



TFTC - THE FUTURE THROUGH COLLABORATION

***Award-Winning Defence Industry Female Mentoring Program Commences Ninth Year with a Record Number of Participants***

Canberra, September 7, 2023 – The highly acclaimed "The Future Through Collaboration" (TFTC) launched its 2023 program last week, marking its ninth year of empowering women in the defence industry. The program's launch event at the QT Hotel in Canberra saw an impressive gathering of the defence community, including an unprecedented 52 mentor-mentee pairs.

TFTC was born out of the need to address diversity challenges within the defence industry. As an innovative, collaborative initiative, it has made significant strides in promoting diversity, strengthening industry connections and nurturing individual development.

The event featured Professor Emily Hilder, Interim Head of the Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator (ASCA), as the keynote speaker. Professor Hilder shared insights from her personal journey, emphasising the critical role of collaboration and diversity in career development and industry advancement. Participants also had the privilege of hearing from a graduating mentee and mentor, who shared their enriching experiences from the 2022 program.

**Katherine Ziesing, Strategic Communications Manager at Hanwha Defense Australia**, underscored the program's universal relevance, "I was unsure what value I could bring to the program since I'm not a project manager or engineer. However, strategic thinking and honing communication skills are relevant no matter the role you work in; I learned a great deal from participating in the program, and the facilitated session gave me a language around concepts that I knew intuitively as well as let me explore several issues not just for my mentee but also for myself."

**Ruth Crawford, Commercial Manager at KBR**, highlighted the value of diverse career paths. She shared that "we all tend to think that our career path will appear, but the reality is that there are many paths, and the wisdom is finding your path for now. I was fortunate to have been paired with someone with insightful perspectives to help me choose what paths are right for me as well as placed in a cohort of remarkable women who have demonstrated the power of determination and who will lead in Defence with compassion, grace, and effectiveness."

TFTC has played an instrumental role in enhancing Australia's defence capability over the past nine years. This achievement is a testament to the unwavering support of its partnering organisations, including 2023 supporters Kinexus, Airservices Australia, BAE Systems Australia, Department of Defence, the Royal Australian Navy, Navantia, Jacobs, Hanwha Defense Australia, Nova Systems, QinetiQ, Rohde & Schwarz, Thrust Maritime, Atlantic & Peninsula and KBR.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our supporting organisations, mentors, and mentees for their dedication, which has contributed to the program's continued success. We eagerly anticipate more positive outcomes from this year's cohort.

### **About TFTC**

Established in 2015, the TFTC Mentoring Program provides women working within the engineering, project management, ICT and cyber disciplines in Defence and defence industry the opportunity to work with a senior industry mentor. Across a structured 12-month program, they develop skills and forge strong networks designed to enhance and grow the capability of the defence sector in Australia.

### **For further information, please contact:**

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