

This is an amazing contract for Tasmania, so we need to tell the world about it

Liferaft wins big British contract



BUOYANT: Liferaft Systems Australia managing director Mike Grainger in an inflatable evacuation tube. His company has just won a contract to supply life rafts and evacuation tubes for two aircraft carriers. Picture: SAM ROSEWARNE

impressed by the quality and design of the product.

CHARLES WATERHOUSE
DERWENT Park-based Liferaft Systems Australia has won its biggest order yet — a \$7 million British contract.

The Tasmanian company won a contract to supply 12 marine-evacuation systems to the British Ministry of Defence for use on two new aircraft carriers being built.

Not bad considering its competitors are in Europe — Britain, Denmark and France.

Managing director Mike Grainger said it was the company's biggest single contract since it started 16 years ago.

He said the company had been working to finalise the deal for about 18 months after being approached by the British Ministry of Defence which had been

although it had previously provided marine-evacuation systems to the French, Dutch, British and American navies.

The two new aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales are similar in size and weight to the recently retired passenger liner QE2.

Each would have a flight deck area of nearly 13,000 sq m and hangar space of 29,000 sq m.

The aircraft carriers will be 280m long and 70m wide, with the capacity to carry 40 aircraft and nearly 1500 crew.

Mr Grainger said that even without further orders, the company had enough work for its employees until the end of 2010 — it employed 75 people.

The workforce would probably be increased slightly.

He said the advantages of his company's systems were weight and size, and speed of evacuation. No other system could evacuate about 100 people in about 3½ minutes.

Denison Labor MHA Graeme Sturges said the two aircraft carriers, to enter service in 2014 and 2016, would be the biggest navy vessels ever built in Britain and the largest ever commissioned by the Royal Navy.

Mr Grainger said his company invested heavily and consistently in research and development and had built a reputation for quality, reliability and design excellence.

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