

Naval giant's office launch

CLAIRE BICKERS



Andra Easton, Naval's 250th worker. Picture: Naomi Jellicoe

THE French defence giant building the \$90bn Future Submarines in Adelaide will open its new headquarters in Port Adelaide within months.

Naval Group's new \$25m HQ near the Hart's Mill building in the historic precinct will eventually be home to about 350 employees.

It's tipped to be a shot in the arm for the port's rejuvenation, as the company ramps up its SA operations ahead of the Attack Class submarine build.

The new office will be a complete internal refit of part of the old TAFE SA building on the wharf.

The defence giant has hired its 250th employee in Australia, and the workforce is expected to reach 1700 by 2028 during the submarine build.

Naval is expecting to hire another 50 staff by December.

"With our workforce rapidly expanding, we need an additional base as we prepare for the move to the submarine construction yard at Osborne," Naval Group Australia chief executive John Davis said.

"Port Adelaide, with its strong heritage of waterfront industry and proximity to both Osborne and our Keswick office, is the perfect place for this new base."

Mayor of Port Adelaide Enfield Claire Boan said Naval basing its HQ at the port would be "fantastic for not only the local region but the state as a whole."

She said it would be a boost for business confidence to have hundreds more potential customers and a major company moving to the port.

"It's one of those spaces that's just been waiting to be reawakened, and we see this as a really great opportunity," she said.

"We've also got a couple of new hotels which will be finished in the next couple of years so accommodation will be a big spotlight for our area."

Andra Easton, who was in the navy before moving across to defence industry, was Naval's 250th employee hired in Australia.

The 43-year-old mum of three, whose expertise is managing technical data, said she spotted the job as Naval's information manager on Linked-In.

"When this opportunity came up to be part of something new that's going to shape our state and my children's future, and help South Australia and Australia with the technology, I absolutely couldn't say no to it," she said.