

Premier Jay Weatherill

Minister Martin Hamilton-Smith

Minister for Investment and Trade
Minister for Defence Industries
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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Coordinated approach to strengthen Australia's defence industry

Premier Jay Weatherill has called for a coordinated and constructive approach to be developed between the States and key industry associations to ensure major defence projects are not tendered overseas.

Mr Weatherill and Defence Minister Martin Hamilton-Smith have today written to the Premiers of New South Wales and Victoria calling on them to join with South Australia and lobby the Commonwealth on future projects.

The letter invites the Eastern States to join a summit in Canberra to develop a more coordinated approach to the nation's defence industry.

Mr Weatherill this afternoon spoke to Premier Mike Baird and Premier Denis Napthine and discussed the letter.

"Every defence project sent outside of Australia erodes our nation's defence capability and thousands of jobs go with it," Mr Weatherill said.

"In the next 30 years the Commonwealth is expected to spend \$250 billion on its naval fleet.

"This is a nation building amount of money that could help foster a world-leading industry in Australia and create thousands of jobs across the country.

"This is a critical point in time where the Commonwealth Government must decide what it wants Australia to be about."

Mr Weatherill said it was vital that the States that would benefit from locally tendered defence contracts worked together.

"There are worrying signs that the Commonwealth is preparing to walk away from its election commitments to build submarines in Adelaide so we are calling for clarity," he said.

"This is an issue that will require everyone to be on the same page, we are determined to find a solution rather than allowing the problem to continue.

"Failing to work with the Australian industry so that it can undertake future projects places the more than 28,000 defence industry related jobs in South Australia and thousands more around the nation at risk."

Mr Hamilton-Smith said he had serious concerns about the future of South Australian jobs if

major projects continued to be sent offshore.

“Completing these important projects in Australia is vital for our industry and our defence capability as a nation,” he said.

“These projects are not simply about building ships, but ensuring we have the proper capacity to maintain them.

“The benefit to our economy goes beyond the build phase, with significant money spend during the life of the ships – money that will also likely go off shore if the Australian industry is not have capacity to service and maintain the equipment.”

In the letter, Mr Weatherill and Mr Hamilton-Smith ask the other Premiers to join them in writing to the Prime Minister to meet about this important issue.