



PRIME MINISTER

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DEFENCE CONTRACT TO NORTH QUEENSLAND FIRM

A North Queensland firm has been selected for the supply of 22 workboats to the Royal Australian Navy and the Army, subject to the satisfactory completion of final negotiations on details of a proposed contract worth about \$3.4 million.

North Queensland Engineers and Agents of Cairns has been selected after evaluation of tenders, received from Australian and New Zealand firms in intense competition.

Work on the first workboat will commence shortly, and the total order is scheduled to be completed within three years.

It is estimated the contract will provide 100 man years of work. Sub-contractors and suppliers of materials in the Cairns area should also benefit from the contract.

The workboats will replace craft in use at various Service establishments throughout Australia, and will meet new requirements. Fifteen will be supplied to the RAN, and seven to the Army.

They will be used for the transport of personnel, equipment and stores, towing lighters, pontoons and buoys, training of clearance divers, and various other utility tasks.

The design has been prepared by the Directorate of Naval Ship Design in the Department of Defence in Canberra. Features will include a 12m aluminium hull, and twin diesel engines.

Navigation and lifesaving arrangements will be of a sufficient standard to permit short coastal passages.

The total cost of the project, including shipbuilding costs, and ancillary equipment, will be \$4.7 million.