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NOVAFAST AND CENTURY ENGINEERING SECURE FRIGATE CONTRACTS

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Adelaide-based SME businesses Novafast International and Century Engineering have been contracted by BAE Systems Australia to manufacture parts to support the Hunter Class Frigate Program's prototyping phase which is well underway.

Composite product and material manufacturer Novafast has been awarded a contract to manufacture 331 composite pipe spools that will be used for water systems and drains, each one ranging from 9m to nearly 12m long.

Novafast has also been certified by Lloyd's Register to manufacture composite pipe spool – the only company in Australia to be fully accredited to manufacture this product.

Novafast International business manager David Figallo said: "Our world-leading robotic technique manufactures advanced and automated composite piping and fittings to support the representative ship blocks that are being constructed.

"We have already created 15 highly-skilled roles and are projected to create more than 25 roles by late 2023 as the first batch of ships go into production."

Century Engineering has been contracted to manufacture more than 340 steel handrails for the prototype blocks and more than 2,000 steel parts of varying sizes that will be used to support block outfitting.

Century Engineering managing director David Heaslip said: "With BAE Systems Australia, we continue to develop Australian industry supply initiatives leading to a more capable supply ecosystem and giving many individuals the opportunity to develop their skills and provide them with long-term careers."

As part of prototyping, BAE Systems' workforce at the Osborne Naval Shipyard in Adelaide is building representative ship blocks in order to test and refine the processes, systems, tools, facilities and workforce competencies prior to constructing the first of nine submarine-hunting warships.

The latest contracts bring to 45 the number of Australian companies working to support Hunter's prototyping phase, with the company planning to progressively engage more local businesses as the program approaches the cutting of steel on the first frigate, the future HMAS Hunter.

BAE Systems Australia managing director, maritime Craig Lockhart, said: "Block manufacture is a critical part of the prototyping phase that provides our employees the chance to test the full productive capacity of the yard, as well as the build process.

"It's important our supply chain is invested in our success and to that end I'm pleased Novafast International and Century Engineering are working with us – both companies have a strong track record in delivering for defence.

"By engaging local businesses we are not only creating local jobs, but building an enduring sovereign capability that supports Australia's continuous naval shipbuilding strategy for future generations."

[By Peter Roberts](#)
