
Innovating for global markets

export
finance
australia

Exports, innovation and productivity

Exporting goods and services into new markets allows for the transfer of knowledge between countries. Export allows businesses to access insights into global best practices for their industries. This, in turn, can help exporters to become more innovative and more productive, which can give businesses an enduring competitive edge.

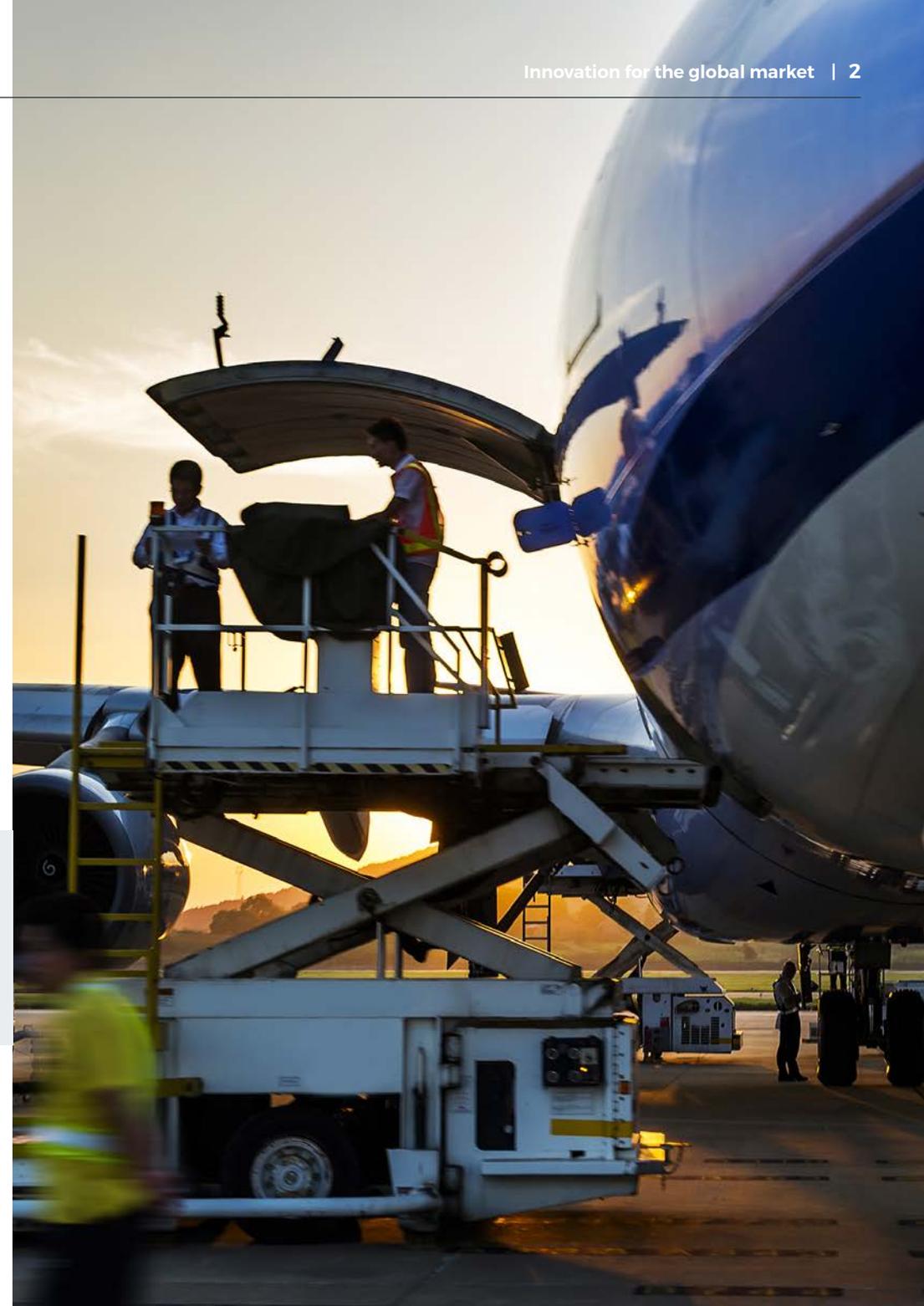
In 2023–24, Australian business expenditure on research and experimental development was more than \$24 billion, an increase of 18% from 2021–22*. This highlights that innovation is fast becoming a priority for businesses and, in the increasingly digital landscape businesses are navigating, is also part of everyday operations.

