



Defence driving GHD's Shoalhaven expansion

The Shoalhaven's growing defence industries sector is one of several local influences that continue to drive the expansion of leading professional services company GHD's Nowra office.

GHD Nowra staff (front): regional manager Andy Beldom and civil and maritime engineer Libby Lockett and (rear, from left) communications engineer Dave Harrison, principal aviation consultant Ian Henderson and spatial scientist Gabby Moore.



The company established its Nowra office in 2005 when it was contracted to design and oversee the construction of the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre. Since then GHD's Shoalhaven workforce has grown from two to 18, thanks in part to a strong focus on defence-related work at HMAS Albatross and HMAS Creswell.

GHD's Nowra regional manager Andy Beldom sees defence-related contracts as one of several key growth areas for the company, with the Nowra office pivotal to its expansion plans.

"The Nowra office is developing into an important centre of capability in defence related works," Mr Beldom said. "For example, this office has recently completed the design and delivery phase design management of appropriate operational, training and maintenance facilities for various bases to support the Australian Defence Forces new Multi Role Helicopter (MRH90) fleet at HMAS Albatross and three locations in Queensland - the Army Aviation Centre at Oakey, RAAF Base Townsville and at Gallipoli Barracks at Enoggera, in Brisbane.

"We completed the detailed design and delivery phase design management. The whole project was managed from Nowra, with elements of the Queensland work undertaken by GHD on-site regional offices near the bases. GHD has a big presence in regional Australia, with 46 regional offices around the country, meaning we can be on the spot with a local presence when working on major projects."

GHD's other defence-related projects in the Shoalhaven include condition assessment of the Parachute Training School jump towers at HMAS Albatross, structural surveys of heritage buildings at HMAS Creswell officer training school at Jervis Bay, Shoalhaven defence estate bushfire and weed management plans as well as Fuel Farm and sewerage treatment works upgrades at HMAS Albatross. The company's maritime engineer is also conducting a structural assessment of the Creswell's wharves and jetties.

In addition to infrastructure-related projects, GHD also provides logistics and engineering support to the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) through the Support Services Panel. GHD is also a Registered Training Organisation, and is currently

delivering logistics professionalisation training to the DMO in conjunction with the DMO Institute and Asset Management training through the Chifley Business College to defence and other industries.

Mr Beldom has spent his career in the defence environment, having joined the Royal Australian Navy as an apprentice airframe/engine technician, serving on the aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne as a 17-year-old. He left the RAN 15 years ago and conducted sea awareness training for a defence contractor before joining the Department of Defence at HMAS Albatross. Here he was involved in capital acquisition projects and was later responsible for overseeing the maintenance and engineering activities of defence contractors throughout Australia and overseas.

Since joining GHD in 2008, he has worked to build up the Nowra office's defence capabilities while also expanding its civil engineering and environment work along the South Coast from Shellharbour to the Victorian border.

"This office gets involved in a diverse range of projects, from civil, telecommunications, coastal/maritime design projects to project

management and environmental assessments," he said. "We have engineers and scientists who specialise in civil, environmental, mechanical, telecommunications, structural and maritime engineering."

He said the office staff included engineers, project managers, Geospatial Information System (GIS) analysts, draftsmen and a mechanical engineer who was also a naval architect.

"We don't have difficulty recruiting the right professional staff to Nowra," Mr Beldom said. "People love the Shoalhaven lifestyle, and like the idea that they can live in such a beautiful place and still work on big projects right around Australia as well as the 12 overseas countries that GHD operates in.

"We recently had a hydro-geologist re-locate from our Melbourne office as he and his wife had started a family and they thought the Shoalhaven would be a great area to raise their children. We have employed some highly trained people who live locally, and we've also found that local students who go off to university to study are really keen to come back to their local area and work for a company like ours."

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.



Megan Cleary
Business Development Manager
NSW Trade & Investment
P: +61 2 4421 1000
E: megan.cleary@business.nsw.gov.au



Greg Pullen
Economic Development Manager
Shoalhaven City Council
P: +61 2 4429 3388
E: pullen@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au



Warren Secombe
Defence Committee
Shoalhaven Business Chamber
P: 0400 123 744
E: info@shoalhavenbusiness.com.au