support this trend is set to continue," Mark said.



Convention MC, Adam Spencer.