

Air 87 SIDA to leverage SME intellectual property

Key Points

- **A three-level intellectual property (IP) training and audit program** directed at Australian defence industry small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is to get under way in Melbourne on 16 July, with a program launch event.
- **The nation-wide program will be rolled-out by a Melbourne law firm** via 13 seminars and 300 in-house training sessions to help SMEs identify and catalogue their respective knowledge bases, as a precursor to more effective marketing of SME expertise.
- **A national 'industry status' survey is to be undertaken** to provide the Department of Defence with improved knowledge of the customer/supplier base, so as to assist in the formulation of future IP policy as it relates to defence-industry SMEs.

■ Canberra Bureau Report

A major defence-industry intellectual property (IP) training and audit program submitted by Eurocopter Asia Pacific as a Strategic Industry Development Arrangement (SIDA) vide its Air 87 Australian Industry Involvement plan is to be kicked-off in Melbourne in early July.

The Program comprises three levels of activity directed at Australian defence-industry small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and is scheduled to take place over a 2 to 3 year period. Recognising the value of SMEs in supporting defence capability and subsequently moving on to export their IP capabilities, Defence considers the SIDA will provide an opportunity to encourage the marketing of such SME expertise, and the virtues of knowledge based industry.

Three levels of activity are proposed to be undertaken over the next few years, including: the conduct of 13 information seminars in each State capital and regional centres; followed by 300 one-on-one in-company visits to conduct audits of IP portfolios and training; and the collection of limited (anonymous) survey data to underpin the production of a limited industry status report, which will subsequently be on-considered by Defence.

The general objectives of the Program are said to be to increase

the ability of Australian defence industry SMEs to profitably maintain, commercialise and protect their intellectual property rights, and thereby, to make Australian defence industry SMEs more export ready, capable and knowledgeable in the IP area.

By specifically training SMEs to identify, manage and exploit their existing and future IP - with an increased ability to value and market that IP and negotiate technology transfers, joint ventures or licensing to meet international opportunities - Defence is hoping to increase exports whilst providing itself with access to a more knowledgeable customer/supplier base.

A better understanding of industry capabilities (through compiled survey results) is also expected to assist Defence in the formulation of future IP policy as it relates to Australian defence industry SMEs.

Roll-out of the SIDA is being managed by Melbourne-based Intellectual Property Lawyers - White Cleland, IP Australia, the Defence Materiel Organisation Intellectual Property Section, the Industrial Supplies Office and the various defence industry networks and associations such as

AIDN, the Australian Industry Group (AiG) and Australian Business Limited (ABL).

White Cleland says the initial 13 educational seminars are to be conducted in all Australian State capitals and in some regional centres. The seminars will be pitched to give not only an introduction to relevant IP issues, but to be the introduction to the main focus of the program, which is the intensive one-on-one company IP audits and in-house training.

SMEs will be invited to attend the introductory seminars to learn more about relevant IP issues, the nature of the in-house audit and training sessions and how to register to participate, all at little if any cost to them. It is anticipated

that attendances at the seminars will average 30 companies at any one seminar, although those held in smaller locations are expected to attract smaller numbers.

A draft seminar format has been prepared and will examine: What is IP and why is it so important to Australian Defence Industry SMEs; How to Identify Your Intellectual Property; How are you protecting (or what you should be doing to protect your IP; How to exploit your IP; How to keep your IP

safe; Assessing the value of IP and its role in Adding Value to a Business; and How to structure a formal In-House Audit & Training Program.

Parallel to the seminars, a program of 300 one-on-one in-company audits of IP portfolios and training directed at Australian defence industry SMEs will take place over a 2 to 3 year period. These companies are to be visited at an average rate of 30 per quarter commencing in the month immediately following the first seminar.

The final activity in the SIDA program is the development and delivery to the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) of an industry intellectual property status report. The report is to contain a mix of statistical data (on the amount of IP registered by the sample SMEs in Australia and the amount of IP they use under licence from others) and a summary of attitudes and other opinions.

White Cleland says the objective of this Report is to seek to answer the questions of how Australian Defence Industry SMEs are (or are not, as the case may be) currently managing their IP portfolios, how they can better identify, maintain, commercialise and protect their valuable IP resources in the future and what further assistance they may require from Government and other service-providers in this task. The report will be delivered at the end of the two and a half year total program of seminars and visits.

Overall responsibility for delivery of the professional component of the program on behalf of Eurocopter will be White Cleland, Intellectual Property Lawyers, who will in turn invite representatives of the other proposed stakeholder agencies to make presentations at the seminars. Working in conjunction with C & I Projects Pty Ltd, White Cleland has focussed in Australia on developing and managing AII initiatives for foreign defence contractors. On the international market they work on defence offset programs and structured finance transactions.

