

## Delivery of Pacific Patrol Boats for Timor-Leste set for 2023



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By: Reporter

Finalisation of the shipbuilding arrangements of the Austal-built and designed Pacific Patrol Boats is underway, with Timor-Leste due to accept two of the 21 vessels in 2023.

The new arrangements follow the agreement between Prime Minister Turnbull and Prime Minister Alkatiri in November 2017 for the provision of these two new boats to Timor-Leste.

Minister for Defence Senator Marise Payne, said Australia's gifting of these vessels will help enhance Timor-Leste's capability to patrol its maritime borders and protect its natural resources.

"The boats will be sovereign capabilities of Timor-Leste, with Australian advisory, maintenance, infrastructure, and other support," Minister Payne said.

"This enduring assistance makes this agreement a 30-year commitment to supporting Timor-

Leste's security and prosperity. This package will build on our existing maritime security co-operation with Timor-Leste as part of our longstanding bilateral Defence Cooperation Program."

Austal will build the two vessels for Timor-Leste under the Pacific Patrol Boat Replacement Project, which in total is worth over \$300 million.

"This is great news for Austal. The company says the project will support more than 200 direct jobs and over 200 indirect jobs in the supply chain," said Minister for Defence Industry Christopher Pyne.

"Western Australia has been identified as one of the two naval shipbuilding hubs in the country and this project is important in helping develop the skills required for future work. Australia and Timor-Leste will continue to discuss a comprehensive package of interim training and sustainment support to help manage Timor-Leste's transition to the boats."

The 39.5-metre steel-hulled vessels will be delivered to 13 nations from late 2018 as part of Australia's \$2 billion commitment to regional maritime security through the Pacific Maritime Security Program.

On current build schedules, the first vessel will be given to Papua New Guinea at the end of this year and two vessels will be gifted to Timor-Leste in the second half of 2023.

The original Pacific Patrol Boat Program was launched in the mid-1980s with 22 vessels donated to 12 regional nations for use by their militaries, coast guards or police forces for border security, disaster relief and fisheries protection.

The vessels were built by Australian Shipbuilding Industries and delivered between 1987 and 1997, but are now reaching end of life.

<https://www.defenceconnect.com.au/maritime-antisub/2175-delivery-of-pacific-patrol-boats-for-timor-leste-set-for-2023>