

23 October 2024

Australian Frogmen Found US Footprint and Manufacturing HQ in Edenton, North Carolina

Edenton, North Carolina – The Whiskey Project Group US (TWPG), a leading global manufacturer of next-generation multi-mission reconnaissance and tactical watercraft, is thrilled to announce the establishment of its new US headquarters and manufacturing hub in Edenton, North Carolina.

The Australian veteran-founded company is expanding its manufacturing capabilities with a state-of-the-art 50-acre facility that integrates shipbuilding and warehousing strategically located along the Chowan River. The expansion will create over 50 jobs within 100,000 square feet of fabrication and industrial manufacturing space, bolstering TWPG's capacity to design and maintain lightweight aluminium and composite vessels that meet the highest military and commercial maritime standards.

The development of the Edenton site cements TWPG's US position to deliver advanced defense manufacturing and innovation, bolstering maritime industrial capabilities and safeguarding sovereign supply chains. It will also enhance naval design intellectual property and foster regional boat manufacturing expertise, local job creation, and skills and training.

The Riverbulk Terminal will feature shipyard sustainment and maintenance capabilities while providing direct water access to local waterways and the North Atlantic Ocean. The direct ocean access and proximity to the Norfolk Naval Shipbuilding precinct will facilitate critical testing and evaluation capabilities in realistic operational conditions, thus enabling the design of stronger, safer, and more efficient platforms for the warfighter.

The Riverbulk Terminal in Edenton, which is strategically situated between the USMC's 2MEF at Camp LeJeune, Fort Liberty in Fayetteville and the heart of East Coast Naval Shipbuilding, Norfolk, marks TWPG's fourth manufacturing hub. It joins Australia and New Zealand facilities, including Sydney, Yamba, and Picton. The expansion aligns with the US Defense Industry Development Strategy's remit to deliver a more resilient, dynamic and robust industrial ecosystem and the USMC Commandant's 39th Planning Guidance to deliver naval integration and organic mobility. It furthermore supports the Australian Government's National Defense Strategy (NDS), to optimise for littoral manoeuvre with a long-range land and maritime strike capability.

Darren Schuback, Chief Executive Officer of TWPG, stated, "We are truly delighted to open our first advanced manufacturing facility in the United States. This onshore expansion allows us to expedite the delivery of our next-generation Whiskey Alpha's and Bravos to the US military whilst enhancing our AUKUS supply chains and developing stronger, faster, and more capable vessels for our global customers who expect nothing less than high performance."

"We are committed to investing in skilled, secure, and well-paid manufacturing jobs right here in North Carolina, prioritizing local employment and supporting the community for years to come and look forward to working with the local authorities to support their long-term plans for the region," Schuback added.

"Our new Edenton facility, managed by Simon Rich, exemplifies TWPG's dedication to strengthening the industrial base of our AUKUS partners through innovation, manufacturing, and the development of local skills and jobs."

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, said "Ours is the most business and military friendly state in the country and eastern North Carolina is the perfect home for The Whiskey Project Group's US headquarters and manufacturing facility."

"We know they will find great workers and the best quality of life right here," said Governor Cooper.

Speaking at the *G'day USA Defence Industry Dialogue Reception* at the Australian Embassy in Washington DC, Air Vice Marshal (Ret'd) Chris Deeble AO CSC, the Deputy Secretary of Capability Acquisition and Sustainment within the Australian Defence Department said, "The Whiskey Project Group knows boats... and the ability to support a contract with the United States Marine Corps, to establish a world-class capability in North Carolina in the USA, is an example of what we can hope for the [Australian Defence Industry] for the future – and that's just the starting position".

"To establish a US footprint is the mark of what we are doing under the Defence Industry Development Strategy (DIDS)," said Air Vice Marshal Deeble.

For more information about The Whiskey Project Group and its new facility, please visit [<https://www.thewhiskeyprojectgroup.com/>].

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Notes for editors:

ABOUT THE WHISKEY PROJECT GROUP

TWPG combines Australian maritime special operations experience and decades of New Zealand design excellence, with domestic and global supply chains of highly-specialised marine and military technology manufacturers.

TWPG watercraft are purpose-built to perform in the most challenging conditions, drawing on the veteran founders' special operations experience in contemporary maritime and littoral warfare.

Named after the military callsign for specialist water operators, The Whiskey Project Group was founded by former Australian Navy Clearance Divers (Frogmen) who set out to create the watercraft they wished they'd had.

TWPG comprises several proven trans-Tasman maritime technology and naval architecture companies delivering end-to-end design, engineering, manufacturing, maintenance and sustainment of high-performance military and emergency services watercraft.

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW



Darren Schuback

Co-founder & CEO, The Whiskey Project Group

Darren is a former military officer (mustang) with over 24 years of operational and leadership experience in the Royal Australian Navy and ADF Special Operations. He has a distinguished record in leading, mentoring and guiding staff at all levels within his organisation, through change management projects, cultural improvement and creating efficiencies in capability output.

He is an entrepreneur that is professionally renowned for 'making it happen', converting plans and strategies into successful outcomes. This unwavering focus is concentrated on The Whiskey Project Group (TWPG) to create the next generation of watercraft for performance, safety and capability.

Since the inception of TWPG he has successfully led his high performing team through multiple capital raises and acquisitions resulting in TWPG being strategically postured for continuous growth and international expansion in the North and South American markets.



Above: The Whiskey Project Group announce their US Manufacturing HQ at the Australian Embassy in Washington DC with, L-R: Major General (Ret'd) Paul Kennedy, TWPG US Board; Mr Brett Sangster, NED, TWPG Board, Air Vice Marshal (Ret'd) Chris Deeble AO CSC, the Deputy Secretary of Capability Acquisition and Sustainment, Australian Department of Defence, Mr Darren Schuback, Founder and CEO of TWPG, Ambassador (Ret'd) John Berry, President of the American Australian Association; Ms Sarah Cullens, MD, Precision Public Affairs and Mr Sohrab Fataar, NED, TWPG Board.



Above: The Whiskey Project Group's Riverbulk Terminal, located in Chowan County, North Carolina.



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