

Major milestone for Offshore Patrol Vessel Program

In a major milestone for the Royal Australian Navy, the first of the new Arafura Class Offshore Patrol Vessels, *Arafura*, has been officially launched in Osborne, South Australia.

The event was attended by the Governor of South Australia, Premier of South Australia, Minister for Defence and the Chief of the Royal Australian Navy.

Chief Executive Officer of Luerssen Australia, Jens Nielsen, said it is a proud day for the company after starting construction of the vessel in 2018.

“This launch is an important moment in the life of *Arafura* and it is an opportunity to celebrate and recognise the hard work and commitment of hundreds of people,” said Mr Nielsen.

“Everyone who has worked on *Arafura* has a unique place in the Royal Australian Navy’s history and you should be proud of your achievements, thank you.”

“Together we have built a formidable vessel for the Navy.”

Luerssen Australia has an extensive Australian supply chain involved in multiple aspects of the shipbuilding Program.

“I am proud of the high level of Australian Industry Content and the large number of close relationships we have forged with our partners, the Program Office and the broader Defence community over the years.”

The AIC percentage for the Program is 63 per cent and Luerssen Australia’s next target is to reach 65 per cent.

The ship’s sponsor who named *Arafura* upon launch was Ms Nova Peris OAM OLY, the first Aboriginal Australian to win an Olympic gold medal, a descendant from West Arnhem Land and a very proud representative of Northern Australia, where the ship will largely operate. Ms Peris was also the first Aboriginal woman elected to Federal Parliament.

Traditionally ships have sponsors to bestow good luck and protection over the vessel and all who sail on her, and they maintain an ongoing relationship with the vessel.

In a unique twist at the ceremony, instead of champagne, a bottle of water from the Arafura Sea was smashed on the bow to mark the launch of the vessel.

Luerssen Australia became the Prime Contractor on the SEA1180 Program to build twelve Arafura Class OPVs after winning the contract at the end of 2017, with two to be built in Osborne and ten in Henderson, Western Australia.

Luerssen Australia has a long-term strategy for building and sustaining minor warships and large vessels in Australia, in line with the Federal Government’s continuous naval shipbuilding strategy, and is committed to delivering the Arafura Class OPVs on time and on budget.

Imagery can be found at the following link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/q93kwb4gva4ofmn/AABeJmIgf3Ui8q2YuWDI7BRa?dl=0>

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