

Thursday, 13 November 2008

TECHPORT AUSTRALIA POWERS AHEAD WITH OPENING OF SKILLS CENTRE

Premier Mike Rann says today's opening of the \$5 million Maritime Skills Centre is the first major milestone in the development of the Government's \$300 million new state-of-the-art shipbuilding facility at Outer Harbor.

"The Maritime Skills Centre is the first building at Techport Australia to be completed and become operational," Mr Rann said.

"I am delighted that to date, Techport Australia's Common User Facility which is the shipbuilding facility that takes in the huge ship lift, 213 metre wharf and dry berth, is being built on time and on budget – it is now 60 per cent complete and is due to be finished by February 2010.

"Already \$250 million in construction contracts have been awarded, including many to local companies.

"The Government has been pleased with the remarkable and rapid progress being made on this new development, which isn't just about building a shipbuilding facility, but creating a whole new industry for the State.

"We told the Commonwealth Government that we would build the most modern naval shipbuilding, systems and sustainment precinct in the region and we are delivering on this commitment.

"Our investment in Techport Australia should return to South Australia about \$1.4 billion in economic benefit over the next decade, creating more than 3000 direct and indirect jobs from this single largest naval contract ever let in the nation's history.

"The \$8 billion AWD build contract is the centrepiece of \$14 billion in defence contracts awarded to South Australian-based companies in the past few years.

"The Maritime Skills Centre has come in not only on time, but \$300 000 under budget.

"It is already accommodating training programs for ASC. It provides an ideal location, adjacent to the precinct's common user facility, to up skill and train new and existing workers to deliver the AWD project.

"The building, built by local firm Candetti Constructions, has many innovative environmental features and represents the future of education and training facilities in Australia.

"Our vision is for the Maritime Skills Centre to become the hub for maritime training in Australia.

“I am pleased that SABRENet, the State’s high speed fibre optic broadband network, will be coming to Techport Australia, linking the Maritime Skills Centre to all of the State’s other education and R&D centres.

Premier Rann also noted that land sales were well underway in the adjoining ‘Supplier Precinct’ which is being sold to various private companies wishing to co-locate their premises to the shipbuilding industry which also has easy access to national road, rail and sea networks.

“To date, allotments have been sold to three local and national firms: Ferrocut, Babcock Integrated Technology Australia, and Harbrew. Negotiations are also well advanced with a number of other parties.

The Techport Australia Commercial Campus is also taking shape with the final agreements signed earlier this week between the State Government, AWD Alliance, Raytheon Australia, and Prime Space Projects – the local private developer for the site.

Premier Rann stated, “The signing of these agreements signals the go-ahead for construction to commence on the \$40 million Techport Australia Commercial Campus, which will house the permanent home of the AWD Systems Centre as well as Raytheon Australia’s new South Australian Engineering Centre.

“No other site in Australia will be able to rival the multitude of high end, professional naval systems and integration skills which will be based here.

Work is also well underway on ASC’s adjoining shipyard site. Preliminary work on the \$8 billion Air Warfare Destroyers will begin at ASC’s site at Techport Australia in September next year.

Many local companies are working with the State to deliver the project, including:

- Candetti Construction – \$3 million for construction of Maritime Skills Centre
- Built Environments – 30% Joint Venture partner with McConnell Dowell - \$180 million for planning, design and construction of Common User Facility
- Subcontractors to ship lift supplier Rolls Royce – RPG Australia (\$10 million to supply the steel and build the platform) and Mayfield Engineering (provision of motor control centre)
- Leed Engineering and Construction – \$9.3 million for construction of headworks
- Landscape Construction Services – \$1 million for landscaping of Techport Australia Stage One
- Bardavcol – \$5.7 million for site preparation and supply of fill material