

Simulators prepare helicopter crews for the real thing

Every time a Royal Australian Navy Seahawk helicopter takes off or lands on the deck of a Royal Australian Navy frigate, its pilot will have perfected the manoeuvre in the flight simulator at the Royal Australian Navy Simulator Complex at HMAS Albatross, supported by CAE Australia.



CAE Training Centre Manager
Warren Seccombe at the Seahawk
Simulator Instructor/Operator Station.

CAE is a world leader in simulation and modelling technologies and integrated training services for military purposes and civil aviation. It operates a simulator training complex at HMAS Albatross with state of the art full motion flight and mission simulators that provide training for the RAN's helicopter aircrew and aircraft maintenance crews to ensure they are mission-ready.

The crews do much of their training in the flight simulators, working with qualified RAN instructors in the simulators to learn how to deal with a wide range of general operational and emergency situations. So when they finally take control of the real thing, the pilots have already made countless "landings" on the pitching deck of an RAN frigate in heavy seas or "hunted" submarines in combat situations.

CAE Australia has operated at the Simulator Complex at HMAS Albatross since 1999, and employs approximately 20 people who provide maintenance and engineering services to keep the simulators and

other training facilities operational. They are part of CAE's Australian workforce of more than 200 and global workforce of more than 7500.

CAE Australia is also a key member of the Shoalhaven's Defence Industry Group, an alliance of around 20 organisations that have a common interest in ensuring that defence-related industries continue to thrive in the region.

CAE's Nowra Training Centre Manager Warren Seccombe says the Defence Industry Group is "like a big, happy family" – a family he would like to see grow and prosper.

"We all know each other and get together to support each other," Mr Seccombe said

He said CAE was keen to increase the defence capability of the region and he had a simple message to other defence-related industries considering locating to the Shoalhaven: "Bring your business here".

"This is a great place to live and work," he said. "There is a lot of

support to encourage businesses to come to the Shoalhaven. For a start, all levels of government – federal, state and local council – are very keen to assist."

Mr Seccombe said CAE came to the Shoalhaven because it needed to be close to its customer, the RAN. However, he said the region had a number of key attractions that had helped CAE recruit and retain quality staff.

"This is a beautiful part of Australia, with a great coastal lifestyle and moderate house prices – so people can afford to live in some really great locations. People want to come here to live and work," he said.

As a result CAE has no problem recruiting suitably qualified technical staff for its Shoalhaven operation, and staff turnover at the company's Nowra operation was extremely low.

"CAE is a high tech company with an excellent reputation, and it can be hard to find opportunities for a career in a high tech company outside the major cities," Mr Seccombe said.

"People who come here to work for CAE tend to stay." He added that the company had great optimism about the future of defence industries in the Shoalhaven in general, and about its own simulation operations in particular.

"Simulation offers a number of advantages, most notably cost advantages, that simply can't be ignored in today's economic environment," he said. "The increased cost of fuel, environmental impacts and significant wear and tear on weapon systems all point to greater use of simulation and synthetic training."

He said CAE was always looking for new business opportunities.

"The current Nowra operation is strictly military as we are focused exclusively on supporting the Royal Australian Navy and helping ensure their aircrews and maintenance personnel are well-trained, prepared and mission-ready. That being said, CAE is always looking for opportunities for both our military and civil businesses in Australia."

The Shoalhaven Defence Industry Group promotes defence industry capability to attract business, investment and jobs to the region. This case study showcases one of the high tech defence companies already contributing to the Shoalhaven economy.



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