



Boeing contract boosts SME business

- The selection of Boeing's Tactical Edge Server (TES) for inclusion in 211 Combat Reconnaissance Vehicles (CRV) to be built in south-east Queensland under LAND 400 Phase 2 has brought with it exceptional growth opportunities for several Australian small to medium enterprises (SME).

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GPC Electronics, Air Affairs and Century Manufacturing are among the suppliers that will provide the processing and storage components for the Boeing TES – a ruggedised, high performance computing and network device to be incorporated into the combat vehicles.

Air Affairs and Century Manufacturing currently manufacture hardware and GPC Electronics provide electronic circuit cards for the TESs designed and built as part of Boeing's LAND 2072 Phase 2B Project Currawong battlespace communication system which will be incorporated into Rheinmetall's BOXER 8x8 CRV.

“Our Australian SME supply chain's capability, quality, and attention to detail is matched by their willingness to continue to innovate,” said Boeing Defence Australia's vice president and managing director, Scott Carpendale.

“Their collaboration and industry relationships are critical to our ability to deliver complex defence programs. Our success in being able to design and develop a multi-purpose product that can be integrated into varying programs and platforms becomes their success, now and in the future.”

The TES forms part of a scalable deployable computer architecture which has been incorporated into a range of man-portable, deployable and vehicle mounted solutions,

including the Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle. This makes the TES ideally suited to withstand the remote, demanding and hostile environment and combat conditions to be encountered by each BOXER 8x8 CRV.

“Incorporating the TES into the BOXER 8x8 CRV provides the Commonwealth with a common, highly capable device that can be used across multiple programs. We were made aware of this through shared knowledge across our network of people. All components are designed, developed and manufactured in Australia and this is testament to the new opportunities for SMEs to grow into the expanding Defence market,” said Rheinmetall’s General Manager – L400 Phase 3/Head of Marketing and Strategy, Lee Davis.

“Further demonstrating commonality and scalability we have also integrated the TES into our LYNX KF-41 Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV) which shares a common architecture with what we are developing under the BOXER program. Our Land 400 Phase 3 vehicles will include this leading edge Australian capability.”

Using components that are locally designed, produced and maintained also means that equipment servicing can be managed through a local supply chain. This supports a truly sovereign technology and support solution and complete surety of supply that would otherwise be impacted if components were produced offshore.

Project Currawong supports more than 700 jobs and 200 Australian SMEs and LAND 400 Phase 2 is expected to generate approximately 1,450 jobs across Australia during the construction of the vehicle.

SME opportunities are not limited to Australian Defence Force contracts. Both Boeing and Rheinmetall are exploring export opportunities for their Currawong and BOXER programs.

About Project Currawong

Boeing Defence Australia’s Project Currawong is delivering a next generation battlespace communication system to the Australian Defence Force. It is designed and developed in Australia and provides fast, reliable and secure wideband voice, data and video services over wireless and wired infrastructure between headquarters and land-based Australian Defence Forces deployed around the world.

About BOXER Program

Rheinmetall Defence Australia is delivering the BOXER 8x8 Combat Reconnaissance Vehicle (CRV) for the Commonwealth of Australia's LAND 400 Phase 2 - Mounted Combat Reconnaissance Capability. The Australian Defence Force requires 211 BOXER 8x8 CRVs. Deliveries commenced in September 2019 and final operating capability is planned for 2026-2027. Rheinmetall is working with a growing network of Australian

small and medium sized enterprises to establish an Australian military vehicle industry that will develop, build and sustain this new Australian capability.