

Holden Hill defence outpost

INNOVATION

RICHARD EVANS



GROWTH: Supashock chief executive Oscar Fiorinotto and Rheinmetall's Ben Hudson.

Picture: DEAN MAI

A WORLD-leading South Australian manufacturing company is to more than double its workforce over the next five years after moving into a new headquarters in northern Adelaide on the back of a national \$200 billion defence capability investment.

Supashock, which started out by designing and making state-of-the-art shock absorbers in Magill in 2005, has expanded into the defence industry via a partnership with German defence contractor Rheinmetall and now also supplies automotive suspensions for motorsport, military and autonomous vehicles.

Premier Steven Marshall and Defence Minister Melissa Price were among dignitaries to open the new Supashock HQ in Holden Hill yesterday. Rheinmetall will also relocate its SA office to the same site next month.

Founded by managing director Oscar Fiorinotto and chaired by former chief of the Australian Defence Force, Sir Angus Houston, Supashock currently has 46 full-time employees and 10 contractors including top-end engineers and suspension design and vehicle dynamics specialists.

"Supashock has historically achieved significant growth, which has required careful management and our five year horizon sees this growth continuing, which is one of the key reasons for us establishing our new facility and headquarters," Mr Fiorinotto said.

"By 2024 we expect to have more than 100 staff. We are pushing for young people to stay here in SA," he said with Supashock a heavy recruiter from SA's three major universities over the past few years.

Federal Minister for Defence, Melissa Price, announced that Supashock would be one of seven small medium enterprises (SME), and the only one from SA, to supply parts, products and services to Commonwealth programs Land 1213B/5B program and the Land 400 phase 2 program as part of a multimilliondollar deal.

Supashock will supply wheel carriage systems.

Mr Fiorinotto said Supashock's suspension technology delivered a huge improvement in mobility and endurance to technology currently available to armed forces in tough combat environments.

"A lot of defence hardware today is still running more traditional technology," he said.

"But we have focused on mobility, reliability, reducing maintenance costs and, most importantly, survivability. That gives us an edge. Giving the commander an advantage in the battlefield is important."

Rheinmetall Defence Australia holds a minority stake in Supashock to help fund its growth locally and overseas.

The new facilities incorporate a dedicated design wing, damper assembly room, advanced manufacturing facility and cycle testing lab all within a purpose built facility.

Supashock's expansion shows the power of a global player (Rheinmetall) and an Australian SME collaborating to deliver cutting-edge technology and significant export opportunities Mr Fiorinotto said.

"Supashock is focused on transferring its knowledge and skills developed through years of testing and performance car racing to take advantage of opportunities available in the defence industry and becoming an advanced manufacturing exporter."

Sixty-five per cent of the company's products are currently exported.