

MEDIA RELEASE



Ref: 0003-14

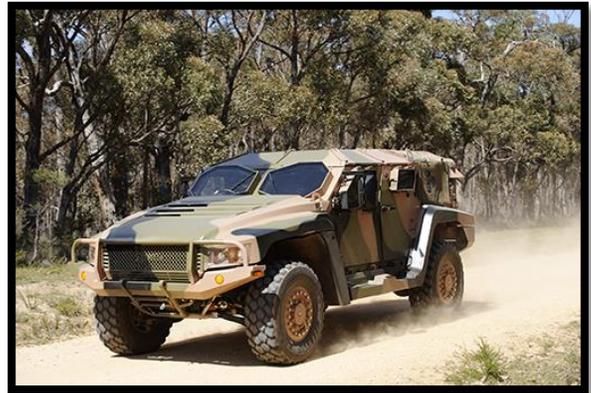
11th June 2014

Thales Australia engages composites specialist, RPC Technologies, in landmark Defence project

Composites offer impressive strength to weight characteristics together with exceptional corrosion resistance and lifelong performance. Composites also offer the ability to produce complex shapes to enable multiple components to be moulded into one part which also helps to save on weight and helps reduce manufacturing costs.

Designers from Thales Australia rated these qualities highly when enlisting design advice for the manufacture of prototype parts for its Hawkei Protected Vehicle development.

The Thales Hawkei must not exceed a weight target of 7 tonnes. The weight limit is dictated by the lifting capacity of the Chinook helicopter that will carry it into the field.



Specialist composite manufacturer, RPC Technologies, was engaged by Thales Australia to assist in vehicle weight reduction by manufacturing composite dashboard assemblies for the new Hawkei vehicle.

Thales Australia CEO Chris Jenkins said: “RPC has the expertise required for the production of military vehicles. Their commitment to excellence in manufacturing and value for money will benefit the Hawkei project, while also securing supply chain skills in Victoria.”

Tony Caristo, Managing Director of RPC Technologies said “we are thrilled about the opportunity to work with Thales on the Hawkei project. RPC has a proud record of supporting Thales, having previously been involved with the Bushmaster program and also Thales Underwater Systems. The Hawkei project will secure our workforce at our Geelong plant, while adding to RPC’s presence in Defence.”

Thales Australia is currently leveraging its specialist procurement experience developed during the Bushmaster program to help with the supply Hawkei components.

MEDIA RELEASE



By way of example the Bushmaster supply chain comprises around 120 Australian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), with more than 100 based in Victoria and 30 in the Bendigo area. It contains 65% Australian content, generating long term revenues for a wide range of local component manufacturers and supporting hundreds of Australian jobs.

Thales has already delivered six Hawkei vehicles to the Department of Defence. These are currently undergoing testing under the LAND 121 Phase 4 project which will ultimately involve providing up to 1,300 protected light vehicles. Subject to successful testing, final approval of the project is expected in 2015.

Thales, having seen the benefits gained from the use of composites during the prototype stage, is now considering extending the use of composites to other parts of the Hawkei.

RPC Technologies has been working closely with Thales during this preproduction phase to continually enhance vehicle design and to incorporate additional improvements - the aim being to further reduce weight, increase strength and reduce cost.

RPC Technologies has been able to provide Thales with comprehensive engineering support from concept to CAD modelling to FEA analysis and physical testing and validation capabilities. This has allowed the designs and composite material selection to be optimised for thickness to achieve optimum strength at a reduced weight and cost.

Thales has sought suppliers with engineering capabilities to complement their own.

RPC Technologies is proud to be one of those Australian companies that has met these requirements and looks forward to continuing its working partnership with Thales on this very capable Hawkei vehicle.

Elena Zaballero
Marketing & Communications Manager,
RPC Technologies Pty Limited
p: 02 9624 9823
e: marketing@rpctechnologies.com