

Austal Delivers First Guardian-Class Patrol Boat

HENDERSON, Western Australia— Austal delivered the first Guardian-class patrol boat (GCPB) to the Australian Department of Defence Nov. 30 and then, in a handover ceremony, presented the vessel to the Papua New Guinea (PNG) government, the company said in a release. Ted Diro is the first of 21 GCPBs to be gifted to 12 Pacific Island nations and Timor-Leste under the Commonwealths Pacific Maritime Security Program.

“Austal are proud to deliver this program for the Commonwealth of Australia,” the company said. “The Guardian class has brought together the industry-leading skills of over 200 Austal employees and estimated to have employed an additional 200 people indirectly through the design, construction and sustainment process.

The Guardian class is the latest evolution of Austal’s proven patrol boat platform that was first introduced some 20 years ago, commencing with the Bay-class patrol boat developed for the Australian Customs Service. Since 1998, Austal has delivered 32 patrol boats to the Commonwealth – representing Australia’s entire border patrol capability. Austal has delivered or has orders for a total of 97 patrol boats for Australia and around the world.

“Over the past six weeks, we have had the Ted Diro crew from the PNG Navy at Austal training on how to use and maintain the new vessels,” said David Singleton, Austal CEO. “Their positive feedback on the greater capability, amenity and operability of the Guardian class has been fantastic. We look forward to show casing the new vessels to the other Pacific Island nations over the life of the vessel program through to 2023.

“The program is now in a full rate of production, with the second vessel, which is destined for Tuvalu, successfully launched on Monday with an additional three vessels in various stages of construction. Austal are already looking at export opportunities for the GCPB.”

The Pacific patrol boat contract was awarded to Austal in May 2016 with a contract option in April 2018. The program supports more than 200 direct jobs at Austal and more than a further 200 indirect jobs through the Australian industry involved in the program. Austal has around 1,000 employees in Australia directly contributing to delivering a strong domestic and export shipbuilding industry.