The Northern Territory Government has welcomed the Australian Defence Force’s appointment of Laing O’Rourke as managing contractor for the planning phase of $500 million in upgrades to the Larrakeyah Base and naval infrastructure facilities.

Chief Minister Adam Giles said the NT Government had worked with Defence and the NT Master Builders Association to maximise local involvement on the project.

“This is part of our plan to assist with transition after the Ichthys LNG Project is completed,” Mr Giles said.

“Laing O’Rourke expects to transfer personnel from Ichthys to the Defence projects as the other winds down.

“The Country Liberals have a plan to ensure employment continues to be maximised in Darwin, including support for tradies through the Home Improvement Scheme, which Labor has promised to abolish.”

The Larrakeyah Base works will involve upgrades to current Defence service infrastructure including accommodation, a wharf facility and fuel infrastructure to enhance northern operations.

Laing O’Rourke is a member of the Northern Territory Master Builders Association (NT-MBA).

“Having a local managing contractor appointed for a project of this size is a vote of confidence in the NT’s industry capacity,” Mr Giles said.

“This is a positive example that local business can compete and win Defence work if they are competitive and prepared.”

The 2016 Defence White Paper includes $8 billion towards upgrading Defence facilities in the NT over the next 10 years.

Minister for Defence Industries, Peter Styles, said the Government had recognised opportunities in Defence years ago and made it a strategic economic priority.

“It’s why we employed a defence expert and established the Defence Advisory Board in 2015 to help ensure the Northern Territory makes the most of future Defence opportunities,” he said.

“We are also advancing the ship-lift project to create a major new industry dedicated to marine services, which has
the potential to drive the development of prime industrial land at East Arm to support the defence, oil and gas, coastal barging and logistics sectors.

"It’s all part of the Country Liberals’ plan to promote economic development and create jobs."

During the Larrakeyah Base planning phase, activities will involve obtaining necessary approvals which will enable the project to progress to delivery phase.

Local businesses could soon have a hand in works for the planning phase, which began on July 13 when the contract was awarded to Laing O’Rourke.

“Laing O’Rourke have begun the initial stages of the planning and will need support from local Darwin subcontractors,” Mr Styles said.

“This includes a range of services including survey, electrical sub-contractor for cable tracing, plumbing subcontractor and Information Communications Technology (ICT) communications.”

Industry briefings will take place during planning to enable maximum potential for local businesses and employees to be engaged during the delivery of the works.

“After the delivery phase contract is awarded, it’s expected there will be great opportunities for Darwin businesses and indigenous enterprises capable of delivering elements of the work,” Mr Styles said.

Planning is expected to continue until early 2018, with the delivery expected to occur between 2018 and mid-2020.

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