

MEDIA RELEASE



The Hon. Bruce Billson, MP
Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence

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SKILLING AUSTRALIA'S DEFENCE INDUSTRY PROGRAM PROVIDES VITAL SUPPORT TO MILITARY SYSTEMS INTEGRATION

The Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence Bruce Billson today officially launched Skilling Australia's Defence Industry Agreements between a group of industry partners (BAE Systems Australia, Saab Systems and ASC) and Defence that will establish a newly developed Master of Engineering degree in Military Systems Integration in Adelaide.

Skilling Australia's Defence Industry Program and the partner companies will invest up to \$7.86 million over the next five years in a program that directly focuses on the critical high-technology skills shortage in Military Systems Integration. The course was developed by the partner companies in conjunction with the University of South Australia and with support from the Government's SADI Program.

"I congratulate BAE Systems, Saab Systems and ASC for putting their competitive thinking together to provide the critical mass to establish this much needed course" Mr Billson said.

"Previously, Military Systems Integration skills were only learnt after many years of on-the-job experience and mentoring by senior practitioners, and demand was outstripping supply. The partner companies will now be able to obtain highly trained and specialised engineers in a shorter time" Minister Billson said.

The SADI Agreements with the partner companies will accelerate the development of engineering managers, design team leaders, technical authorities, integration and test managers and support managers – areas in which there are skills shortages. Following the first intake of MSI students from BAE Systems, Saab Systems and ASC in 2006, the program will be opened to other industry participants in 2007.

"This joint initiative will play a vital role in ensuring Australia has the highly skilled engineers capable of leading engineering outputs in the integration of highly complex, software intensive military systems. The investment by the companies and the SADI program will increase the skills base not only of the companies but will benefit industry and the wider community generally" said Mr Billson.

Through the SADI Program, the Australian Government will invest up to \$215 million over ten years to assist defence industry generate additional skilled positions, up-skill existing employees and improve the quality and quantity

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