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AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

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COVID-19: AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE INDUSTRY ADJUSTS

DEFENCE STRATEGY
AND FORCE
STRUCTURE REVIEW

COVID-19
HOW NZDF
FOUGHT BACK

JP 9101
ENHANCED HIGH FREQUENCY
COMMUNICATIONS

PENTEN

MATTHEW WILSON | CEO, Penten



Matthew Wilson, CEO, Penten

Penten started discussions around potential responses early and agreed that communication would be a vital component in how we managed our response. We updated our staff regularly on the steps we were taking. These steps included: transitioning almost 65% of our work force to working from home, implemented hygiene and social distancing measures in our office. We focused on staff well-being with regular telephone and video check-ins, virtual team lunches, weekly newsletters, health and safety tips, and we even delivered hampers filled with activities to keep people occupied (they were very much welcomed).

We have always supported a flexible work environment and believe people across our teams will continue to work when and how they want. We will continue to support individual choice and ensure we continue to build on our remote collaboration tools to facilitate this.

We responded quickly and were able to support most of our team working from home within a couple of weeks. We were monitoring the situation closely before it affected Australia and put a plan in place quickly.

Our secure mobility business unit worked harder than ever before to ensure government workers could continue to access information securely while out of the office. Our staff were majority working from home, but the work demand was high. The dedication of our teams to get through their own home-life adjustments during the pandemic, while ensuring Penten's clients were supported is a testament to their commitment.

Supply chains were affected globally, and this also flowed through to our business. However, with a very clear understanding of our critical goods we have been able to manage the slow-down with confidence. Our logistics director prepared for extended lead times from delayed flights and re-prioritised our workforce to ensure we had a consistent flow of goods as we needed them.

Regarding supply chains, we have learned to look for alternative options from different locations and suppliers to ensure we can continue to deliver. By having this information ready before a crisis hits, we have a back-up plan ready to roll out.

We have also learned from this pandemic how demand for our products can increase in crisis situations, so by being aware of this, we can better prepare if a future crisis should occur.

The pandemic has highlighted the need for self-reliance and sovereignty, especially critical technologies, and the need to maintain a technology edge. Penten has been through a recent period of growth, and COVID-19 accelerated the attention on developing sovereign Australian technology to keep the country functioning throughout crises.

As an Australian owned and operated company, Penten has a clear focus in directly supporting Australia's industrial capacity and productivity to generate and retain sovereign capability. We actively seek to sustain and develop Australian employment opportunities and to enhance and expand the advanced manufacturing and innovation sectors. As a direct result of our drive, we are not only creating new and exciting roles from sought after skills such as cyber security, network design, engineering and cryptography, but sustaining and challenging our established workforce to deliver better and more effective outcomes.

Throughout the shutdown, Penten has actively evaluated and responded to the changing situation. We have implemented communication strategies and flexibility of workforce so we can ensure our business can continue throughout future shutdowns, even those that may be more severe than the current one.



Penten specialises in mobile cyber security devices (Penten image)