

Senate Standing Committee Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Opportunities for Strengthening Australia's relationships with the People's
Republic of France – 26 June 2020

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Defence

Topic: SSCFADT - Public Hearing - Opportunities for Strengthening Australia's
Relationship with Republic of France - 26 June 2020 - Q2 - Joint Ventures - Kitching

Question reference number:

Senator/Member: Kimberley Kitching

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Question:

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Tesch. In your submission there are some points around Team Defence Australia and trade shows and Australian and defence companies committing to progress joint ventures. Could you expand on those? Is there a strategy in place, firstly? And where are the priorities, or what's possible to expand in these relationships?

Mr Tesch: Yes. Again, this is one of those areas where the practical constraints are telling. There are a number of vectors across a range of industries that we are seeking to prosecute. Clearly, there are some significant extant commercial relationships, in relation to both maritime and aviation platforms, and they have a range of spin-off and allied opportunities for commercial engagement. The specifics of the future activities that we would like to prosecute under Team Defence Australia, with these substantial French industrial shows and expos, are still obviously going to be subject to change, and I think we have to just work through that as best we can. But at a broad level, at the moment, that's about as much as I think I can say, because of the uncertainty that attaches to what we can concretely progress in the absence of international travel and participation in trade shows.

CHAIR: I was after: in what areas have the joint ventures been, or where has there been interest in terms of those joint ventures? Are there particular sectors that are of more interest, for example, to French and Australian companies than to others?

Mr Tesch: Again, I'm not sure what level of detail might be most suitable for you, but—

CHAIR: To give you an example, are there joint ventures on software, or is it more of a hardware variety? I need just a basic idea; I don't need it to be particularly in depth. I'm just wondering if there are particular areas where there has been interest.

Mr Tesch: Yes, I think probably the way to respond to that, at that level, is to say that we are seeing scope to move this relationship beyond the simple hardware and equipment focused endeavours, and perhaps I might ask Greg Sammut: against the backdrop of the submarines program, there are illustrative examples of the kinds of fields and areas in which we are seeing this commercial opportunity evolve.

Mr Sammut: We have seen some examples, when it comes to some of the systems that we might put into submarines, whereby Australian companies have joined with French companies to share expertise and experience in the supply of particular systems that would

better prepare Australian companies to be able to provide equipment for the future submarines. I just offer that as one example of where we have seen joint ventures. Also there have been situations where design companies have also reached out to work with Australian companies when it comes to the qualifications of designers and so forth who may be involved at later stages in the design process for the future submarines. I just offer those as some examples that we've seen—

CHAIR: I appreciate it. That was sort of what I was after. I'm just trying to get an understanding of where you might be aware that there are areas of general interest, because obviously the committee's report will look at commercial ventures, as well as, obviously, defence and security outcomes, or at where bilateral relations might be able to be expanded. So I'm just trying to get a sense of where that is.

Answer:

Noting the response given at the hearing, below are examples of engagements/exports involving Australian defence industry, French Defence industry and/or the French military.

- Memko (headquartered in Victoria) is a provider of industry specific Products, Technology, Training and Engineering Solutions.
 - In 2018, Memko and French company Ingeliance formed a joint venture (Ingeliance Australia).
- CableX (headquartered in Victoria) is a globally recognised manufacturer of custom cables and harness assemblies, and
 - In 2018, CableX was awarded an Airbus global supply chain contract for the manufacture and supply of electrical harnesses and bays for ARH Tiger and NH90 Taipan helicopters.
 - Cablex has previously secured an Airbus Award for Best Global Supplier Airbus Helicopters 2016 for Industrial Performance across Quality, Schedule and Total Costs.
- EM Solutions (headquartered in Queensland) is a trusted technology developer of innovative microwave and on-the-move radio and satellite products, has become an integral part of the Thales supply chain.
 - EM Solutions was awarded a contract in 2012 to provide key Ka band components for a satellite terminal being developed by Thales in France.
 - EM Solutions has continued to supply Thales with components for a range of products for global customers.
- W&E Platt (headquartered in New South Wales) specialises in the design, testing, prototyping, manufacture, installation and Integrated Logistics Support of weapon mounts and ordnance parts for law enforcement and military entities.
 - W&E Platt Weapon Mounts have been exported worldwide, including to France.
- DroneShield (headquartered in New South Wales) is a worldwide leader in drone security technology.
 - DroneShield's *DroneGun Tactical* has been trialed by the French Army and featured as part of their display during the 2019 Bastille Day parade in Paris. DroneShield are continuing to work with the French Armed Forces on further trials.