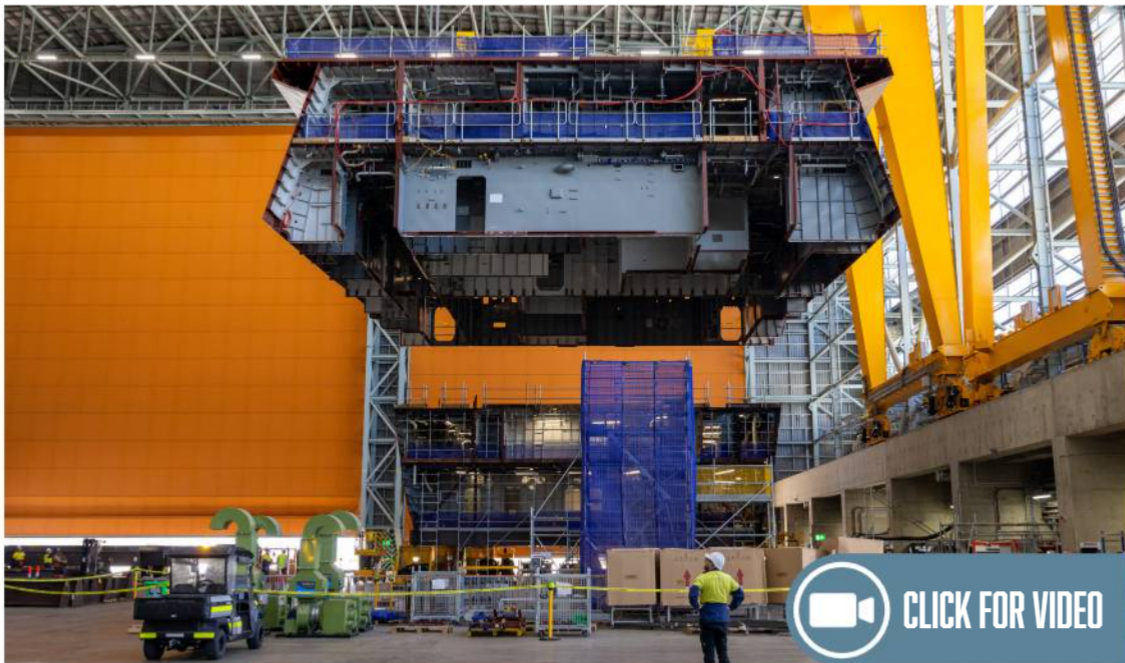


Hunter-class supply chain expands

The BAE Systems Australia-led army of industry partners and supply chain members involved in the construction of six Hunter-class ASW frigates for the RAN continues to grow. *Ian Bostock* reports.



BAE SYSTEMS AUSTRALIA is continuing to expand its Strategic Supplier Partnerships program with selected small and medium-sized enterprises to underpin the construction schedule for the first of three Batch 1 Hunter-class anti-submarine warfare (ASW) frigates. A total of six ships will be built for the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) at a total cost, according to the Australian National Audit Office, of approximately AUD\$45 billion (out-turned, future dollars), making Sea 5000 the largest procurement project for the Australian Defence Force ever undertaken.

The use of local companies to produce ship sections off-site ensures construction continues when the Osborne Naval Shipyard is operating at full capacity.

To this end, BAE Systems has two 'Strategic Supplier Partnerships' with South Australian firms Century Engineering and MG Engineering that are delivering key elements for the first of the 8,800-tonne, 151m-long ships.

Century Engineering is fabricating engine room stanchions,

ABOVE: Construction at the Osborne yard has commenced on 30 of 78 blocks for the leadship. Vessel hand-over to the Commonwealth is scheduled for 2032. Image: BAE Systems

pipe support manacles and various external out-fit items. MG Engineering has now commenced Ship 1 Production of Unit B21 and Unit C31B components at its Port Adelaide facility; this is a significant achievement as it represents the first out-sourced Ship 1 product for the Hunter program.

MG Engineering is cutting, forming and fabricating components into complex fabricates including sideshells, bulkheads and seats. The fabricated components will be the first primary structure fabricated outside of the Osborne yard.

