

**Minister Martin Hamilton-Smith**

Minister for Defence Industries

**Minister Susan Close**

Minister for Education and Child Development

Friday, 28 August, 2015

## South Australian school prepares students for defence industry jobs

The Government is on track to fulfil its election commitment for a specialist Defence Program, with a suburban high school helping to prepare a new generation of South Australians to benefit from the next wave of defence industry jobs.

Defence Industries Minister Martin Hamilton-Smith and Education Minister Susan Close have visited The Heights School in Modbury, which began its specialist Defence Industries Pathway Program earlier this year.

Dr Close said the Defence program at The Heights School – already an Ignite focus school for gifted education – will expose students to cutting edge technology including robotics, 3D printers and computer aided design modelling and manufacturing systems.

“Since the middle of this year, the school has been providing specialist maths, engineering and technology related skills to align students with future defence industry careers.

“The school’s existing strengths in science and maths have paved a solid foundation for its future success,” Dr Close said.

The State Government provided \$300,000 towards equipment, staff and professional and program development, with a senior leader being appointed to manage the defence program.

Principal Helen Calvert said the course will continue to help its 1000-plus students gain the skills necessary for a career in defence industries.

“This program has created a range of opportunities for our students to work with industries, and provided them with a direct link to industry leaders,” Ms Calvert said.

“It has also created opportunities to pursue pathways in university education and qualifications in high-growth areas such as advanced manufacturing, which is where future jobs will exist.

“The program has been integrated into maths, technology and science subjects from Year 8 onwards, and counts towards the student’s SACE.

“We want to cater the defence program to industry needs, and students will get on-the-ground training within these industries.”

The Heights School also offers an Ignite specialist program for children gifted in maths and science, which has led to many students becoming more interested in engineering and manufacturing.

Mr Hamilton-Smith said it was pleasing that some of South Australia's brightest students were considering future careers in the state's defence industry.

"The Federal Government has a clear choice to make regarding its Future Frigates and Submarines Programs: it can either provide future job opportunities for these highly skilled South Australian students, or sell off their dreams overseas," Mr Hamilton-Smith said.

"The program focuses on providing young people with skill sets that are aligned to employment in the defence supply industries.

"This will enhance our state's capabilities to build world-class defence assets and sustain an industry which employs 28,500 South Australians, and contributes about \$2 billion to the state's economy each year."

The school is building on its well-developed industry partnerships, with a Saab Systems engineer currently working with teachers to develop the Re-Engineering Australia's 'Subs in Schools Challenge'.

"In addition to the partnership with Saab, a first-year graduate engineer mentors students involved in the program," Mr Hamilton-Smith said.

In conjunction with the Northern Advanced Manufacturing Industry Group, The Heights School is involved in student challenges including the 'uninhabited aerial vehicle challenge' where students learn to fly their UAV, fit it with sensors, collect and interpret data and submit a technical report to judges.

Students are also involved in drone challenges where they design and build an unmanned craft and develop detection and tracking systems that could remotely identify faulty power cables and insulators.

The school is also building key relationships with the University of South Australia, University College at Mawson Lakes and the Defence Science and Technology Organisation.