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New kit on the frigate blocks

GIUSEPPE TAURIELLO

SA shipbuilder MG Engineering has been chosen to build four "mini blocks" to be used to test leading edge manufacturing techniques for the \$35bn future frigates program.

ASC Shipbuilding has signed a contract with MG Engineering to build the modules, which will mirror ship blocks to be used in construction of the Hunter-class frigates.

Each six metre block will have similar features to a real ship block including watertight doors, manholes, hatches, passageways and confined spaces.

The blocks will be installed at the Tonsley innovation district later this year, where ASC Shipbuilding is partnering with Flinders University to research advanced manufacturing processes for future use at the state-of-the-art digital shipyard at Osborne.

Researchers will undertake a range of trials including conducting confined-space robotic blast and paint work, implementing electronic tag boards, testing wireless connectivity and applying various adhesives and paints. The four blocks will also be used for training and to

showcase research and technology opportunities to students.

MG Engineering managing director Anthony Brdar said the project would help educate the next generation of shipbuilders in South Australia.

"This is a unique project and we are thrilled to have collaborated with ASC Shipbuilding in developing the mini-blocks concept," he said.

"ASC Shipbuilding has showcased innovative ideas and technology capabilities and we look forward to growing our involvement in Australia's shipbuilding industry."

As part of the project MG Engineering has contracted local Indigenous company Murra Services to apply the protective coating on the blocks, providing a training opportunity for trainee Shaquille Burgoyne.

Murra Services chief executive Gavin Wanganeen said he was excited about being involved in the frigates program.

"My vision is to empower young Indigenous people to work alongside established, capable companies, giving them a taste for various trades while working on significant projects like the Hunter program," he



MG Engineering managing director Anthony Brdar, trainee Shaquille Burgoyne, ASC

shipbuilding strategy director Sharon Wilson and Murra Services chief executive Gavin Wanganeen Picture: Brenton Edwards

said. "As a young Indigenous person growing up in Salisbury I was lucky to find foothold. Murra Services is all about creating training and employment

opportunities for young people and giving back to local Indigenous communities." ASC Shipbuilding CNS (Continuous Naval Shipbuilding) strategy di-

rector Sharon Wilson said the company was committed to creating and developing 15-20 new Indigenous businesses through the Hunter program. "We com-

mend MG Engineering on creating opportunities for First Nation businesses and we encourage other suppliers to do the same," she said.

"Contracts like this underpin our effort to maximise Australian industry capability on the Hunter-class frigate program and to develop a continuous

naval shipbuilding capability for Australia." The prototyping stage of the Hunter program is to begin in December, with manufacturing of the first of

nine frigates to begin in 2022. Each frigate will comprise 22 blocks which will be manufactured and consolidated on-site at Osborne.

Glimmer of hope on the horizon



MARTIN HAESE

had not fully emerged at the time of the survey period in early to mid-July, it is still clear businesses owners are feeling more confident of surviving current restrictions in SA.

THE tide of business confidence in South Australia has turned but the swell of success is still a long way off.

After failing to outstrip levels never before seen in the March quarter, business confidence rebounded in the June quarter Business SA - William Buck Survey of Business Expectations.

From a historic rock bottom 41 points, business owners defied ongoing uncertainty from COVID-19 to record a 26-point jump in confidence to 67.0. The spike in confidence cannot be understated, it is the largest in 13 years.

While the periscope of this pandemic continued to swirl around them in states like Victoria and overseas, South Australian business owners were surprisingly feeling somewhat confident about the road ahead.

The General Business Conditions Index for the June quarter stabilised, despite business predicting it would plummet further back in March. The outlook for next quarter fared even better, with the index expected to jump almost 14 points to back above 80.

Revenue also started to swing with those businesses down by 50 per cent or more in the June quarter (22 per cent) halving from the March quarter figures (43 per cent).

While the full impact of the deadly second wave in Victoria

Amid mass uncertainty in March, 36 per cent of businesses cast doubt on whether they could survive another three months, however, June is much more encouraging with 81 per cent of SMEs now confident of surviving current restrictions for a further six months or longer.

There is no doubt the Federal Government's JobKeeper scheme is boosting confidence. According to the survey, 65 per cent of respondents are receiving the wage subsidy while 60.2 per cent of those on the scheme said it had allowed them to maintain pre-COVID-19 staffing levels, which underscores the critical importance for it to continue.

More so for businesses reliant on events and international tourism.

The survey found 94 per cent of tourism businesses are on JobKeeper - the highest percentage of any industry.

That is why Business SA is urging the state and federal governments to consider additional financial support measures above and beyond JobKeeper 2.0 for those businesses that remain materially impacted by restrictions on gatherings and events as well as international travel.

While there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon for SA's broader economy, for some businesses the future still remains dark.

MARTIN HAESE IS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF BUSINESS SA

Helping Hand board chair

AGED care support services group Helping Hand has appointed Professor Brenda Wilson as its board chair.

Professor Wilson, who is Lieutenant Governor of SA and chair of SA Health's clinical quality and innovation committee, brings extensive experience in health services and in management to the key role in aged care.

"Aged care is going through a very challenging time but that's a good opportunity for us because it means we're doing everything possible to ensure we provide the highest-level care to the people we serve," Professor Wilson said. "It's a great time to look at everything we're doing, what we're doing well and where we could be doing better."

Helping Hand, a not-for-profit organisation, supports more than 7000 older South Australians.

ASK 200 6110.20 +105.40 +1.75% Shares have closed 1.76 per cent higher on the Australian market as investors believe the US can approve an aid package.	ALL ORDINARIES 6247.10 +102.20 +1.66%	BEST ARISTOCRAT \$28.81 +1.14 4.12%	WORST AMP LTD \$1.395 -0.2 -1.41%	SA US CENTS 71.52 c -0.55 -0.76%	OIL SUS PER BARREL \$44.69 -0.43 -0.95%	IRON ORE SUS PER TONNE \$118.07 -0.82 -0.69%
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HELPING SA GET BACK TO BUSINESS

Recent bushfires and COVID-19 have fundamentally changed our economic landscape. To help small business owners navigate this new reality, the South Australian Government has created the SA Small Business Hub with information on applying for grants and funding, plus advice on a range of topics including cyber security, applying for Government tenders, and access to all the support you need to get back to business sooner.

VISIT THE SA SMALL BUSINESS HUB AT:
BUSINESS.SA.GOV.AU

Government of South Australia

KEEPING SA SAFE & STRONG

Lutheran finance charity appoints new boss

THE Lutheran Laypeople's League has appointed Ross Smith as its new chief executive.

Mr Smith will replace Allen Kupke, who is retiring, becoming the fifth person to head the

organisation since its inception in 1921. The Adelaide-based LLL provides loans to projects including upgrades to Lutheran schools, churches and care facilities, with surpluses generated assisting the "Lutheran

Church in Australia mission". Last year it became the first charitable financial institution in Australia to be licensed as an authorised deposit-taking institution regulated under the Banking Act and by APRA, and currently administrators de-

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