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ACTION PLAN TO DEVELOP DEFENCE INDUSTRY SKILLED WORKFORCE

A new action plan launched today aims to assist South Australia's defence industry towards securing a competitive and productive workforce to support future expansion.

Employment, Training and Further Education, Minister, Michael O'Brien said a key objective of the Defence Industry Workforce Action Plan was to establish a clear future direction for the industry.

"The Rann Government has secured around \$44 billion worth of defence projects over the past five years, and we're committed to increasing the number of defence jobs in South Australia to 28,000 by 2014," Mr O'Brien said.

"Significant new defence projects are driving industry growth, including the \$8 billion Air Warfare Destroyer contract and the multi billion dollar Collins class submarine assembly contract.

"If we're to build on our reputation as the nation's 'Defence State', it's critical we also build a high-skill, high-tech and adaptable workforce," Mr O'Brien said.

"Of course, this future growth also presents a number of challenges for the defence industry. Recent forecasts indicate increasing demand for workers with professional and technical skills and emerging demand for trade and high-level qualifications.

"Ensuring the defence industry has sufficient numbers of highly skilled workers is critical to achieve the State Government's target to double the defence industry's economic contribution to \$2 billion per annum by 2013," Mr O'Brien said.

The plan has four key strategies:

- Develop and sustain industry leadership and engagement in workforce planning and skills development
- Improve the industry's ability to attract and recruit a highly skilled workforce
- Assist the defence industry to retain an adaptable and diverse workforce
- Develop and promote industry-led school to VET to higher education pathways

The Defence Teaming Centre will drive the plan's implementation, which will be monitored by a reference group comprising industry and government representatives.

The plan will be available on the Workforce Information Service website at <http://www.workforceinfoservice.sa.gov.au/>