

Media Release

The Hon Colin Brooks MP
Minister for Industry and Advanced Manufacturing
Minister for Creative Industries



Thursday, 26 February 2026

VICTORIA STRENGTHENS DEFENCE MANUFACTURING

The Allan Labor Government is strengthening Victoria's position as the nation's leading defence manufacturer, creating local jobs and driving long-term economic growth.

Minister Brooks today joined Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles to witness the first AS9 *Huntsman* Self-Propelled Howitzers – long-range mobile artillery weapons – roll off the production line at Hanwha Defence's Avalon facility.

The vehicles were built under the Australian Army's \$1 billion LAND 8116 project at the Hanwha Armoured vehicle Centre of Excellence in Avalon.

The \$225 million facility, established with support from the Allan Labor Government, is Hanwha's national manufacturing hub. It will also manufacture 129 Redback Infantry Fighting Vehicles for the Commonwealth's \$5-7 billion LAND 400 Phase 3 program.

The Victorian Government has also provided \$2.1 million in grants to 29 small and medium businesses since 2022 through its \$10 million Victorian Land Systems Fund and Supply Chain Uplift Program, helping them join Hanwha Defence Australia's supply chain and gain more work in the wider defence industry.

These Labor-supported manufacturing programs will create more than 1,000 direct jobs and hundreds more across the 2,500 businesses in Victoria's defence supply chain.

Victoria continues to be the destination of choice for leading global defence manufacturers like Hanwha thanks to the state's highly skilled workforce, advanced manufacturing expertise and world-class research and development capabilities.

The Victorian Defence Vision Statement outlines the Government's plan to leverage the state's nation-leading capabilities in advanced manufacturing, workforce talent and defence-related research and development – which contribute around \$10.9 billion annually to our economy and employ over 29,000 workers across Victoria.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Industry and Advanced Manufacturing Colin Brooks

"This milestone cements Victoria's position at the centre of Australia's defence manufacturing capability, supporting highly skilled jobs, strengthening sovereign capability and driving long-term economic growth."

"Built right here in Victoria, these vehicles showcase the strength of Victoria's advanced manufacturing industry, the expertise of our skilled workforce and the significant economic benefits of world-class production."

Member for Western Victoria Gayle Tierney

"This project puts Western Victoria on the map as a defence manufacturing powerhouse. It means good, stable jobs right here at home."

Member for Lara Ella George

"Our community in Geelong's North is stepping up as a key player in cutting-edge defence work. This project means real opportunities for local workers and businesses to grow and thrive in a strong, future-focused industry."

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Quote from Hanwha Defence Australia and UK/Europe CEO Ben Hudson

“The support from the Victorian Government to both Hanwha Defence Australia and our supply chain partners has been excellent, confirming Geelong as the right choice for our manufacturing base.”