

Shipbuilder tools up in boost for local jobs

CLAIRE BICKERS



Apprentice welder Mitchell Baker, 18, is training to work on the Future Submarines at the Osborne Shipyard. Picture: Tom Huntley

AUSTRALIAN companies will be targeted to supply \$100 million worth of tools and vital equipment to prepare the Osborne Shipyard to build the \$89 billion Future Submarines.

French defence giant Naval Group is going on a buying spree as construction continues on a new shipyard at Port Adelaide and preparations ramp up to build the first Attack-class submarine from 2024.

The company is opening expressions of interest for local suppliers to provide about 1000 items for the shipyard, from welding machines to whiteboards.

Tanks, pumps, scaffolding, hand tools, transport trolleys, office equipment, personal protective gear, workshop benches and a plasma cutter are also among the readymade and custom manufactured items being sought from suppliers.

"The opportunity for Australian suppliers to get involved in this latest \$100 million investment in tools and equipment for the shipyard is significant, as we continue growing the local supply chain," Naval Group Australia chief executive John Davis said.

"We will be targeting this purchase to small and medium Australian businesses, and aiming to build longterm relationships that will continue throughout this multi-decade submarine program."

An initial \$900 million manufacturing package was released last year targeting Australian industry to build more than 20 hi-tech parts for the submarines.

Mr Davis said the project was “on the cusp of an exciting new phase” as the new shipyard took shape and preparations began for construction of the first submarine.

Apprentice Mitchell Baker, 18, will eventually be working on the Future Submarines, after being posted with Advanced Steel Fabrication to learn his trade.

“I hope to be building the pressure hull for the submarine as it’s a very complicated and high-skilled task ... and it requires world-class welders,” he said.

Naval Group’s global chief executive Pierre Eric Pommellet said the company’s local teams were working to build new supply chains and create sovereign Australian defence industry capabilities.

“Ensuring that at least 60 per cent of the Attack-class contract value is spent locally will create hundreds of Australian jobs, for the longterm, in new supply chains around the country,” he said.

More than 2000 businesses in Australia have already registered their interest with Naval Group to eventually become part of the supply chain.