

## Digital shipbuilding recruits



CHALLENGE: Jaryd, left, and Tony, who are doing the new Diploma of Digital Technology. Picture: TAIT SCHMAAL

AUSTRALIA'S first digital shipbuilding course was launched yesterday through a partnership between BAE Systems and Flinders University.

Funded by federal and state governments, the Diploma of Digital Technology will initially be delivered to 53 shipbuilding workers, whose roles on the Air Warfare Destroyer program ended on Friday.

It will equip them with the digital skills required to support BAE's \$35 billion Hunter-class frigates program, which is being delivered by its ASC Shipbuilding business.

In response to the coronavirus, Flinders University will deliver the course online, with plans to transition to face-to-face learning at the Tonsley innovation precinct once the health crisis eases.

ASC Shipbuilding managing director Craig Lockhart said the course would enable shipbuilders to keep pace with the latest trends in modern shipbuilding.

"Not only does this course equip our employees with the skills that will be in demand at our digital shipyard at Osborne, but it guarantees we retain the shipbuilding skills between the end of the current shipbuilding programs and the ramp-up of the Hunter program," he said.

"Our partnership with Flinders University means we will upskill shipbuilders on the latest in Industry 4.0 technologies and techniques, benefiting not only the Hunter-class frigate program but the broader shipbuilding industry."

Online orientation began yesterday, with the course running for nine months from April. Tony, 54, will undertake the new course after nearly 15 years working at the Osborne shipyard.

"The opportunity to upskill while maintaining my company service is very appealing," he said. "I look forward to applying these qualifications in a practical way, enhancing the capability of the new shipyard."

Jaryd, 25, has spent seven years on the AWD program.

"I would like to further my skills and be in the best position possible to continue my work in the propulsion field of work on the Hunter-class frigate program," he said.

"I enjoy learning new things and challenging myself. I believe it will open up my future in the shipbuilding industry."

The men's surnames can't be disclosed for security reasons.

The \$90 billion shipbuilding program is expected to employ more than 6300 by 2030.

Defence Minister Linda Reynolds said the course would retain the skills and expertise needed for the Hunter-class program.

Flinders University Vice-Chancellor Colin Stirling said the university's research and teaching was equipping "these and many other highly skilled workers to meet the current and emerging needs of the defence industry".