This eBook will help you understand:

- › the six types of innovation in exporting
- › how innovative your business is
- › resources and support available to help you.

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*ABS, Research and Experimental Development, Businesses Australia, Released 22/08/2025



Six types of innovation for exporters

When we think of innovation, we often tend to imagine ground-breaking new inventions and revolutionary technologies. However, most innovations are an evolution, rather than a revolution.

A change to your business processes, delivery model or even your marketing can be just as effective as a new product in creating a lasting competitive advantage, increasing margins and helping your business to unlock profitable new markets.

Here are six different ways Australian businesses are driving growth through innovation:

- 1 Product and service innovation
- 2 Delivery innovation
- 3 Business model innovation
- 4 Process innovation
- 5 Marketing innovation
- 6 Financing innovation

1 Product and service innovation

Adapting your products and services to the special needs of a new market is a proven route to export success. In some cases, innovative product features may even have a unique appeal in international markets.

Take the success of our customer **Archies Footwear**. The innovative design of its arch support thongs has seen the brand go global.

After recognising a need for more supportive summer footwear, physiotherapist and CEO of Archies Footwear, Daniel Jones, had a lightbulb moment for a business. He wanted to create a footwear solution that didn't lead to the foot, ankle, leg and hip issues he'd seen in people wearing traditional flat-soled thongs.

The thongs Daniel designed and produced are a one-piece construction of incredibly lightweight material providing arch support and a tighter strap to allow people to walk more naturally.

"Our export footprint includes the US, UK, Canada and more recently Europe," Daniel shared. "While we've got a successful business in Australia, we didn't know how we were going to go in these markets. It's been a matter of starting small, getting a proof of concept in the region and building it up from there."

Our Export Line of Credit enabled Archies Footwear to fund its overseas stock, enabling the business to expand its wholesale business internationally.

“

Export Finance Australia helped us take our business to the next level. If you're looking to go overseas, in addition to working with your bank, I'd most definitely recommend working with Export Finance Australia. It was a great option for us.”

Daniel Jones
CEO, Archies Footwear



Putting innovation for global markets into practice:

- › identify the unique features of your products and services
- › research the distinctive needs of potential export markets
- › consider further product and service adaptations that would strengthen your appeal in the target market.

2 Delivery innovation

Finding an innovative way to distribute your product or service can mean the difference between success and failure. Collaborating with an established international partner is one way to gain a head start in a new market, and could provide immediate benefits for both businesses.

Your partner creates a new revenue stream and a new way to bring value to its existing customers, while you gain a ready-made delivery channel run by people with direct experience in your export destination. Digital technologies have also made it easier than ever before to reach out to overseas customers directly, either in collaboration with a partner or on your own.

