

Tuesday 27 March, 2018

Fincantieri Reaches Landmark MoU with Australian Unions on Future Frigates Project

One of the world's largest shipbuilders, Fincantieri, a final contender for the Federal Government's SEA 5000 Future Frigates project has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with key Australian trade unions in Canberra today.

The MoU signals the intent of unions and Fincantieri to work together to ensure that the Future Frigate SEA 5000 project produces the best possible naval vessel for the Australian Navy, but also helps to build a sovereign shipbuilding capability, revitalise Australia's manufacturing industry and secure highly skilled jobs for the future.

According to the Chairman of Fincantieri Australia, Dario Deste, SEA 5000 is a once in a generation naval ship building project that represents a unique opportunity for Australia's manufacturing industry: "The significance of the project cannot be over-stated and will inject hundreds of new opportunities for defense and advanced manufacturers across the supply chain, while also creating new skilled jobs," Mr Deste said.

The commitments within the agreement signal a genuine cooperative approach between Fincantieri, its workforce and their representatives to ensure the productive use of technology, the application of modern shipbuilding practices and investment in a skilled workforce provides a clear path forward for the future of naval shipbuilding in Australia.

Signatories to the agreement include: Fincantieri, Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU), The Australian Workers' Union (AWU), The Electrical Trades Union (ETU), Professionals Australia and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).

Mr Deste said that the MoU reflects Fincantieri's long-term industrial relations record and collaboration with trade unions across its shipbuilding portfolio to deliver results for its customers.

"With 20 shipyards across the world, our relationships with unions and our workers are a key factor in our success. We are very keen to ensure that our engagement with key unions is a contributing factor to the success of the future frigates project," Mr Deste said.

"If selected by the Federal Government we will actively work with the unions to address and solve issues through an ongoing communications process which is reflected in the agreement we have committed to."

A stable industrial relations environment is a key component for project success and the MoU we have signed will help meet this objective," he said.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary Scott Connolly:

"The Frigate program is critical to Australia's national security, and the security of thousands of Australians jobs.

"This project has huge potential to create jobs and build capacity right across the shipbuilding industry and its related manufacturing supply chains.

"The ACTU hopes that this agreement signals the start of a constructive relationship between Fincanteri, its workforce and the shipbuilding unions."

Quotes attributable to AMWU Assistant National Secretary Glenn Thompson:

"This agreement is another milestone in our campaign for an Australian shipbuilding industry that delivers good jobs and meets Australia's future needs. Thousands of shipbuilding workers have campaigned to secure the future of this industry."

"We look forward to working with Fincantieri to build a workforce that has the skills to deliver this critical project."

Quotes attributable to ETU National Secretary Allen Hicks:

"Today's agreement represents the beginning of a productive partnership between working people and a major employer in the defense construction industry."

"It is evidence for all industry participants in the manufacturing, construction and infrastructure sectors that a co-operative working relationship with unions is in the best interests of working people, business and the nation."

Quotes attributable to AWU SA Secretary Peter Lamps:

"The AWU looks forward to working constructively with Fincantieri and our fellow unions to deliver a successful project that generates quality employment now and into the future."

Quotes attributable to Professionals Australia CEO Chris Walton

"Australia is in dire need of major projects which generate good, steady jobs for engineers and other workers in the shipbuilding industry."

"This is the most important and complex project in Australia, providing an enormous opportunity to fast track our move into advanced manufacturing and create the smart jobs of the future through."

"That opportunity will only be seized if we do the vast majority of work locally in Australia to get the flow on benefit to Australian workers through direct jobs in the supply chain."

ENDS

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