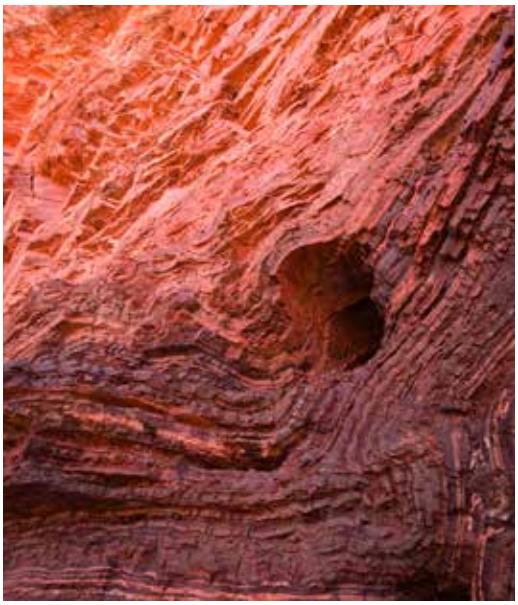
MAKING INNOVATION PERMANENT

Technology has always been integral to Defence. In fact, history is littered with examples of how disruptive technologies have changed the course of a battle.

GABBY COSTIGAN | CANBERRA



FROM LEFT: Red Ochre is a quintasentially Australian substance, used in traditional indigenous ceremonies and a large part of our environment.

WHETHER it was the long-bow, the machine gun or the vertical take-off fighter aircraft, disruptive technologies time and time again have provided a strategic and battle-winning advantage.

Disruption in technology does not happen by accident. It requires investment and focus, and the time, space and resources to innovate. After all, it is innovation that is necessary to spiral technology in such a way that it can provide our armed forces with a capability edge and a strategic advantage.

BAE Systems Australia has been investing in advancing defence technology in Australia for over 65 years. Today we are focusing on our diverse and innovative work through Red Ochre Labs. Centred around a new facility in Melbourne, that acts as a hub for our leading engineers across the nation, Red Ochre Labs signals a renewed and strategic approach to research, innovate and develop disruptive technologies for the Australian Defence Force.

One of the enduring challenges we face is ensuring that we are remain aware and responsive to the evolving needs of our customer, the ADF. We need to understand how they work, what their challenges are today, and how to combat the threats of tomorrow.

What I really like about Red Ochre Labs is that it will be a centre for collaboration with the ADF. It will also facilitate greater engagement with Australian industry and academia to ensure the ideas, ingenuity and expertise across the defence landscape can be harnessed.

As we look to the future, and contemplate a more challenging and ever changing defence and security environment in our region, I am excited about the approach we are taking to invest in technology right here in Australia.

There is no reason why Australia can't be the originator of defence innovation and technology. And there is no reason why we can't exploit the ideas we develop to create

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new companies, and new industries that benefit not only the security of our nation, but our economy as well.

In this way I see innovation as providing an opportunity that also meets the challenges our nation faces today as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Investing in innovation as we are through Red Ochre Labs can provide Australia's best scientists and engineers with interesting and rewarding work, something I know is integral to the career of any engineer, but particularly those engineers who work in defence.

If you can imagine the amalgam of people with expertise in rocket science, software hardware, mechatronic engineers, navigation and guidance experts, defence analysts, control systems engineers, material and additive manufacturing specialists – all under the same roof. That's Red Ochre Labs.

On a national scale, defence companies are not often thought of by the general public as centres for technology development. But I hope through Red Ochre Labs that we can change that perception here in Australia, and change it permanently.

After all, Red Ochre has been a permanent feature of the Australian landscape for thousands of years. I believe that Red Ochre Labs can likewise become a permanent icon for Innovation in the Australian Defence industry.

Gabby Costigan is the CEO of BAE Systems Australia.

PARTNERED CONTENT

The following pages are a paid partnered effort between *ADM* and BAE Systems Australia to celebrate and showcase the R&D efforts of the company in the wake of the opening of their Red Ochre Labs.