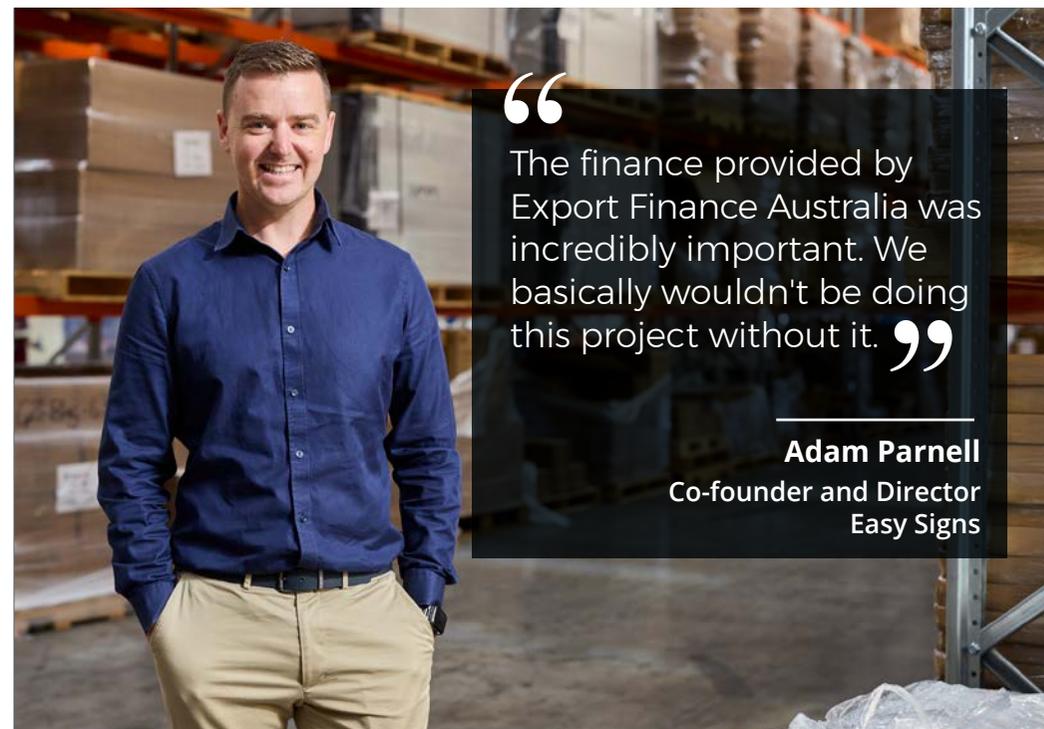
One example of a business that is using the power of online platforms to grow globally, is our customer, online signage manufacturer, **Easy Signs**.

Known for its fast turnaround times and high-quality products at low prices, Easy Signs began testing its products in the US market. Following the success of this test, the business needed to set up permanent operations overseas to continue servicing its new market.

“Because of the large market size in the US, we believe that with our strategy we'll be able to grow really quickly early on. We've taken that leap into a large facility to start with,” explained Adam Parnell, Co-Founder and Director of Easy Signs.

“We're duplicating the exact operation that we have here in Sydney, in Pennsylvania.”

We provided Easy Signs with a loan that supported this overseas direct investment into its US operations.



“The finance provided by Export Finance Australia was incredibly important. We basically wouldn't be doing this project without it.”

Adam Parnell
Co-founder and Director
Easy Signs

Putting innovation for global markets into practice:

- › consider partnering with a business that understands your target market and offers a complementary product or service
- › investigate innovative techniques for using digital technologies to reach customers directly.

3 Business model innovation

New business models have the power to overturn established players and reshape entire industries.

Our customer, **Grounded Construction Group**, is a great example of a business with an innovative business model that sets it apart from its competitors.

Designing and installing accommodation camps and site facilities on remote mining sites across Western Australia, the service that the team provides is quite unique as Paul Natoli, Founder and Managing Director of Grounded Construction Group explained.

"There are a lot of other companies that do similar builds and installs and then deconstruct the facilities, but we only do the install. There aren't too many like us around. We're small and agile."

By sourcing the buildings it designs and installs via Australian manufacturers from local and imported materials, Grounded Construction Group's business model has set it up to become an important part of the supply chain for major players in the mining and resources sector.

Our guarantee provided Grounded Construction Group with the support it needed to deliver its contracts and continue to grow. Paul highlighted that having support from Export Finance Australia has enabled the business to do a lot more.

"It gives us the opportunity to grow more as a business without having all our money tied up. We've grown a lot over the past three years and that's the path we want to continue on."



“Each time we get a new project, we reach out to Export Finance Australia and they do the bank guarantees for us.”

Paul Natoli

Founder and Managing Director
Grounded Construction Group

Putting innovation for global markets into practice:

- › analyse your existing business model and identify the areas where you add the most value for your customers
- › consider how you can re-engineer your current model to deliver value more simply and directly
- › look for adjacent sectors and customer segments you can reach by adapting your existing business model to deliver new products and services.

4 Process innovation

Process innovation can yield immediate results by reducing costs and improving customer experience and speed to market.

