

Wednesday, 22 August 2007

MASSIVE CONTRACT AWARDED FOR WORLD-CLASS SHIPBUILDING FACILITY

Premier Mike Rann has announced the awarding of the largest contract in the construction of Techport – Adelaide’s emerging defence hub.

The \$170 million contract to construct world-class shipbuilding facilities at Osborne, as part of the Common User Facility, has been awarded to a McConnell Dowell/Built Environs joint venture.

Premier Mike Rann made the announcement at the nation’s premier **Defence and Industry Conference**, being held at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

This is the first time the *D+I Conference* has been held outside Canberra, and this year has 1750 delegates, up 50 percent on previous years, and there’s a near doubling of the number of business delegates.

“Today’s announcement confirms our position as the defence capital of Australia and brings us one step closer to delivering Australia’s largest defence project – the \$8 billion Air Warfare Destroyer program,” Premier Mike Rann said.

“We are investing more than \$300 million in State-owned infrastructure to support the Air Warfare Destroyer program and provide a home for future naval shipbuilding, systems and sustainment at Techport Australia.

“Part of this investment includes design and construction of a world-class Common User Facility – including a 210 metre-long wharf, transfer system and Australia’s largest ship-lift, which will be 156 metres long and capable of lifting ships that weigh up to 9 300 tonnes.

“This facility will be the hub for movement and assembly of large ships and modules, and will become a national strategic asset and integral to the successful delivery of the AWD program.

“And following this week’s announcement by federal Labor leader Kevin Rudd - later supported by Defence Minister Brendan Nelson - that the next generation of submarines will be built in Adelaide, this publicly owned multi-user facility assures our future at the very centre of Australia’s naval defence and ship construction industry, and provides strong justification for the investment the state has made.

“By investing in this infrastructure, we are providing opportunities to a to a range of companies, contractors and subcontractors and indeed a range of projects well beyond the AWD – we are creating and supporting an industry for generations to come.”

Construction on the facility is expected to be completed by early 2010.

Contractors interested in exploring opportunities for work associated with the Common User Facility project can log onto website www.techportaustralia.icn.org.au.

The Premier was accompanied on his tour of the Defence and Industry Conference today by the new Governor of South Australia, **His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AO CSC**, whom he thanked for his crucial role in South Australia's successful bid for the multi-billion dollar AWD contract.

That top-ranking advice will continue, with Premier Mike Rann today announcing General Peter Cosgrove as the chair of the Government's new Defence SA advisory board.

"This board, under General Cosgrove's strong leadership will ensure we reap the benefits of the defence projects we have already won, and that we aggressively and effectively pursue additional new projects," Mr Rann said.

"The board will work closely with the new Defence SA unit, led by Andrew Fletcher - former KBR Senior Vice President and Chief Executive of Port Adelaide Maritime Corporation.

"Defence SA will take our State's defence-industry plans and goals up to the next level, combining the best elements of the Government's existing Defence Unit and the Port Adelaide Maritime Corporation, Defence SA will focus on infrastructure and skills.

"Its existence will implicitly recognise that our industry has moved into a new phase one in which we're not just seeking new projects, but also delivering on the contracts we've already won.

"Defence SA's efforts and direction will be informed by some of Australia's very best defence and industry minds, who will serve on a new Defence SA Advisory Board."

"And Adelaide's place at the centre of the nation's Defence industry will be further enhanced with today's announcement that **Adelaide will host the Asia Pacific Defence and Security exhibition and conference in November 2008**," Mr Rann said.

"The exhibition will cement South Australia's global reputation as Australia's leading defence state and give national suppliers direct access to the region's leading government defence procurers and significant access to defence prime companies."

It will provide a unique opportunity for naval, aerospace and land products and services to be showcased alongside one another and will also provide a significant local forum through which to advance defence investment activities.

"By bringing the world's leading defence proponents to Adelaide next year, it will assist us in opening new markets for South Australian companies in the Asia Pacific region," Mr Rann said.