

XTEK sets sights on space

Jim Plouffe February 21, 2020

A new advanced manufacturing centre in South Australia will allow ballistics company XTEK to expand in to new markets, including the US, and new industries such as space.



XTEK Managing Director Philippe Odouard and Chair Uwe Boettcher in Adelaide this week.

XTEK launched its state-of-the-art fabrication centre in Adelaide, South Australia this week to manufacture lightweight ballistic armour plates and helmets.

The manufacturing centre is equipped with the company's XTclave composite materials curing and consolidation technology. The machine, about the size of four shipping containers, runs cycles of ultra-high isostatic pressure at high temperatures to achieve composite curing of thermoset and thermoplastic resin.

XTEK Managing Director Philippe Odouard said the machine would allow the company to meet expected demand for its products after XTEK bought American defence company HighCom Armour last year to tap into the lucrative US market.

"With this acquisition we now have the largest distribution network in the US and with this facility in Australia we have the manufacturing capability necessary to address the US military market," Odouard said.

"Further, the reception we received from the launch of two XTclave manufactured products earlier this year at the SHOT Show in the US was incredibly pleasing.

“We got confirmation from everyone that there was massive interest for this product at the price point we discussed.”

Oudouard said XTEK was targeting production capacity of up to A\$20m in revenue with the first delivery of products to US customers expected soon.

XTEK has based its R&D operations in Adelaide for the past 13 years, developing the lightweight armour plates and helmets as well as rifles and other defence related products.

Oudouard said their US compliant small arms protective insert plates are up to 30 per cent lighter than other products and have buoyancy potential, while the light helmets can stop AK-47 MSC bullets and fragments.

The new machine will allow the company to ramp up production from the three plates it can make per cycle at the moment, to more than 40 plates in less time, as well as proving production capabilities before expanding in the US.

XTEK chair Uwe Boettcher said the expansion would not only enable the company to fulfil expected demand for its ballistic products but also allow it to expand into the space industry by being able to make larger more complex shaped parts than are currently available.

XTEK has an MOU with the Australian Space Agency and works with space engineering services company Skykraft to manufacture new parts for of small spacecraft and launcher systems.

“We are starting the research cycle again with the space industry and we see great potential,” Boettcher said.

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