

Century gets Defence-ready

VALERINA CHANGARATHIL

EDINBURGH North manufacturer Century Engineering says a recent project with defence industry giant BAE Systems is improving its capability and expertise within the sector gearing up for shiploads of work over the next few years.

Century recently worked with BAE to deliver 17 prototype unit load containers (ULCs) for evaluation by the Australian Defence Force.

BAE Systems was engaged to provide a set of prototype modular ULCs to support and improve Army artillery logistics. The ULCs have been designed to transport all the elements and natures of 155mm ammunition for the Australian Army's M777 lighttowed howitzer, manufactured by BAE Systems.

"The contract for the prototypes was small in the scheme of things, but it's a potential pathway to more bigger contracts," Century Engineering's managing director David Heaslip told *The Advertiser*.

"Defence is an interesting space for us, with the potential to win work on the future frigates and the Land 400 Defence contracts.

"We've also got some inquiries about the Offshore Patrol Vessels, so all the experience we can get is just improving our capacity and capability," he said.

Century Engineering employs 80-100 staff, including casuals, at Edinburgh North. About 10 per cent of those are apprentices.

The ULCs are essentially dummy loads produced to simulate live rounds, BAE said.

"Four of these were used to demonstrate capability through destructive testing, 12 were sent to the users for trials and one will end its life at Port Wakefield explosive ordnance testing," a spokeswoman for BAE said.

"Century Engineering provided valuable input into 'Design for Manufacture' of the ULC to ensure a quality, valuefor-money product."

BAE Systems Australia's chief operating officer David Bond said that it was working with Century Engineering and other local SMEs to provide the best possible Australian Defence solution.