

PACIFIC 2019 Maritime Exposition

Keynote speech

Category:

Author: Ian Irving, Chief Executive Naval Shipbuilding Institute

Ian.Irving@navalshipbuildingcollege.com.au

Title: Creating a skilled, sovereign workforce for ships and submarines

Overview:

The Naval Shipbuilding College (the College) is an Australian Government initiative managed by Naval Shipbuilding Institute (Australia) Pty Ltd, a joint venture between KBR and Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII).

The College has been established to ensure a skilled and accessible, sovereign naval shipbuilding workforce is available to deliver and maintain the Australian Government's \$90 billion continuous naval shipbuilding enterprise over the next 50 years.

Since the official opening in November 2018, the undertaking in uncharted waters involved implementing the operational model against the back-drop of a recovering mining industry, the establishment of a new space industry, a robust aviation industry and an already established and growing defence industry has presented unique challenges.

The College has developed innovative partnerships with education and training providers across Australia. Vocational and tertiary training methods and courses are being assessed and adapted for naval shipbuilding requirements, identified through a whole of industry approach to taxonomy priorities and future needs.

Review and establishment of effective workforce retention strategies and techniques have been undertaken to encourage the skilled workforce to remain in Australia, to ensure the sustainment of the naval shipbuilding industry, and risk mitigate salaries from steep increases.

The result is an on-track workforce attraction, training and retention model which will deliver the largest skilled workforce in Australia's history.

A healthy and competitive Australian naval shipbuilding enterprise will strengthen a maritime industry by creating increased import and export opportunities as well as a highly skilled regional workforce.

The scale and scope of Australia's \$90 billion Shipbuilding Enterprise engineering project is unprecedented in Australia's industrial history, with the cutting-edge upgrade to the Royal

Australian Navy's fleet of ships and submarines having all the hallmarks of a nation-building endeavour.

This represents the largest single engineering project that this country has ever embarked upon, a 40 year plus continuous shipbuilding enterprise. But it's much broader than just the naval projects themselves and is indeed a national endeavour that requires skills and expertise established at a sovereign level, not seen in this country before.

With much discussion about the availability and capability of the required workforce as one of the major challenges for this enterprise - this is where the Naval Shipbuilding College comes in.

Operated by the Naval Shipbuilding Institute - a partnership between KBR and America's largest naval shipbuilding company Huntington Ingalls Industries - the Naval Shipbuilding College is based at both the Osborne Naval Shipyard in South Australia and at South Metropolitan TAFE's Naval Base campus in Western Australia.

The Naval Shipbuilding College is partnering with Defence, industry and a national network of training and education providers. Its purpose is to play an integral role in developing the Australian workforce required to ensure the successful delivery of the critical naval capabilities that support our national security.

The activity of the College is now gaining real momentum and is poised to transform Australia's naval shipbuilding workforce of the future.

The ambition of the Australian Government's \$90 billion engineering project is unprecedented in Australia's industrial history, and to succeed it will require the unrivalled development of a sovereign shipbuilding and sustainment capability that reaches into every state and territory, underpinned by a 'new level' of collaboration amongst industry to identify, attract, train and retain a shipbuilding workforce.

Global prime shipbuilding companies through to small, bespoke local industry suppliers will all play a critical role in contributing to the realisation of a truly national and sustainable Enterprise. It is estimated that more than 15,000 qualified and non-qualified workers will be required directly and indirectly in the first ten years of the Enterprise by naval shipbuilders and the associated supply chain and sustainment industry. Thousands of jobs will be secured for Australians over the coming decades and there are significant opportunities for local businesses to prosper too, as the supply chain engagement fans out across the whole country. Thousands of small to medium companies within the supply chain and sustainment categories are relying on industry to seize this opportunity.

The strengthening of Australia's naval shipbuilding industrial network provides a unique opportunity for career development and upskilling across a multitude of job categories. Workers will have the opportunity to gain training and qualifications across many high-end skills and professions that will give them a strong foundation for a rewarding and meaningful career. As

workers become increasingly skilled, their employment options will widen and many will pursue promotional pathways and new experiences.

New career opportunities will soon spawn throughout Australia, offering jobs across a diversity of disciplines, from fabrication roles in the construction yards, through to engineering roles in the design bureaus, and leadership opportunities within management teams. They will be jobs of the future supported by state-of-the-art digital tools embedded throughout the design and construction processes, as well as during integration across the supply chain.

Indeed, the College is already well advanced in partnering with training and education providers across Australia to ensure there is a sustainable pipeline of skilled and job-ready workers available. Today's high school, TAFE and university students will form a critical element of Australia's future naval shipbuilding construction, supply chain, and sustainment workforce, coupled with experienced personnel sourced from across Australia's industrial sectors. However, large parts of this workforce are still three to four years away from graduating and the major companies' current needs are for workers who are skilled and experienced to lead and establish the core of their design and construction teams.

The Mission and Vision of the College

The Mission of the Naval Shipbuilding College is - To Lead the creation and sustainment of the enterprise that identifies, attracts and skills multi-generational sovereign capability for naval shipbuilding.

The Vision that the College has is that - all stakeholders know that Australia has the shipbuilding capability to meet the Naval Shipbuilding Plan

The College has been established to serve a number of stakeholder groups.

