

**The Hon Dr Brendan Nelson**

Minister for Defence



**Hon Kevin Foley**

Deputy Premier



## Joint Media Release

047/2007

Wednesday, 30 May 2007

### **AIR WARFARE DESTROYER SKILLS CENTRE TAKES SHAPE**

Defence Minister the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson and South Australian Deputy Premier Kevin Foley were today delighted to give the green light to construction of the Maritime Skills Centre.

The \$6 million purpose-built facility will support the Air Warfare Destroyer Alliance – the Commonwealth, Adelaide-based ASC AWD Shipbuilder Pty Ltd and Raytheon Australia Pty Ltd – to deliver critical trade and technical skills required to build Navy's AWDs.

“I am delighted to join with the South Australian Government in establishing the Maritime Skills Centre as a centre of excellence in maritime construction training”, Dr Nelson said.

Dr Nelson said that a shared commitment to building the skilled workforce is critical to successful delivery of the AWD project – the largest, most complex naval procurement in Australia's history.

“The South Australian Government has invested over \$20 million in workforce development programs to support the skill growth required by modern shipbuilding. The Maritime Skills Centre forms a centrepiece of these commitments”, said Mr Foley.

Mr Foley said that the Maritime Skills Centre will be located adjacent to ASC Shipbuilding at Techport Australia. Construction will commence in the coming weeks and conclude in February 2008 in readiness for the AWD Alliance to commence training at the facility from March 2008.

“Where capacity permits, the Skills Centre will also be able to be used for training to benefit wider industry”, Mr Foley said.

The South Australian Government is investing over \$250 million to develop Techport Australia as a world-class shipbuilding precinct at Osborne that will not only build the state-of-the-art AWDs but also attract other shipbuilding and repair opportunities.

In addition to the Skills Centre, that investment includes:

- common user shipbuilding facilities, including wharf, transfer system and Australia's largest shiplift
- more than 35 hectares for suppliers to establish operations, and
- the future home of the high tech AWD Systems Centre – headquarters for the AWD program.

“Development of Techport Australia is well underway, with approximately \$60 million worth of contracts awarded to date”, Mr Foley said.

“The AWD project based at Techport Australia will make a major contribution to South Australia’s bold plan to double the contribution of the defence industry to the State’s economy and to increase defence industry employment to 28000 by 2013.

Dr Nelson said the construction of the Air Warfare Destroyers will be one of the most significant shipbuilding projects undertaken in Australia to date, and will provide enormous benefits for Australian industry and new skills and jobs for generations to come.

“More than 1000 direct jobs will be created in South Australia as part of the AWD build contract”, Dr Nelson said.

“However, up to 70% of the module construction will be sub-contracted to other shipyards around Australia creating around 1000 additional jobs throughout the country.

“The AWDs represent a quantum leap in the air warfare capabilities of the Navy.

“The AWDs will meet Australia’s strategic requirements and be highly capable across the full spectrum of maritime operations; from peacetime national tasking that might include protection of our environment and natural resources, through to responses to terrorism and threats to our national security. As a highly interoperable unit, the AWD will be a key component to the provision of air defence to a joint or combined task force, including land forces.