

Innovation Award for Redwing Program

A Defence team has won an inaugural Institute of Public Administration Australia Public Sector Innovation Award for developing a suite of force protection products to assist in countering the global threat posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The Redwing project was successful in the *Innovative Solutions* category that recognises new, improved and effective approaches to public administration.

“The Redwing program saves lives. It offers a suite of practical counter IED devices that operate in austere environments,” said Acting Secretary, Brendan Sargeant. “The rapid development of Redwing shows how Defence is innovative and working with industry to respond quickly to user driven need.”

“The Redwing program is a fine example of innovation with Defence and industry working together to deliver an operational capability for the national good,” Chief Defence Scientist, Dr Alex Zelinsky said.

“The rapid development of unique devices under the Redwing program has been both timely and life-saving for coalition troops.”

Under the program two robust, light-weight systems were developed – a handheld version called Greengum for use by dismounted troops and a more powerful system called Greygum for fitting to light vehicles.

Greengum and Greygum systems were developed by the Defence Science and Technology Group, sponsored by Defence’s Counter-IED Task Force and manufactured by Australian industry under project coordination by the Australian Military Sales Office.

Dr Alex Zelinsky said the Redwing program is an exemplary success story for innovation, commercialisation and collaboration with industry. The Redwing industry partners include Microe, Ultra Electronics, Associated Electronics Services, AXIOM Precision Manufacturing and Lintek.

“To date Australia has supplied 100,000 units of the Redwing equipment to the Afghanistan National Security Forces, with a further 50,000 systems on order, to meet their security needs,” Dr Zelinsky said.

Funding for these systems has been sourced from Australia’s annual contributions to the Afghan National Army Trust Fund, coordinated through Defence’s International Policy Division.

Dr Zelinsky thanked team leader Mr Darryn Smart, including Ben Barona, the principal electronics engineer, Katherine Thatcher and Rex Russell from the Australian Military Sales Office, and Tim Heenan from the Counter-IED Task Force.

“The Redwing counter-IED capability would not have been possible without the expertise of the small and medium enterprises that were involved in the program and they share in the recognition of this award,” Dr Zelinsky said.

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