



MEDIA RELEASE

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DEFENCE MINISTERS VISIT ADELAIDE

The Minister for Defence, Stephen Smith, and the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon, were today pleased to host the UK Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Liam Fox, on a visit to Defence facilities and defence industry in Adelaide.

The Ministers visited BAE Systems Australia, the Air Warfare Destroyer (AWD) facilities and the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO).

Mr Smith said today's visit reflects Defence's intent to work more closely with the UK on defence science, technology and procurement.

"Australia and the UK can benefit from our defence industry relationship and from greater collaboration on the procurement of similar defence capabilities," Mr Smith said.

At BAE, the group received a comprehensive briefing from the Chief Executive, Mr Jim McDowell, and visited BAE's Joint Strike Fighter titanium machining facilities.

Mr Smith said, "Our visit to BAE today provided the opportunity to highlight the importance of the relationships between BAE Plc and BAE Systems to the Defence Forces of both countries.

"BAE is our biggest defence contractor and is involved in supporting Defence across every industry sector, including the \$8 billion AWD project, ship repair and maintenance in Western Australia; aircraft maintenance and support at Williamstown and Nowra in NSW, and Oakey and Townsville in Queensland.

"BAE is also doing important work on vehicle modifications at Bandiana in Victoria; and electronic warfare systems development and support in Adelaide," Mr Smith said.

The Ministers also visited the ASC Shipyard and new Air Warfare Destroyer (AWD) Systems Centre at Techport Australia. The ASC shipyard is one of the sites constructing hull blocks for the AWDs. Opened in December last year, the new AWD Systems Centre is the headquarters of the AWD project and workplace for over 300 people from the AWD alliance.

Mr Smith said, "The facilities at Techport for the Air Warfare Destroyer project are impressive and demonstrate both the commitment of the South Australian Government and the excellent cooperation between the public and private sectors on a key national project."

At DSTO, the Ministers received in-depth briefings on a range of promising technologies that can be expected to make a real difference for our troops in theatre and for the ADF's future capabilities.

Mr Snowdon said they were shown several examples where UK and Australian scientists and researchers have worked together to solve future capability and current operations issues.

Some examples include advanced work on countering the effects of improvised explosive devices, countering electro-optic threats, collaborating on armour technology for vehicles and working on hypersonic technologies. Australia also gained performance information and technical knowledge from successful UK trials of non-lethal weapons at Woomera.

“Among the matters discussed was the potential for our two nations to interoperate in the science and technology domains, including future sharing of research facilities and staff.

“Our science and technology cooperation provides the Australian Defence Force with a leading capability edge, whilst achieving value for money for the defence budget,” Mr Snowdon said.

As part of the visit, wreaths will be laid at the National War Memorial by Mr Smith and Dr Fox.

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