



**SURFACE
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MEDIA RELEASE

NEW HIGH TECH TOOLING FACILITY LAUNCHED TO ENHANCE DEFENCE MATERIALS

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Australian military essentials – from bulletproof vests to aircraft – will be manufactured more quickly and economically thanks to a new facility to be launched in Thomastown, Victoria on 27 August.

Australian military essentials – from bulletproof vests to aircraft – will be manufactured more quickly and economically thanks to a new facility launched today in Thomastown, Victoria.

The Victorian Minister for Industry and Trade, the Hon. Martin Pakula MP officiated at the opening of the Advanced Surface Solutions Facility (ASSF), a collaboration between the Defence Materials Technology Centre (DMTC), cutting tool expert Sutton Tools and RMIT University.

“Increasingly, materials used to manufacture critical products for our military personnel are inherently difficult to machine,” DMTC’s CEO, Dr Mark Hodge said. “If we are to maintain our international competitiveness within global supply chains we must establish a capability in the efficient, economical manufacture of these components. This is one of the strategic goals of the DMTC and is the reason for the establishment of the ASSF.”

The ASSF is a world class facility that will focus on developing the latest in computer numerically controlled (CNC) grinding technology, advances in surface coating technology and performance testing of cutting tools. The cornerstone of the ASSF facility is a world class tool coating machine, the INNOVA, which DMTC acquired with the support of funding from the Victorian Government. The equipment, owned by DMTC, is located at Sutton Tools in Thomastown, Victoria.

Sutton Tools is Australia’s largest manufacturer of engineering cutting tools and power tool accessories. The Australian-owned company employs more than 400 people and is a founding participant of the DMTC.

At the launch of the ASSF Mr Mike Grogan, CEO of Sutton Tools, emphasised the importance of innovation in research and development focused on improving efficiency and productivity in manufacturing.

“In these difficult economic times it is vital that we continue to invest in people and capital equipment in readiness for a return to growth and improved profitability for Australian manufacturing industry.”

DMTC and university researchers and industry will now have access to the world’s best coating technology in the form of the INNOVA production ready, fully specified research and development machine.

Dr Steve Dowey, General Manager of Surface Technology Coatings, a wholly owned subsidiary of Sutton Tools, noted: “The Victorian Government should be specifically thanked for its support of the DMTC and local industry in establishing world class manufacturing activities directed at strengthening our defence capabilities.”

Also attending the launch of the ASSF was the Speaker of the House of Representatives and Federal local member for Scullin, Mr Harry Jenkins MP.

About Sutton Tools:

Based at Thomastown, Melbourne, Sutton Tools is Australia’s largest manufacturer of engineering cutting tools and power tool accessories. The Australian-owned company is a fourth generation family-owned business which employs more than 400 people. Visit www.suttontools.com.au

About RMIT University:

RMIT University is an innovative, global university of technology, based in Melbourne. Visit www.rmit.edu.au

About DMTC:

The Defence Materials Technology Centre is a technology development joint venture that develops new materials and manufacturing technologies for the Australian defence sector. It is based at Swinburne University, Hawthorn campus, Melbourne. Visit www.dmtc.com.au

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