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# News

Macomb County Executive  
Mark A. Hackel



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## Planning & Economic Development

### *For Immediate Release*

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## **Macomb County hosts delegation of Australian defense businesses**

Macomb County Executive Mark A. Hackel and officials from the Macomb County Department of Planning and Economic Development welcomed a group of Australian government officials and business leaders this week.

The Honorable David Hodgett, minister for Ports and Manufacturing for the State of Victoria, led the delegation of 18 people that included senior leaders from 12 aerospace and defense companies.

State capital Melbourne is home to a large cluster of research organizations including the Defense Materials Technology Centre, Defense Science Institute, Defense Science and Technology Organization and Advanced Composite Cooperative Research Centre. These institutions help support more than 300 businesses that supply products and services to domestic and international defense customers.

“We met the Government of Victoria, Australia during the 2013 Association of the United States Army Conference in Washington DC,” said Vicky Rad, interim deputy director of the Macomb County Planning and Economic Development Department. “We were drawn to how their industrial base is similar to Macomb County’s and their research and development strengths mirror that of Michigan’s Arsenal of Innovation. It was a privilege to introduce them to some of our defense assets and the unparalleled companies that make up our supply chain.”

The department coordinated the visit to coincide with the Michigan Defense Expo hosted by the Michigan Chapter of the National Defense Industrial Association at Macomb Community College.

The department arranged for the group to meet with Dr. Paul Rogers, director of the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC) to learn more about the inner workings of this important installation. Afterward, each of the visiting companies had an opportunity to offer a short overview of their companies to an audience of TACOM and TARDEC officials as well as some area companies that service the defense industry.

A dinner to celebrate the visit was attended by county, regional and state officials including Executive Hackel, Doug Smith, senior vice president of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Nigel Francis, Michigan’s senior automotive advisor and Justin Robinson, director of Business Development from the Detroit Regional Chamber.

“Melbourne is home to Australia’s pre-eminent military vehicle designers and manufacturers,” said Richard Smith, chair of the Defense Council of Victoria. “The similarities between our two locales holds potential for future collaboration.”

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