

Martin Hamilton-Smith

Minister for Defence Industries

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All bids are in – Federal Government must build 12 submarines

Minister for Defence Industries Martin Hamilton-Smith said South Australia must build the nation's next generation of submarines and only 12 will secure a continuous industry.

Today the deadline closed for responses to the Federal Government's competitive evaluation process to select an international partner to design and build the submarines.

Mr Hamilton-Smith said the Federal Government must reveal how many submarines it requested in the competitive evaluation process.

"Defence strategists and economic experts agree that eight submarines will only provide a project, where as 12 submarines will secure a sustainable industry," Mr Hamilton-Smith said.

The Federal Government needs to release the delayed Defence White Paper and costed naval shipbuilding plan as a matter of urgency.

"The Turnbull Government must back Australian workers and re-commit to building the entire submarine fleet in Australia," Mr Hamilton-Smith said.

"The competitive evaluation process has closed - the Federal Government now has an opportunity to provide certainty to Australia's shipbuilding industry and immediately rule out a hybrid or overseas build. This would save time and expense.

"As the next generation of submarines and Future Frigates build are years away, South Australia's naval shipbuilding industry also needs the Offshore Patrol Vessel project to be fast tracked and built in Adelaide.

"The valley of death is with us now – the Offshore Patrol Vessel build would provide jobs for workers coming off the Air Warfare Destroyer project and enable them to maintain their skills."

Mr Hamilton-Smith said regardless of the design selected, the Future Submarines must be built in South Australia – not overseas.

"Adelaide has the world-class maritime infrastructure, skilled workers and strong track record," Mr Hamilton-Smith said.

"The Future Submarine program is the most important contribution the Federal Government can make to our nation's high-tech future.

"South Australia is also home to Techport Australia, the nation's flagship naval shipbuilding precinct.

“The Future Submarine build and sustainment will require a national effort, involving all levels of government working collectively with national and international industry, academia and the education and training sector.”

The South Australian Government will continue talking with the three bidders – Germany, France and Japan – and local industry to maximise opportunities for South Australian workers and industry in the Future Submarine program during the evaluation period.

“Through in-country delegations and visits to the bidding nations, the State Government has been determined in its efforts to develop strong relationships with all three bidders and to secure the maximum amount of jobs for Australians,” Mr Hamilton-Smith said.

“We are working to secure all key program infrastructures: the design centre, program management office, and combat system design, integration and test facilities because it makes sense to co-locate these functions at Techport Australia.

“Having designers sitting alongside production workers and systems engineers with direct lines of communication, sharing knowledge and collectively problem solving will drive efficiencies.”

Techport Australia is home to the Air Warfare Destroyer program and the Collins class submarine sustainment, and will be the build location for Australia’s new frigate fleet.

Mr Hamilton-Smith said the Techport facility is a national strategic asset with world-class facilities that can support multiple projects concurrently.

“It is the logical place to build submarines in Australia, and South Australia is ready to partner with all stakeholders to deliver the capability,” Mr Hamilton-Smith said.