Looking for opportunities to automate and streamline your internal systems can increase efficiency and drive down costs. Equally, if your product or service can help deliver these efficiencies to your clients, it could have global appeal.

Our customer **Flovac Vacuum Sewerage Systems** (FLOVAC) is an example of an Australian-based business that has expanded globally by supporting other businesses to improve their processes.

With a focus on providing solutions to difficult sewage engineering problems in environmentally sensitive and unique geographic areas, using vacuum technology, FLOVAC is helping flood-prone areas like Key Largo, Florida.

FLOVAC won a contract under a program for the US Army Corps of Engineers for hurricane preparedness to install its monitoring system in Key Largo to help prevent sanitary sewer overflows and warn of potential issues. We provided FLOVAC with a performance bond, which freed up cash flow and supported the delivery of its US project.

“They want to know which parts of their sewer sanitisation system are down, which parts are underwater and which homeowners have been impacted,” John Radinoff, CEO of FLOVAC explained.



“Export Finance Australia and its people were very helpful and knowledgeable, and are vitally important to Australian businesses.”

John Radinoff
CEO, Flovac

Putting innovation for global markets into practice:

- › analyse the operational and production chokepoints for your target market, then identify how your product or service can help eliminate them
- › modify or replace equipment to speed up production and reduce costs
- › integrate front and back-office systems to streamline administration
- › consider outsourcing low-value activities.

5 Marketing innovation

An essential element of export success is the ability to adapt your marketing approach to appeal to customers in different locations. The first step is to analyse the distinctive tastes and buying behaviours of key customer segments in each destination, then adapt your brand and marketing accordingly.

Our customer **KickAss Products** is an e-commerce business specialising in designing, manufacturing and selling more than 250 high quality and innovative products in the 4WD and camping industry.

As part of its international growth strategy, the next step for KickAss Products was to break into the US market. KickAss Products Former Financial Controller, Marcin Niepostyn, explained that marketing is an important factor in a global expansion.

"You want to be quite strategic in how you get your name out there," he said.

"We started to send products over to see what would happen and quickly realised that we needed a way to finance new stock purchases in America."

We provided an Export Line of Credit to support KickAss Products to fund inventory for the US operations.

"The support we receive from Export Finance Australia is tremendously important as it will allow us to buy stock specifically for America, have it in our warehouse in the States and really test the market with an increased advertising spend," Marcin explained.



“It can be difficult to secure finance from traditional banks when you’re looking to expand overseas, so it was great that we could find the support through Export Finance Australia.”

Marcin Niepostyn
Former Financial Controller
KickAss Products

Putting innovation for global markets into practice:

- › take advantage of digital and social platforms to maximise international exposure, while reducing costs
- › use data to understand your target market, and create tailored messages based on their needs and behaviours
- › test and learn — experiment with different messages, channels, imagery and copy, and monitor the results to understand what works.

6 Financing innovation

Securing finance for new export initiatives is a key challenge for many Australian businesses. But innovative finance methods are becoming increasingly popular and creating new opportunities.

For example, a growing number of start-ups are using crowdfunding: raising capital directly from the public, usually via websites and social media channels.

Our customer **Red Analytics** (Trading as HIVERY) is an example of an emerging business that utilised innovative finance solutions to grow. HIVERY started as a \$US50K experiment after a data hackathon event that proved artificial intelligence can augment human thinking. This led to the creation of a mathematical model that optimises the products in fleets of vending machines.

As an emerging business, HIVERY had utilised several financing options following its initial seed funding from The Coca-Cola Company, and later rounds from Blackbird Ventures, AS1 Growth Partners and One Ventures.

After signing two major accounts following its success with Coca-Cola, HIVERY began to scale up its sales team in North America. At one point, the business had 10 projects running with various companies. However, CFO, Roy Cooke, highlighted that US Global Consumer Packaged Goods companies operate on extended payment cycles of 90-120 days.

We provided a A\$1.3 million Export Contract Loan that provided the working capital to support HIVERY's contracts, enabling the business to scale up the team to deliver its services in the US.



