



Great Western Manufacturing workers Leon Stirling (left) and Craig Williams work at the company's Harristown site. PICTURE: BEV LACEY

Contract targets 250 jobs



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A FAMILY-OWNED business is on the verge of a billion dollar Australian Defence Force

contract that could generate more than 250 jobs in Toowoomba.

Queensland-based Protected Transport Systems is among the top contenders for the contract to build new, light-armoured vehicles for the ADF.

And in a coup for the Garden City, family-owned Toowoomba

business Great Western Manufacturing would build the vehicle at its manufacturing plant at Harristown, using an extensive local supply chain.

The company's managing director for manufacturing, Chris Thornton, was reserved

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Treasurer backs lucrative tender

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about the prospect yesterday, but said the family was thrilled to be involved in the proposal.

"It's a significant contract," he said.

"But it all takes time."

PTS brings together Koos de Wet Consulting, who have more than 30 years of Australian-based armour design experience, and Great Western

Manufacturing which has more than 30 years experience in the manufacture of components for trucks and other heavy, specialist vehicles.

PTS executive chairman Derek Andrews has called for the support of the Toowoomba community to show the ADF that the proposal could work in

Toowoomba.

"We believe that Queensland has the edge and Toowoomba in particular has a very strong manufacturing base," Mr Andrews said.

Queensland Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development Andrew Fraser yesterday publicly backed the proposal, saying PTS was a strong candidate for the project.

"They have the technology and the know-how to deliver a state-of-the-art product," he said.

Mr Andrews said two companies would be selected by the ADF within the next couple of months to build prototypes.

He said manufacturing of the vehicle could start in early 2011.