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Raytheon Australia confirms successful AS-9 ‘Aussie Thunder’ armour testing.

CANBERRA – 24 July 2008: Raytheon Australia today confirmed the successful completion of a series of live tests to validate the AS-9 “Aussie Thunder” advanced armour solution. The AS-9 self-propelled howitzer (SPH) is the joint Raytheon Australia / Samsung Techwin solution for the Australian Army’s LAND 17 Artillery Replacement Program.

AS-9 is protected against projectiles using a Removable Armour for Vehicles (RAV) developed by the Australian company SEAL Solutions. The RAV system was initially developed as a collaboration between DSTO and SEAL Solutions to protect the Bushmaster vehicle. It has been further refined in collaboration with Samsung Techwin to ensure maximum possible coverage of the protected crew compartment.

AS-9 is protected against the effects of spall by a 20mm Spall Liner also developed by SEAL Solutions. It reduces the cone angle of a shaped charge and limits the number of spall fragments that can enter the vehicle on detonation. Recognising the increasing threat from mine blast and improvised explosive devices (IED), the Raytheon Team has also developed a protection system incorporating additional composite belly armour, mine blast resistant seating and a blast over-pressure kit.

“These tests demonstrate our commitment to ensuring the AS-9 is one of the safest SPH platforms in the world,” said Raytheon Australia’s Managing Director, Ron Fisher. “SEAL Solutions has a history of delivering outstanding results to the Australian Army and we have tremendous confidence in this system.

“AS-9’s advanced armour solution, combined with high mobility and first rate Command and Control (C2) arrangements, will give Australian Gunners the edge on operations,” said Mr Fisher. “Our work with SEAL is a great example of the opportunities LAND 17 offers to Australian industry.”

Mr Fisher said the AS-9 is essentially a Military Off-The-Shelf (MOTS) solution with improved protection from mine blast and improvised explosive devices to counter emerging operational threats. He also indicated that interest has already been shown by potential overseas markets.

“C2 integration was demonstrated recently, showing that AS-9 is compatible with our coalition partners in a truly digital battlespace, and we have worked hard on the critical issues of survivability and crew safety,” he explained. “We look forward to the possibility of demonstrating the complete system to the Commonwealth.”

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LAND 17 self-propelled howitzers (SPH) will bring ground commanders a land-based indirect firepower system able to fight and communicate in the digital battlespace. They will be linked to the broader Australian joint fires environment, providing precision terminal effects at long ranges and unprecedented situational awareness to minimise the risk to friendly forces and enable a fast and lethal response to authorised targets. Gun crews will be protected under armour and the platforms will be fully interoperable with Australia's likely coalition partners.

With facilities located across the country, Raytheon Australia is a highly capable prime contractor with an engineering and technical workforce of 1300 backed by world-class management and quality systems. This local presence is bolstered by strong relationships with small and medium sized enterprises and access to the global resources of Raytheon Company.

Raytheon Company, with 2007 sales of \$21.3 billion, is a technology leader specialising in defence, homeland security and other government markets throughout the world. With a history of innovation spanning 86 years, Raytheon provides state-of-the-art electronics, mission systems integration and other capabilities in the areas of sensing; effects; and command, control, communications and intelligence systems, as well as a broad range of mission support services. With headquarters in Waltham, Mass., Raytheon employs 72,000 people worldwide.

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