The success of these two partnerships will see BAE Systems – or more precisely BAE Systems Maritime Australia – commence onboarding more Australian companies later this year and into 2026 to increase availability of both

capacity and capability to assist in meeting production needs. The number of active supplier contracts program-wide has now reached 140, with 80 of these placed with Australian companies.

“Supplying units for the first Hunter-class frigate is a massive undertaking that requires not only technical expertise but also a commitment to meeting deadlines and quality benchmarks,” said Jason Loveday, program director of the Hunter Class Frigate Program at BAE Systems Australia.

“MG Engineering’s status as a strategic supplier is a testament to the capabilities of its people and dedication to ensuring it delivers nothing short of the highest quality,” Mr Loveday added.

“In a complex project like this, the ability to manage an efficient, reliable supply chain is vital. We work closely with our suppliers and logistics teams, and we maintain a strong focus on quality control at every step of the process,” he said.

“MG Engineering is proud to be a key supplier for the construction of the first of the Hunter anti-submarine frigates,” said managing director Anthony Brdar.

“Our team’s commitment to precision and quality has enabled us to achieve this level of support for the Commonwealth’s biggest surface ship program,” Mr Brdar said.

Companies and Contracts

At Osborne, BAE Systems is also working with Australian small and medium-sized enterprises onsite to deliver numerous scopes of work in blast and painting, insulation, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC), deck coverings, non-destructive testing and habitation/accommodation. Some of these companies are already working under contract, with others in the process of being contracted in coming months.

In developing Australian industry and as a core component of Australia’s continuous naval shipbuilding capability, BAE Systems is committed to delivering a minimum target of 60% ‘Australian Contract Expenditure’ (ACE) out of the total value of the Batch 1 contract scope of AUD\$11.15 billion. This, the company says, will be achieved by the end of the Batch 1 contract scope, inclusive of development and prototyping activities. With ACE for Batch 1 currently sitting at AUD\$6.25 billion, the 60% target is less than 0.5% away.

The following company snapshots represent a selection of Australian and international firms making vital contributions to the construction of the first batch of three ships and the Hunter-class program supply chain in general.



Aerius Marine Australia is to supply HVAC related equipment and services into the Hunter-class frigate program.

Aerius Marine is a global supplier of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC), refrigeration, piping, fire protection and firefighting solutions for naval platforms. It is supplying HVAC systems for City-class (Type 26) frigates.

Location: Hobart, Tasmania

aerius-marine.com

airspeed

A composites design and build specialist, **Airspeed** is supplying replenishment at sea (RAS) stump masts for the first batch of three Hunter-class ships and is already building RAS stump masts for the Royal Navy’s City-class (Type 26) frigates.

The stump masts are key components of RAS – the ship-to-ship transfer of fuel, munitions and stores whilst underway.

The company was also involved in supplying lightweight floor panels for the Hobart-class destroyers.

Location: Mawson Lakes, South Australia

airspeed.com.au





Marine & General (MG) Engineering has proven capabilities in providing complex fabrication solutions to the naval ship building industry.

MG Engineering officially commenced structural works for Ship 1 of the Hunter-class program at the start of 2025. The initial scope includes the delivery of the primary hull structure, bulkheads and key equipment foundations.

Location: Port Adelaide, South Australia

mgengineering.com.au



Penske Australia and New Zealand partner with defence prime contractors to provide customised propulsion and power generation solutions and sustainment support over platform life-of-type.

Penske will supply diesel generator sets and provide through-life support of MTU products for the Hunter-class frigates.

Location: Wacol, Queensland

penskeanz.com



Rohde & Schwarz Australia will supply the proven NAVICS (Naval Integrated Communications System) for the first three Hunter-class frigates under contract to BAE Systems Australia.

The backbone of the ship's communication system, NAVICS will provide integrated and reliable internal and external communications and classified data processing.

Location: Macquarie Park, New South Wales

rohde-schwarz.com/au/about-australia



Rolls-Royce is a key industry partner for BAE Systems Australia in the Hunter-class frigate program.

The Rolls-Royce MT30 gas turbine sits at the heart of the UK's City-class (Type 26) and the Type 26 designs selected by Australia (Hunter-class) and Canada (River-class).

Location: London, United Kingdom

rolls-royce.com

