

## Defence and SA manufacturer produce face shields

🕒 April 22, 2020 📁 News

Defence has partnered with a family-owned South Australian company to produce face shields for frontline healthcare workers for protection against the coronavirus.

Axiom Precision Manufacturing began production last week, with 600 of the new face shields designed by Defence Science and Technology Group (DST) already being distributed.

Defence minister the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC said the new partnership will ensure Australia sustains a sufficient supply of shields over the months ahead.

“The Morrison government is committed to ensuring our frontline health and aged care workers have access to masks and other personal protective equipment,” she said.

“This includes boosting domestic manufacturing capability and capacity and creating a pathway through to manage the virus.

“This initiative will not only help boost the supply of face shields across the country, but also expand industry capability within Australia.”

Axiom will produce around 1000 face shields per day, with the number set to increase as the manufacturing process matures.

“The Australian-made shield is lightweight so it can be worn comfortably for long periods, made from materials which Australia has ready access to, and is cost-competitive to manufacture compared to imported masks,” Reynolds said.

“It provides sovereign manufacturing capability to the medical industry, and is another great example of Defence applying its ingenuity and unique engineering research skills.”

Industry, science and technology minister Karen Andrews said Axiom highlighted the incredible advanced manufacturing capability that exists in Australia.

“Many of the Aussie companies with contracts in defence are advanced manufacturers working at the cutting-edge and there are great cross-over opportunities that exist as a result of that,” she said.

“Whether it’s expanding into medical supplies as we’re seeing in this case or expanding into space or other precision manufacturing – our advanced manufacturers will help Australia come out the other side of this pandemic stronger than ever.”

DST is also helping to increase domestic stocks of invasive ventilators, meanwhile Australian Defence Force personnel have provided support to Victorian manufacturer Med-Con to boost production of surgical face masks.



*Samples of the personal protective equipment (PPE) face mask components being produced by defence industry SME Axiom in collaboration with the Defence Science and Technology Group engineering team for use by health workers in COVID-19 workplaces. Image: Australian Department of Defence*

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