

KEEL LAYING ACHIEVED FOR FIFTH OFFSHORE PATROL VESSEL

The Arafura Class Offshore Patrol Vessel Program continues to go from strength to strength, with the keel laying ceremony held for the fifth vessel.

The vessel will be known as HMAS *Illawarra* when it is commissioned.

The ceremony took place in Henderson, Western Australia, and was attended by Deputy Secretary National Naval Shipbuilding, Tony Dalton, Head Navy Capability, Rear Admiral Pete Quinn AM CSC, and the Chairman of Luerssen Australia, Tim Wagner.

A keel laying ceremony is a tradition dating back to the times of wooden ships and is said to bring luck to the ship during construction, and to the captain and crew during her life.

In keeping with tradition, two shipbuilders from Luerssen Australia placed the coin under the keel, alongside RADM Quinn.

Chairman of Luerssen Australia, Tim Wagner, was delighted to attend the ceremony and congratulate the team.

“The progress on this program has been fantastic and I’m very happy to see it has opened up new opportunities for local businesses,” said Mr Wagner.

“Luerssen Australia is creating local jobs, and investing in the shipbuilding industry in Australia. We strongly believe there is a bright future with a lot of opportunities nationally and for exports from Henderson.”

Luerssen Australia CEO, Jens Nielsen, said the event showcased the fantastic progress being made on the program.

“I’m extremely proud of the people in our company and the keel laying milestone is testament to the hard work and commitment of everyone involved,” said Mr Nielsen.

“Our supplier partners are critical to our success and I would like to thank them and the Department of Defence for their ongoing support as we help create a sovereign shipbuilding industry in Australia.”

Luerssen Australia is employing Australian workers, in Australian shipyards, using Australian steel to provide the Royal Australian Navy the vessels it needs for the future.

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