



The Hon George Souris MP

Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing
Minister for the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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FORMER DEFENCE CHIEF TO SUPPORT NSW DEFENCE INDUSTRY

The NSW Government has appointed a Former Chief of Army and Vice Chief of the Defence Force to help target business opportunities for the State's defence industry, Acting Minister for Trade and Investment George Souris announced today.

Mr Souris said Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie (Retd) will work closely with NSW Trade & Investment, the Commonwealth and NSW Business Chamber to promote NSW defence capabilities and target contract opportunities.

"I thank Lt Gen Ken Gillespie (Retd) for enlisting to support NSW's defence industry and help it prosper into the future," Mr Souris said.

"Defence is an important part of NSW's advanced manufacturing sector and supports jobs and innovation by working at global best standards and employing some of the world's most sophisticated technology practices.

"The NSW Government wants to grow defence business, investment and exports, and Lt Gen Gillespie (Retd) will ensure NSW capabilities are strongly promoted on both the national and international stage.

"Tim Owen was instrumental in securing the involvement of Lt Gen Ken Gillespie (Retd) and we thank him for his efforts."

Tim Owen, Member for Newcastle and former Deputy Commander of the Australian Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, welcomed the appointment of Lt Gen Ken Gillespie (Retd).

"Lt Gen Ken Gillespie (Retd) will be a strong advocate for the defence sector in NSW," Mr Owen said.

"He has the experience and the knowledge to help advance our State's defence industry."

Lt Gen Gillespie (Retd) first joined the Australian Army as an apprentice in 1968 and had a distinguished record of service. His senior military appointments included being the inaugural Officer of the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment, Commander of the Australian Theatre Joint Intelligence Centre for which he was made a Member of the Order of Australia, and Principal Staff Officer of Intelligence, Headquarters Australian Theatre.

Lt Gen Gillespie (Retd) served as Vice Chief of the Defence Force from 2005 until 2008, and then Chief of Army from 2008 until his retirement in June 2011.

Lt Gen Gillespie (Retd) will focus on supporting job creation and new investment opportunities for NSW companies, as well as raising the profile of the defence industry in

NSW. One key aspect of this support is promoting NSW capabilities at leading trade shows, including the 2012 Pacific International Maritime Exposition in Sydney.

The NSW Government will sponsor and exhibit at Pacific 2012, which is held from 31 January to 3 February 2012 at Darling Harbour. Pacific 2012 is one of the Asia Pacific's largest defence and commercial maritime events, attracting strong local and offshore interest.

"NSW Trade & Investment will be working closely with Lt Gen Gillespie (Retd) to target defence industry opportunities through Pacific 2012," Mr Souris said.

"We will have a strong regional NSW presence at the expo with approximately 10 organisations exhibiting on a Team Hunter stand, and six organisations on a Shoalhaven defence industry stand focusing on naval aviation."

The defence industry in the Hunter received a boost recently from the signing of an agreement between the NSW Government, Newcastle Ports Corporation and Hunter based Forgacs to support the redevelopment of Newcastle Defence Shipyard.

"This assistance will upgrade the infrastructure at Newcastle Defence Shipyard in order for Forgacs to manufacture and assemble additional Air Warfare Destroyer blocks in Newcastle," Mr Souris said.

"The NSW Government is confident Forgacs will continue to win even more AWD blocks. This is a great example of the strong defence capabilities in the Hunter.

"Newcastle is showing the world how shipbuilding should be done."