- a. Firstly, the Commonwealth – the Department of Defence. To lead the creation and sustainment of the Enterprise that identifies, attracts and skills multi-generational sovereign capability for naval shipbuilding for Australia - from school students to experienced trades and tertiary graduates and ensures that the workforce is available with sufficient skills and capacity to meet Australia's Naval Shipbuilding Plan - including construction, supply chain, sustainment, and ship repair activities across the nation.
- b. Secondly – Industry. Partnering with industry to create a national skills base. Ensuring that the industry workforce is available in the required locations in the required capacity when needed. Ensuring that this workforce has the required skills, knowledge and experience required to enter the shipbuilding sector. Reducing industry's cost of sourcing its required labour force, and assisting with the overall management of sector workforce evolution (up and down) over time.
- c. Thirdly – the education and training sector. Connecting the education and training sector to where they can contribute to the national Naval Shipbuilding Enterprise. Ensuring that suitable education and training offerings are made available to meet the workforce training

needs, and ensuring that the quality of the skilling offerings is endorsed and maintained at the requisite level.

- d. And finally - the future workforce. Increasing the overall pool of workforce candidates through national industry sector promotion. Promoting the opportunities available for careers in Australia's Naval Shipbuilding Enterprise. Connecting potential future employees with the sector opportunities and industry companies.

The Naval Shipbuilding College Model

The College operational model is a 'hub and spoke.' The College is the Hub, headquartered at Osborne, South Australia and with an office in Henderson Western Australia, adjacent to the two major shipbuilding construction yards, and with potentially a third location in NSW to serve the Garden Island ship sustainment precinct. This is the Hub. The spokes are Australia's training provider network. The College has engagement with the national training provider network across the vocational and tertiary sectors in every state and territory of Australia – these are the spokes.

Naval Shipbuilding College Activities:

On behalf of Government and its industry stakeholders the College conducts activities across the complete spectrum of workforce management and development for the naval shipbuilding sector. From workforce demand and supply modelling, through workforce attraction and community outreach and engagement, to coordination of skilling and training initiatives to build job ready candidates to enter shipbuilding industry roles.

The College is at the very core of the national continuous shipbuilding enterprise – ensuring that the workforce is there for success. Establishing a comprehensive set of workforce development services across the sector that will underpin the establishment of Australia's Naval Shipbuilding Enterprise.

Workforce Management

In conjunction with industry the College has documented a common Industry Job Taxonomy – for common job categorisation across the sector, as the foundation of the workforce management function. The College is conducting labour market supply analyses across the sector for the primary job roles, and is collating and analysing future projected workload demand from industry. Identification of the priority and critical roles for industry has been assessed over time, and engagement is being driven across the whole supply chain to fully understand the complete workload demands, particularly those not within the perimeters of the construction yards themselves. This information is used as the basis of analysis for the available supply within the market and from training providers, in order to identify the requirements for market interventions. Specific job supply strategies are developed for all of the priority roles, and current and projected shortages, and appropriate interventions, identified to assure supply is planned and enacted.

Talent Acquisition:

To help meet this demand the College launched a national Workforce Register in July, 2018. First time entrants, people transitioning from adjacent industries or those wishing to upskill within the industry can use the Workforce Register to be connected with appropriate training and education providers and potential employers across Australia. Candidate Endorsement Consultants provide tailored training, education and career path guidance to people seeking to acquire the skills and experience required by future employers. More than 1500 people have already registered interest to work on some of the most technologically advanced projects on the planet and thousands more are expected to follow as the College extends its engagement across the country, to elevate naval shipbuilding as a career of choice.

Skilling, Training and Development services

The College has established a national network of training providers across the vocational and tertiary levels which now spans all states and territories. The College is working with these providers to identify gaps within current training and education offerings to ensure that they are suitable for the skilling requirements of the Enterprise. The College is developing and overseeing gap closure plans, and where needed identifying specific non-accredited training modules and electives required to be available to meet the specific skilling and competence requirements of the naval shipbuilding roles. On behalf of industry the College also provides the training and education entities with a formal College course endorsement, once the gap closure plans have been implemented and industry is satisfied that the training offerings will create job suitable candidates. The College also manages the 'Community of Excellence' of these endorsed providers through the duration of the National Shipbuilding Plan.

Communications and Engagement and Community Outreach

One of the key roles and responsibilities of the College on behalf of the sector is to generate awareness within the broader community of the available careers within the Enterprise, and to attract the future workforce candidates to these new roles. The College has a growing strategic outreach campaign that spans the nation, aimed at connecting with and attracting the future workforce, from high school pupils through TAFE and university students, to existing experienced trades and professionals already within industry. This campaign will leverage existing education and employment programs at the federal and state levels where possible. The College will be conducting its own national events in each state and territory on a yearly basis leveraging existing education and engagement programs at headline events. The College is promoting the sector through secondary schools and tertiary institutions for industry attraction, and developing the website/social media to connect with future generations. The College is also active within Australia's professional communities of practice to promote the sector opportunities and raise the profile of shipbuilding careers.

Conclusion:

The College is operating at the centre of Australia's Naval Shipbuilding Enterprise - partnering with industry and the education and training sector, to ensure that the workforce is available with sufficient skills and capacity to meet Australia's Naval Shipbuilding Plan.

The College is quickly building its capacity to provide workforce solutions for the Enterprise and is ready to remain an integral part of Australia's defence industry for generations to come. It is partnering with Defence, industry and a national network of training and education providers to play an integral role in developing the Australian workforce required to ensure our nation successfully delivers the critical naval capabilities that support our national security.

The collaboration and cooperation seen across the major global shipbuilding companies involved in the Enterprise is unprecedented. All are committed to pulling in the same direction to collaboratively grow the talent pool, through establishing and developing new workforce pipelines to ensure the success of the Enterprise. It's a very exciting time to be part of establishing Australia's Naval Shipbuilding Enterprise.