

## Making Rapid Progress



*Simon Chandler (far right), Rapid Prototyping, Development and Evaluation (RPDE) Program Task Manager and Tenix employee, with members of the Communications Efficiency Task Team.*

The Task has shown that Satellite bandwidth could be improved by up to 40 per cent with the use of Commercial-Off-The-Shelf Wan Optimisers, coordinated by the Traffic Profile Management Application software developed by RPDE.

The Government has issued an invitation to defence industry to join the Rapid Prototyping, Development and Evaluation Program (RPDE) which scopes and develops options for Network Centric Warfare (NCW) related problems identified by the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

RPDE gives industry participants the opportunity to showcase intellectual property to both Defence and the industry's upper echelons; get a better understanding of all participants; and develop relationships and its people.

The program which came into being two years ago is funded from the Defence Capability Plan and sees defence industry and academia work together to brainstorm feasible approaches to solving problems, evaluate these approaches and make recommendations.

Its industry base is already large with 83 companies and academic bodies currently contributing to its analysis and recommendations.

Tenix Defence is one of these having signed up for the program in its formation days, leading the initial scoping study in 2004.

Tenix Defence's General Manager Electronic Systems Division, Kim Scott said his experiences with the program to date have been extremely positive.

"One of the main benefits has been the increased level of understanding of emerging and future requirements for the ADF in the area of NCW," he said.

"Our staff who have been either working in the core RPDE organisation or on project teams have all commented on the accelerated personal development and learning they have enjoyed through rubbing shoulders on a daily basis with operational ADF staff, who are working alongside them to identify and solve operational issues. This type of development is rarely obtained when our engineers are working back in a normal office.

"In addition, the early understanding of future ADF requirements assists us to target our research and development funds into areas that will provide a capability enhancement for the ADF; therefore assisting the preparation of our business case," Mr Scott said.

Personnel on secondment from participating bodies make up RPDE's team. With 25 core staff on two year placements and additional personnel resources drawn on for tasking as required across the shorter tasking time frames.

RPDE's General Manager, Pam Price came to the organisation from Raytheon Australia where she was Deputy General Manager of the Intelligence and Technical Support business.

Ms Price said RPDE scopes out its additional resource requirements on a task by task basis.

"For example, if we require a systems engineer from the Maritime sector we will seek nominations of personnel from the relevant member companies and a team member for that task will be selected based on the necessary capability and value for money," she said.

Statistics sourced by RPDE show that the level of participation from defence industry is quite even between small to medium enterprises and primes with each accounting for 34 per cent and 29 per cent respectively of the additional staff recruited to undertake tasks.

The program's recruitment pool is set to expand in 2007, as the Government's latest invitation has already seen more than 100 companies nominate to participate since its issue in January.

In September 2006 Government announced the continuation of the program for at least another three years, making a \$60 million investment.

Ms Price said that she would be calling on the client base in 2007 to make use of this investment and the increased industry participation.

"We want those that have problems to tap into this enormous industry resource to find solutions," she said.

For more information on becoming a RPDE member visit <http://www.rpde.org.au/>. The current round of applications closes on 9 March 2007.