



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Defence Sub-Committee

Chair: Senator David Fawcett
Deputy: Senator Deborah O'Neill

Expanding Defence industry exports by SMEs

Opportunities to expand the contribution of small to medium sized enterprises to Australia's defence industry exports will be explored at a public hearing in Sydney on Friday, 17 October.

The Defence Sub-Committee of federal parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade will hear from several SMEs which currently export defence products and services. These include Quickstep Technologies which manufactures advanced composite parts for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft, Sonartech ATLAS which manufactures sonar products for the Australian and other navies, and Ferra Engineering which manufactures aerospace structures for Australian and overseas defence and aerospace companies.

Issues of concern to SMEs include Australia's approach to defence procurement, notably the contention that the domestic defence industry is fundamentally geared to support the needs of the ADF by integrating equipment sourced from overseas suppliers; Government support for R&D; access to overseas markets; and access to capital.

Chair of the Defence Sub-Committee, Senator David Fawcett (SA), said the hearing will provide an opportunity to explore these issues and other barriers to expanding exports of defence goods and services produced by Australian SMEs:

"Defence industry should be seen as a fundamental input to Australia's defence capability which means we need it to be innovative and sustainable. One way to achieve this is for the Government to encourage, and where appropriate facilitate, export to suitable nations" Senator Fawcett said.

The inquiry's terms of reference include identifying barriers and impediments to the growth of Australia's defence exports; how Government can better engage and assist Australian defence industry to export its products; the operation of the Defence Export Control Office; and assessment of the export support given to defence industry by governments of comparable nations.

Public hearing

- Date/Time:** Friday, 17 October 2014, 9:45 am to 4:15 pm
- Location:** Northcott Room, SMC Conference & Function Centre, 66 Goulburn Street, Sydney
- Organisations:** Export Finance and Insurance Corporation, Sonartech ATLAS, Thales Australia, AMWU, EM Solutions, Ferra Engineering and Quickstep Technologies.

The hearing will be audio broadcast live at www.aph.gov.au/live.

For media comment: please contact the Sub-Committee Chair, Senator David Fawcett, on (08) 8205 1040 (Electorate Office) or (02) 6277 3418 (Parliament House).

For further information: please contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2313, via email at jscfadt@aph.gov.au or visit the inquiry website at: www.aph.gov.au/jfadt.