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“Aussie Thunder” Self Propelled Howitzer – an impressive ‘range’ of extra benefits

CANBERRA – 5 December 2008: Having offered the Commonwealth what it already considers to be the most advanced self-propelled howitzer (SPH) in the world, Raytheon Australia now believes it can significantly increase the capability of the AS-9 “Aussie Thunder” by matching it with advanced extended range ammunition.

The AS-9 is the joint Raytheon Australia / Samsung Techwin proposal for the Australian Army’s LAND 17 Artillery Replacement Program.

According to Raytheon Australia’s Managing Director, Ron Fisher, Korean company Poongsan—which already supplies 155mm ammunition to Australia—has recently developed a combined base bleed / rocket assisted projectile and fired it from the Korean variant of the AS-9 to a range of 57km. The projectile has been certified by the Republic of Korea (ROK) proofing agency for service with the ROK Army.

“Our team believes that matching the AS-9’s longer 52 calibre barrel and high rate of fire with extended range ammunition would bring tremendous range and terminal effect advantages to the Australian Army,” said Fisher. “The longer the range, the bigger the area that can be covered without having to redeploy the platform—that’s critical from a force protection perspective.”

“The more range you have, the fewer number of platforms needed and the safer your own guns are from enemy action,” he said. “Along with the obvious protection and mobility advantages, longer range is a major benefit of SPH compared to towed 39 calibre guns, and this capability would complement standard 155mm ammunition and advanced munitions such as Excalibur.”

Mr Fisher noted that technologies such as Poongsan’s new extended-range projectile had the potential to enhance the capability of the complete artillery system, stressing that the Korean company has already demonstrated its ability to satisfy Australia’s stringent safety and performance requirements.

“This is another example of the sorts of capabilities and commercial opportunities that can be achieved by working with allies and partners within our own region.”

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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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