

# Nova eyeing new markets

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ENGINEERING and consulting firm Nova Group has reported a 24 per cent surge in revenue as it continues to diversify into new markets – locally and overseas.

The company posted a net profit of \$4.4 million in the 12 months to June, down from \$6.3 million in 2017. Revenue was up 24 per cent, from \$104.2 million to \$129.3 million.

Chief executive Greg Hume, pictured, said the company was likely to benefit from the recent ramp up in defence spend in South Australia, but that growth in other sectors remained a priority.

“D e f e n c e remains the predominant part of our revenue stream,” he said. “We continue to provide a large range of support services to defence and the primes – in Adelaide we continue to support companies like Raytheon, Saab and Lockheed Martin – so it’s still a large growth area for us.

“We are planning to grow in SA, but our broader focus is to grow geographically. A large part of what we’re trying to do is to move outside of defence, in areas like oil & gas, mining and rail – across a five-year timeframe we’re looking to grow in defence but also use those skills and capabilities that we’ve built in defence and apply them in other geographies and other sectors.”

Nova Group employs approximately 120 full-time staff at its Mile End South headquarters, and more than 550 full-time employees across Australia, UK, Norway, Singapore and New Zealand.

Since being established in 2000 as a consultancy to the Australian defence industry, the company has expanded into new markets and regions.

The group comprises four businesses – professional services provider Nova Systems, aerospace engineering and design company GVH Aerospace and satellite mapping and software brands Geoplex and two10degrees.

In February Nova Systems, leading a consortium including PwC and technology company QinetiQ, was appointed as one of four major service providers (MSPs) to the Department of Defence’s Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG). As an MSP, the team is tasked with improving Australian Defence Force capabilities through better workforce planning and improved industry and supply chain management, and supporting the Federal Government’s commitment to engaging local SMEs in the defence supply chain.

Mr Hume encouraged local SMEs to tap into opportunities arising from the upcoming defence spend, but highlighted that a shortage of skills was likely to materialise unless governments and industry worked together to bridge the gap.

"Companies like Nova are always looking to partner with small companies that have the skills that aren't easily available elsewhere," he said. "There is an issue around the availability of people do to the work, and we're certainly looking at diversifying our workforce through increased focus on graduate programs and introducing more diversity, particularly women into the company.

"We've also been looking at how to recruit skills from overseas as it is important to access certain parts of the workforce that normally wouldn't be used in defence."