

Our submarine 'cousin' handed to the French

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Naval Group has built the Suffren submarine, the first of six in the French Barracuda class, at its Cherbourg shipyard.



INSPIRATION for Australia's new fleet of submarines passed a major milestone in France this week.

After undergoing rigorous sea trials, the Suffren, the first submarine of the Barracuda fleet, has been handed over to the French Defence Procurement Agency.

The move is the final step before being handed to the French Navy.

During the trials, the Suffren's combat system and tactical weapons were evaluated, including tests that proved a naval cruise missile could be fired underwater and hit a land-based target several hundred kilometres away.

"This is a major milestone for the Barracuda program, as the first French cousin of Australia's 12 new attack-class submarines is successfully delivered," Naval Group Australia chief executive officer John Davis told The Sunday Mail.

"It is a truly exciting glimpse into the future for Australia."

Mr Davis said Naval Group would get to work on a modified version of the French submarine that would be tailormade for the defence of Australia.

It would be built at the Osborne Naval Shipyard near Port Adelaide.

"The Australian build is setting down a 50-year bedrock of local benefits, including the creation of 1700 direct jobs at Naval Group Australia," Mr Davis said.

About 30 staff from Naval Group Australia are in France learning essential skills and expertise.

"Cutting-edge technology as well as know-how and know-why will also be transferred from France to Australia as we build the local fleet," Mr Davis said.

"That will leave a legacy of new skills and capacity in the local economy."

The Barracuda fleet was used as an example by Naval Group as the type of quality vessel Australia could receive when it successfully competed for the Royal Australian Navy's lucrative submarine contract against Germany and Japan.

While Australia's attackclass submarines will not be nuclear-powered, as France's Barracuda fleet is, the stealth capability of the vessels' jet propulsion system was spruiked as a key point of difference.