

21 November 2024

## THE WHISKEY PROJECT GROUP WINS BIG AS NATIONAL EMERGING EXPORTER OF THE YEAR

**Canberra, Australia:** Veteran-founded, specialist, and tactical watercraft manufacturer The Whiskey Project Group (TWPG) won the coveted Emerging Exporter Award at the 62nd Australian Export Awards last night.

In an incredibly strong field, TWPG was honoured to be announced as a joint winner alongside [Royal Poly Products](#), a family-owned business in Western Australia that developed its first commercially viable product less than 3 years ago and only started exporting in 2023.

In taking the win, TWPG has not only unlocked the export potential for innovative defence industry companies in New South Wales but also heralded a new era of critical end-to-end sovereign capability for new-technology watercraft through its manufacturing facilities along the State's coastline, including in Belrose, Gosford, Morisset, Yamba and Newcastle.

The expansion of manufacturing facilities in New South Wales has also been featured alongside the acquisition of KJL Sails in Picton, New Zealand, and the establishment of a US Headquarters and manufacturing hub in Edenton, North Carolina, in October 2024.

As a first-time applicant to the New South Wales Premier's Export Awards, TWPG was immensely proud of winning this year's Emerging Exporter Award, which recognised the business's success in the United States and expansion into South America.

Last year, following a highly competitive selection program, TWPG was awarded a breakthrough contract with the United States Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) to initially supply vessels for the development of the future combatant craft for the US Marine Corps.

TWPG went head-to-head with 34 other global specialist military boat companies and was awarded a significant contract by the US DoD, which is currently going through its paces with the US Marines.

TWPG is a proud Australian-owned company that has grown to be one of Australia's largest suppliers of Australian-made military law enforcement and emergency services vessels in Australia and New Zealand.

The company is a preferred supplier of high-performance vessels to users across defence, government, rescue, and coastguard organisations. It also services world-class patrol, commercial, and recreational vessels.

Darren Schuback, CEO of TWPG, said, "TWPG is thrilled to take out this prestigious national award, and are grateful for the opportunities that have been afforded to us through the dedicated team of Austrade professionals around the globe, both in the USA, South America, the UK and Europe. This award means a great deal to our entire Whiskey team, and it highlights the success we have collectively achieved through five years of sheer grit, determination, and world-leading innovation."

"TWPG is making cutting-edge watercraft internationally renowned across defence forces, law enforcement and recreational vessels. We are fortunate to partner with a range of amazing Australian OEMs - one of which was also recognised as the joint winner of the Small Business Award - [Marine Air Flow International](#), based on the Gold Coast in Queensland", Mr Schuback said.

"We have been focused on engaging with new markets for our Australian-made watercraft, and to have the company make inroads in new and exciting markets globally is incredibly humbling. We are so proud to showcase the best of the New South Wales and the Australian innovative export industry and we extend our heartfelt congratulations to all of our fellow finalists and winners."

**- ENDS -**

For further information please contact:

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### **Notes for editors:**

#### **ABOUT THE WHISKEY PROJECT GROUP**

*TWPG combines Australian maritime special operations experience and decades of New Zealand design excellence, with domestic and global supply chains of highly-specialised marine and military technology manufacturers.*

*TWPG watercraft are purpose-built to perform in the most challenging conditions, drawing on the veteran founders' special operations experience in contemporary maritime and littoral warfare.*

*Named after the military callsign for specialist water operators, The Whiskey Project Group was founded by former Australian Navy Clearance Divers (Frogmen) who set out to create the watercraft they wished they'd had.*

*TWPG comprises several proven trans-Tasman maritime technology and naval architecture companies delivering end-to-end design, engineering, manufacturing, maintenance and sustainment of high-performance military and emergency services watercraft.*

#### **AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW**



#### **Darren Schuback**

Co-founder & CEO, The Whiskey Project Group

*Darren is a former military officer (mustang) with over 24 years of operational and leadership experience in the Royal Australian Navy and ADF Special Operations. He has a distinguished record in leading, mentoring and guiding staff at all levels within his organisation, through change management projects, cultural improvement and creating efficiencies in capability output.*

*He is an entrepreneur that is professionally renowned for 'making it happen', converting plans and strategies into successful outcomes. This unwavering focus is concentrated on The Whiskey Project Group (TWPG) to create the next generation of watercraft for performance, safety and capability.*

**THE WHISKEY PROJECT GROUP**

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Since the inception of TWPG, he has successfully led his high-performing team through multiple capital raises and acquisitions, resulting in TWPG being strategically postured for continuous growth and international expansion in the North and South American markets.



(L-R) Sarah Cullens, Managing Director of Precision Public Affairs; Susan Martin; John Martin, Head of Strategic BD, TWPG; Michelle Rathgeb, Operations Manager, TWPG; and Darren Schuback, CEO, TWPG.

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