



# The Strategic Shipbuilder

Overview

August 2025

The Australian Government is building a sovereign defence industrial base in Henderson, Western Australia (WA), through the Strategic Shipbuilding Agreement (SSA).

This Agreement establishes a programmatic approach to shipbuilding for projects contracted to the Strategic Shipbuilder in WA.

Together with the establishment of a Commonwealth Defence Precinct at Henderson, this will create a world-class shipbuilding and sustainment hub, capable of building and sustaining larger and more complex vessels.

This is a critical part of the Government's Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Plan to deliver on key National Defence Strategy initiatives.

**The establishment of the Strategic Shipbuilder secures a continuous pipeline of work for Western Australian industry, addressing the 'boom bust' cycle often experienced. It will:**



**Provide industry with greater certainty and help to secure long-term skilled jobs, infrastructure investment and productivity in the shipbuilding industrial base.**



**Accelerate capability delivery for projects awarded to the Strategic Shipbuilder through a dedicated strategic asset, streamlined procurement processes and a best practice, innovative shipbuilding industry.**

**Building a sovereign Defence industrial base is vital for higher levels of military preparedness and self-reliance and is key to the Government's Defence strategy.**



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### About the Strategic Shipbuilder



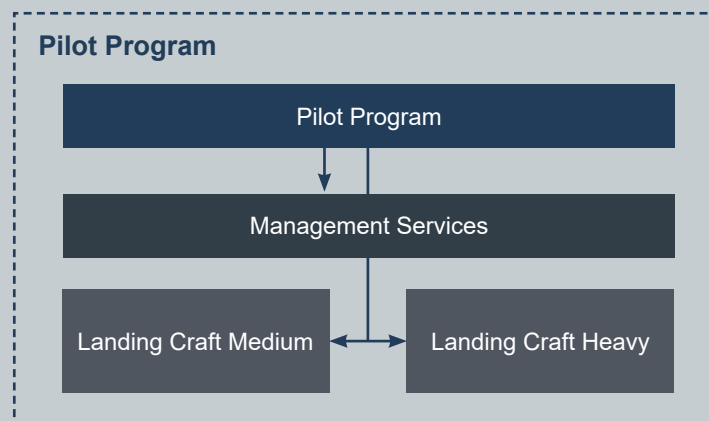
On 28 August 2025, the **Strategic Shipbuilding Agreement** was executed by Defence and Austal Defence Shipbuilding Australia Pty Ltd (Austal Defence Australia). As a sovereign subsidiary under the Austal Group, this establishes Austal Defence Australia as the **Strategic Shipbuilder in WA**.

Under the SSA, the Strategic Shipbuilder will work closely with the local industrial base and supply chain to deliver Defence shipbuilding projects in WA, developing the skills and resources required to deliver increasingly complex projects over time.

The SSA establishes and utilises pre-agreed terms and conditions to streamline the procurement process for contracts awarded to the Strategic Shipbuilder, to accelerate the delivery of dozens of vessels for the Australian Defence Force over the next decade.

### Strategic Shipbuilding Pilot Program

The Strategic Shipbuilding Pilot Program includes the construction of 18 Army **Landing Craft Medium** vessels, and subject to Government approval and commercial negotiations, 8 **Landing Craft Heavy** vessels, as part of Army's new littoral fleet.



The \$2 billion project to build the littoral fleet is expected to create 1,100 direct jobs and more than 2,000 indirect jobs under a program that will also deliver amphibious vehicles.

Subject to performance, capacity and capability maturation, the Strategic Shipbuilder will be considered on a project-by-project basis for the build of larger, more complex vessels in the future.



### More information

For more information scan QR code <https://www.defence.gov.au/business-industry/industry-capability-programs/continuous-naval-shipbuilding-and-sustainment-enterprise/henderson-defence-precinct> or email [henderson.defenceprecinct@defence.gov.au](mailto:henderson.defenceprecinct@defence.gov.au)

