



Media release

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Inaugural Australian Defence fashion parade celebrates local manufacturers

In an Australian first, an Australian defence fashion parade showcasing local suppliers will run daily at the Australian Land Forces 2014 conference being held next week in Brisbane from 22 to 25 September.

Organised by one of Australia's leading manufacturers, Merino Country, in conjunction with Defence Industries Queensland, the parade will showcase local Queensland manufacturers who supply the Australian Defence Force with protective apparel.

Featured in the parade will be ballistic vests, eyewear, bomb and chemical suits and Merino undergarments, including the 'Ballistic Bra', worn under ballistic vests.

As fallout continues after the recent announcement of the Australian Defence contract for non-combat boots going to an Australian company who manufactures in Indonesia, parade organiser Kerrie Richards, Managing Director of Merino Country, said it was time to celebrate Australian manufacturing.

"The economic flow on effect of manufacturing locally to other businesses is very high. Our range of merino underwear and clothing is manufactured here in Queensland and this means work for local knitters, dye houses, transport companies, thread suppliers, mechanics and machinists. More money flows back into the local economy than an Australian company manufacturing offshore," Kerrie says.

Merino Clothing has supplied around 120,000 Australian merino lightweight and heavyweight Extreme Cold Weather Undershirts to the Department of Defence and thermals to the Victoria Police. They also supply a variety of merino products including short and long sleeve t-shirts, boxer shorts, balaclavas and beanies to Australian Customs and Border Protection.

According to Kerrie, there are numerous benefits in manufacturing locally.

"We are able to supply products quickly in manageable quantities for the Defence warehouses with very high product quality and flexibility of supply. We work closely with other Queensland businesses and can deal face to face with partners in the supply chain.

To win a contract with the Australian Defence Force, we have to compete on what is called a 'Value for Money' basis which means not only price, but also the life of the product, delivery times, reliability and risk management of the business."

The Personal Protection Equipment Parade will be a highlight of the Defence Industries Queensland site at the Land Forces 2014 conference and exhibition being held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre from 22 – 25 September. The parade, which will run daily from 12.30pm, will showcase ballistic vests, eyewear, chemical and bomb protection suits, and merino wool undergarments, including "Wundies", cooling vests and boxer shorts.

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