

Feature Story

Boeing contract boosts SME defence expansion

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B&R Enclosures' contract to provide brackets and racks for Boeing's Currawong battlespace communications system has spurred the family-owned Australian business' expansion into the defence sector.

A leading SME designer and manufacturer of enclosures and cabinets, B&R's core business has traditionally been industrial, information and communication technology, hazardous areas, industrial and domestic applications.

"Boeing Defence Australia engaged us to develop brackets for high capacity line-of-sight radio and videoconferencing equipment," said Executive Director at B&R Enclosures, Chris Bridges-Taylor. "That initial piece of work was the foundation for shaping our defence business which now includes a broad range of data and electrical custom enclosure, as well as integration and control solutions."

Project Currawong employs more than 200 Australian businesses and Boeing prides itself on creating opportunities for SMEs in its supply chain to both build capability and expand internationally.

"Our local supply chain provides agility, certainty, and an ability to work at pace," said Boeing Defence Australia head of industry engagement, Peter Farquharson. "In return, the complexity of defence work delivers opportunities for SMEs to build sophisticated manufacturing skills and reap benefits beyond one specific program."

B&R's work in the defence sector has justified investment into Industry 4.0 business systems and capital equipment.

"We are committed to staying at the leading edge of smart manufacturing techniques and digital technology innovations to meet the evolving needs of our market," said Bridges-Taylor.

"The defence industry's stringent quality and accreditation requirements have escalated our investment in equipment such as robotic laser welding and 3D technology to enhance our physical production processes. We are now recognised for our ability to achieve highly technical outcomes for the challenges of the defence industry."

An Australian industry capability success story, B&R Enclosures is actively applying its capability developed for defence programs to a range of industries, while simultaneously strengthening its capacity to support customers in the international marketplace.