“It was the right product to suit the problem that we were facing, which was long working capital requirements. And getting some support from the federal government as we're a 100% export business, I think was kind of the right product for the right problem.”

Roy Cooke
CFO, HIVERY

Putting innovation for global markets into practice:

- › consider alternative funding sources that can help you build your global presence without sacrificing equity or control
- › when your bank is unable to help, talk to us to discover how we could help you access funds or other export finance solutions.

Where can you find financial support?

You may need extra finance when innovating for global markets. Knowing in advance where to go and how to access funding is a key part of preparing for export growth.

› Do-it-yourself finance

You may be able to meet costs from your own reserves without causing cash flow problems or taking on expensive debt. Your existing customers and suppliers could also help you cover any temporary cash flow gaps by rescheduling payments and invoices.

› Talk to your bank

Keep your banks updated on your business plans. They may be able to offer you a secure loan or commercial bill facility when you need extra finance.

› Alternative sources of finance

We may be able to provide alternative support for your export ambitions. We have the expertise to help Australian businesses with their export activities and can offer a range of finance solutions.

Our finance solutions are designed to support Australian businesses to grow globally



Loans

Working capital to grow your business.



Bonds

The security to help you take on export contracts.



Guarantees

To secure the finance you need from your bank.

Contact us to discuss our finance solutions

From an online unsecured loan to help with cash flow, to a flexible multi-option facility that could include a longer-term loan and bonds, our experts take the time to understand your needs, so you can focus on growing your business.

Call us on **1800 093 724** or visit our [website](#) for more information.

Need a small loan to give your export plans a boost?

Our **Small Business Export Loan** is designed to help businesses get the finance they need for a variety of export-related needs. You can access between \$20,000 to \$350,000 for a wide range of export-related activities such as investing in equipment, promoting your business and even providing services for international visitors.

Apply now on our [website](#).

How innovative is your business?

An innovation checklist

- Do you have a research and experimental development budget allocation?
- Do you have an innovation strategy that sets out your objectives and priorities?
- Do you have a process for capturing new ideas and creating an innovation pipeline?
- Does your business champion innovation?
- Is continuous improvement a part of your day-to-day operations?
- Do you actively collaborate with outside organisations and experts to capture new ideas and technologies?
- Do you have funding in place to make innovative ideas a reality?
- Do you seek out talented people with innovation experience and skills in areas like design, user experience and process re-engineering?
- Do you make innovation part of employee key performance indicators and reward innovative activity?
- Do you have metrics to measure and improve your innovation performance?

Support available

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Export Finance Australia

Australia's export credit agency, providing finance solutions to Australian exporters including businesses in an export-related supply chain.

Visit exportfinance.gov.au

Call **1800 093 724**

Email info@exportfinance.gov.au



Export Council of Australia (ECA)

ECA is the peak body representing every player in the ecosystem of international trade. It supports Australian businesses and other entities involved in global trade through providing updated information, on-going capacity building, advisory services, creating ecosystems and advocating on behalf of members.

Visit export.org.au

Export Finance Australia



Business
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Business.gov.au

business.gov.au is a whole-of-government website for the Australian business community. It is a simple and convenient entry point for information, services and support to help businesses succeed in Australia. Find information, grants, services and support from across government to help your business succeed.

Visit business.gov.au



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

DFAT promotes and protects Australia's international interests to support our security and prosperity. One of the ways it does this is by helping Australian businesses, in partnership with other agencies like Austrade and Export Finance Australia.

Visit dfat.gov.au



Australian Government
Austrade

The Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade)

Austrade helps grow Australia's prosperity by delivering quality trade and investment services to businesses, accelerates growth in Australia's tourism sector and promotes Australia's education to the world. It can link Australian businesses to global export opportunities, provide market and industry insights and make it easier for businesses to go global.

Visit austrade.gov.au

Want more information?

We've developed a range of export-related **resources**.

Explore more of our resources, including eBooks, articles and country profiles here:

exportfinance.gov.au/resources/



Discover how Export Finance Australia could help your business take on the world.

To find out more about how we could help your business, go to exportfinance.gov.au or call 1800 093 724.

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