

Navy builders now charting new waters

CHRIS RUSSELL

A GROUP of 51 shipbuilders destined to be made redundant has retrained at Flinders University and gone on to new jobs and promotions.

The workers had all been involved on the air warfare destroyer program, which delivered the final ship to the navy last February.

Instead of joining the dole queue, the workers began a Diploma of Digital Technologies – a new course created in a partnership between Flinders, TAFE SA and BAE Systems Maritime Australia.

The workers began the course last March, learning about robotics and automation, cyber security, cyberphysical systems and other skills focused on the future of manufacturing.

A graduation ceremony last week – the first face-to-face graduation at Flinders in a year – has launched them into the next phase, joining the \$45bn Hunter Class frigate program.

Among the graduates was Jaryd, 26, who is now a detailed designer at BAE after seven years on the AWDs.

“The digital diploma has given me the opportunity to expand my career from my trade as a fitter, combining skills I learnt in the diploma with those I already had, to start a new career in digital design,” he said.

Judd, 34, who has also become a detailed designer, said the course at Flinders’ Tonsley campus provided expert support as he learnt about new technology and innovation. Flinders vice-chancellor Colin Stirling was pleased the inaugural course had successfully been brought to life with every student getting a job.

BAE Systems Maritime Australia managing director Craig Lockhart said the course combined theory with hands-on experience.



Shipbuilders Jaryd, Rick, Luke and Judd have completed a new Diploma of Digital Technologies so they can keep working in the defence industry. Picture: Supplied

"The students are already applying the skills they've learnt over the past 10 months at the new shipyard at Osborne, where prototyping for the Hunter Class frigate program is under way," he said.

"More than half of the group have transitioned from trade-based roles to engineering, project management and supply chain roles, and I'm looking forward to watching Hunter's newest employees forge new career paths.

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