




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Defence Industries

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.44 am): I join with the Premier in welcoming leaders of the Queensland Jewish community to the gallery of the Queensland parliament this morning, including Mr Jason Steinberg. In particular, I acknowledge survivors of the Holocaust, the Shoah, in the Queensland parliament this morning. We say their names so we never forget.

The terrible war in Ukraine reminds us every day of the importance of the Australian Defence Force, and the importance for the Australian Defence Force to have access to the very best equipment. For the Australian Army, the very best of that equipment is being manufactured right here in Queensland.

Rheinmetall's Boxer Combat Reconnaissance Vehicle is at the absolute front line of Australia's land defences. I am pleased to say that the first 25 Boxers being delivered under the LAND 400 Phase 2 project have achieved an important milestone in their certification process. The Australian Army has declared the Boxers have achieved initial operating capability. This benchmark is not some desktop exercise. It is the result of extensive test and evaluation processes, including deploying the Boxer during Exercise Sea Raider. The exercise was conducted in September at the Cowley Beach Training Area near Innisfail and involved the Boxer doing an amphibious landing from HMAS Adelaide. The Boxer is now deployed with the Army's 7th Brigade based at Gallipoli barracks, Enoggera.

Getting defence projects to the point where they provide our defence personnel with the protection and projection they need is always challenging. For the Boxer to achieve initial operating capability, it is a great testament to the work of Rheinmetall Defence Australia, led by its CEO, Mr Gary Stewart, its team of highly skilled workers at Redbank and many small and medium Queensland businesses who support Rheinmetall.

This week's federal budget has also confirmed progress on another important Queensland defence project. The Defence Portfolio Budget Statements confirmed a funding commitment of \$220 million to be spent in 2022-23 to stand up production of Boeing's MQ-28A Ghost Bat uncrewed aircraft. This is part of expanding Defence's Ghost Bats acquisition from three aircraft to 10. Boeing is establishing its advanced aerospace manufacturing facility at Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport to assemble the Ghost Bat. It will be the first military aircraft designed, developed and manufactured in Australia for over 50 years.

As Queensland's Strategic Defence Adviser, retired Rear Admiral Simon Cullen, notes in today's *Australian* newspaper, our government has been working hard to support Defence's capabilities. He says the Queensland government does this throughout the state through 'the provision of infrastructure and facilities, skilled people, world class research and a growing defence manufacturing base' which really makes a difference in our state. We look forward to continuing to work with the federal government, with the defence department and with industry to bring more defence projects to Queensland.