

## Hon Steven Marshall MP Premier

Friday 18 December 2020

### **First students in jobs after Premier's Defence Industry Scholarship Program**

The first cohort of university students have completed their defence industry placements under the Premier's \$600,000 Defence Industry Scholarship Program, with 11 students accepted in the first round of placements and seven in scholarship-supported placements since mid-June.

Premier Steven Marshall said it was great to see the inaugural students from the scholarship program, which will continue to run in 2021, build real-world skills from their respective industry partners – and in turn, get a job out of it.

"This scholarship program is all about connecting university students with the defence industry to ensure they can take advantage of the career opportunities on offer in South Australia," Premier Marshall said.

"We need to inspire the next generation of defence industry workers because we have a pipeline of Hi-Tech jobs in South Australia that will span over the next 40 years and beyond."

"As outlined in the new South Australian Defence Sector Strategy 2030, ensuring we develop a future workforce with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to deliver these projects is crucial."

Brandon Sears, studying a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering (Honours) at Flinders University, has completed a placement with APC Technology and has since secured full-time employment with the company.

Brandon Sears, who graduated from university in November, said his placement with APC Technology helped him gain real, hands-on experience after joining the program with a strong interest in the defence sector.

"During my internship at APC Technology, I was able to gain solid defence experience, which was my main objective," Brandon said.

"I was given the opportunity to apply my educational qualifications, but also learnt new hands-on skills, notably in environmental testing."

"I made the decision during my internship to look for an engineering role within defence once I finished and I am delighted to have been offered, and accepted, a permanent full-time position with APC. For me the outcome of the program could not have been better."

Scott Begbie, Managing Director of APC Technology, said the company got involved in the Scholarship Program as a way to identify and feed prospective talent into their operations, as well as nurture the engineers of the future.

“Brandon has brought a new dynamic to the team and also provided an opportunity for our engineers to experience the process of mentoring. We believe there are mutual benefits to being part of the Premier’s Defence Industry Scholarship Program so we would like to continue supporting the program into the future,” said Mr Begbie.

Additional students undertook placements with local companies Swordfish Computing, Aurecon, Form Cut, and REDARC Electronics, with a further two students commencing their placements at Dematec Automation and Wallbridge Gilbert Aztec over the summer semester.

Luiza Menezes Nogueira, who is completing a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) at the University of Adelaide, and recently completed her placement with Aurecon, said she applied for the scholarship program because of the links between businesses and students within the defence industry.

“As a student engineer, I have always been excited for defence projects in our state as they provide a great outcome for our economy and our nation’s security. I am certainly hoping to continue my work in the defence industry as an engineer after graduating as I feel strongly that there are many opportunities in this field that are exciting and innovative,” said Luiza.

“I want to be part of a thriving industry where I can move forward and have the opportunity to grow as a student engineer and as a professional.”

Niko Tsoukalas, Principal, Built Environment and Infrastructure Advisory and South Australian Government Market Leader at Aurecon said being involved in the program enabled the company to build their future workforce capabilities by directly linking industry and real-world work with university students.

“As an employer in the defence industry, this has enabled us to tap into the skills and knowledge of leading third year and honours year university students. Supporting the placements of these high-calibre students enables us to build our future workforce by growing and nurturing the in-demand skills, knowledge and experience through work-based learning opportunities,” said Mr Tsoukalas.

For more information about the scholarship program and for upcoming placement opportunities, visit: <https://defencescholarships.aigroup.com.au>