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# CORONAVIRUS LESSONS: AUSTRALIA'S MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

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*"Australia drank the free-trade juice and decided that off-shoring was OK. Well, that era is gone." – Andrew Liveris*

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Due to interruptions in global supply chains as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, Australia has begun to reconsider the structure of its manufacturing industry as part of a larger inquiry into the way Australia can respond to the pandemic. It is clear that Australia is heavily reliant on China and other Asian countries to provide supplies, and the Commonwealth government has thought it necessary to convene a commission headed by Nev Power, the former Fortescue Metals chief executive, to broach issues including engineering, medicine and mining, in order to advise on economic responses to the pandemic going forward. Andrew Liveris, former Dow Chemicals CEO, is the lead advisor on the manufacturing component of the taskforce. According to the ABC in its article of 19 April 2020 (*Australia's manufacturing pivot in a post-coronavirus world as COVID-19 creates 'new era' for the economy*), manufacturing in Australia accounts for only 6% of GDP, compared to 30% in the 1960s. Liveris' focus will be to create a long-term plan to improve the Australian local manufacturing sector to boost the economy following COVID-19. Liveris' determination to devise an effective plan is encapsulated by his statement, *"I don't want to waste a crisis. We have a call to action, we have a need. My training tells me jump...define it as fast as we can."* He will be focusing on manufacturing in the health, defence, cyber, energy, water and food sectors. We will have to wait and see what plans are devised by the taskforce to revitalise Australia's economy in the post-COVID era.

