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TENDERS CALLED FOR INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS AT EDINBURGH

Tenders have been called for the first two Hardened and Networked Army facilities and infrastructure to support the new battalion at the Edinburgh Defence Precinct, further strengthening South Australia's push to become the nation's defence capital.

Premier Mike Rann has welcomed the decision by the Commonwealth Public Works Committee to allow the tenders for these packages to be called before they've completed their deliberations on the project

"The tenders cover the first major works to support the establishment of a new battalion," Premier Mike Rann said.

"Over the next three years, we'll see the 7th Battalion re-established at Edinburgh as a mechanised infantry battalion, with 1200 soldiers, and more than 350 vehicles.

"The Commonwealth Government has called tenders this week from the short-listed contractors for the first works package, which includes working accommodation, training facilities, and site-wide infrastructure.

"It's expected that tenders will be called within months for the second phase of work – the common user facilities for both the Army and Air Force, including a new combined mess, medical, fitness and community facilities as well as infrastructure works.

"Subject to Parliamentary approval, construction is expected to start by the end of the year and be completed by 2011.

"I recently met with Federal Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon to discuss the tender process, and we both share an enthusiasm to see this project underway as soon as possible.

"Getting a new battalion here is expected to be worth up to \$100 million dollars to the state economy.

"And it helps consolidate South Australia's position as the defence hub of Australia, after securing the \$8 billion warfare destroyer contract and being named as the location for construction of the next generation of submarines.

"SA companies have already won more than \$14 billion in defence contracts in the past four years and our share of defence projects is set to grow even further.

"The state government is making massive investments to support the defence industry, including Techport Australia, the \$300 million naval industry hub being developed in Port Adelaide.

“The State Government is preparing for Adelaide’s outer north to become home to about 50,000 people in the coming years with the government land sales in Blakeveiw and Andrews Farm, together with the regeneration of the Peachey Belt and the creation of the Northern Expressway.

“And our defence push is international. In the past week during a trade mission in the United States, I have met in Washington, with Raytheon, which is employing hundreds of technicians and systems engineers for the Air Warfare Destroyer contract, as well as General Dynamics, which is involved in land systems and naval projects in South Australia.

“I’ve also met with executives of the Northrop Grumman Corporation, BAE Systems (whose Australian headquarters are in Adelaide), the Boeing Company and Lockheed Martin.

“The head of Defence SA, Andrew Fletcher, has also joined me in meetings with senior officials of the US Defence Department and US Navy, to discuss the development of Techport, the Air Warfare Destroyer contract and local participation in a range of other defence projects.

“We intend to build on our defence industry capabilities and continue with our Strategic Plan target to increase the number of defence jobs in SA from 16,000 to 28,000,” Mr Rann said.

The shortlisted companies for the first works package will have 12 weeks to prepare their tenders.

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