

Indigenous consortium awarded frigates deal

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Indigenous Defence & Infrastructure Consortium chief executive Adam Goodes, ASC Shipbuilding managing director Craig Lockhart and the chairman of TQCSI-Yaran Rick Callaghan at the ASC Shipbuilding head office in Adelaide. Picture: NCA NewsWire/Naomi Jellicoe

BAE'S ASC Shipbuilding arm has contracted its first Indigenous business to support prototyping for the \$35bn Hunterclass frigates program.

The contract was placed with the Indigenous Defence & Infrastructure Consortium (IDIC) and its consortium partner TQCSI-Yaran.

Adelaide-based TQCSIYaran, a majority Aboriginal-owned-and-operated joint venture, will audit and undertake quality, safety, health and environmental systems certification during the frigates prototyping phase from next month.

ASC Shipbuilding managing director Craig Lockhart said diversity in the frigates supply chain was a critical part of developing Australia's long-term industry capability.

"Through Hunter and the building of nine submarine-hunting warships, ASC Shipbuilding is committed to creating and developing up to 20 new Indigenous businesses and increasing Indigenous employment opportunities over the life of the program," he said.

"As we approach prototyping next month, we will place more contracts with Australian businesses, underpinning our commitment to maximise Australian industry capability and underpin a continuous naval shipbuilding capability for Australia well beyond the Hunter-class frigates."

During prototyping the processes, systems, tools and facilities will be tested and refined by ASC Shipbuilding before construction starts on the first frigate in 2022.

BAE Systems has a strategic relationship agreement with the IDIC, which provides opportunities for Indigenous suppliers to become part of BAE's supply chain. TQCSI-Yaran principal Craig Bates hopes to increase participation in the frigates program in the future.

"IDIC and TQCSI-Yaran have worked together for three years providing auditing and certification of ISO management systems to companies and organisations wishing to grow their supply chain with Indigenous-owned companies," he said.

"TQCSI-Yaran's senior leaders have decades of naval experience and the company is looking forward to building on this contract and potentially building our participation in this world-class program."

The IDIC is headed by former AFL footballer Adam Goodes and was established to facilitate Indigenous business participation in defence and major infrastructure projects.

"We've been working on the program since inception. I am delighted the IDIC has been able to facilitate this partnership with TQCSI-Yaran," he said.

ASC Shipbuilding is committed to creating and developing up to 20 new Indigenous businesses

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