



**BATTLE-READY:** Supashock managing director Oscar Fiorinotto and graduate trainee Oliver Sainsbury at the Land Forces Expo.

Picture: JAMES ELSBY

#### RICHARD EVANS

ADELAIDE engineering graduates are helping power a new era of combat defence vehicle.

Magill-based Supashock has teamed up with global defence and security technology giant Rheinmetall to design a customised damper system for its cutting-edge Lynx KF41 that made its Australian debut at the Land Forces Expo, in Adelaide, last week.

Supashock's damper (shock absorber) system will withstand extreme amounts of force from

improvised explosive devices or heavy landings while crossing rough terrain said Supashock's founder, Oscar Fiorinotto.

"The whole team that worked on this is under 30 but with leaders around them who supported and mentored them," he said.

"We have intern programs with Flinders University, Adelaide University and UniSA, and these young engineers have benefited from working with high-end, high-technology components in an industry dependant on performance and

safety and reliability. Some of their work has contributed to, hopefully, saving lives."

Supashock, which has grown to 40 staff in 13 years, takes on about six graduates a year, including Oliver Sainsbury, a mechanical engineering graduate from Adelaide University.

"Without projects like the Lynx KF41, it takes away from the learning opportunities of some of our excellent graduates who have come through the university programs," Mr Sainsbury said.

"It's really been a fantastic experience."

Although just recently rolled out, the Lynx KF41 will not come into service until 2026 and will have a life expectancy of about 30 years.

It can carry up to nine soldiers and has the flexibility – by removing the roof turret in the first instance – to transform into an ambulance, recovery or repair vehicle.

The Lynx proved a hit at Land Forces with around 1000 people stepping inside the vehicle during the three day

event. About 400 such vehicles are expected to be commissioned and all will be able to accessorise according to individual needs.

Rheinmetall, which was chosen to deliver Australia's Land 400 Phase 2 project, said changing from one configuration to another could occur within several hours for the KF41. The German military vehicle designer will compete for the \$15 billion Land 400 Phase 3 project designed to replace the army's M113 armoured personnel carriers.