

To assist in rapidly maturing sovereign concepts through the Technology Readiness Levels, EPE has built Military Training, Evaluation, Certification and Systems Assurance (MILTECS) facilities in Southeast Queensland, comprising a test laboratory, and proving grounds. EPE provides access to these MILTECS facilities, aiming to deliver operators, prime vendors, and industry, suitable and accessible Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) validation, testing, and training facilities within Australia. This enables the ability to test and validate new and emerging capabilities and generate the required Objective Quality Evidence (OQE) for equipment end users.

EPE's most recent addition to its commitment to build national improvised threat detection, mitigation, and exploration facilities, is at Helidon, Southeast Queensland. The centre spans across approximately four hectares and is co-located near Rocket Test Industries (RTI) at Helidon quarry, approximately one hour's drive from Brisbane or fifteen minutes from Toowoomba. The site is designed to test and validate Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) disruptors and Conventional Munitions Disposal (CMD) tools and to assist in the development of enhanced Render Safe Procedures (RSP). It provides a safe and unparalleled facility for product development and validation as well as improving operator technical skills.

MILTECS Helidon has been designed and constructed as an operational facility, providing users with firing lanes as well as an omni directional pit. Three lanes are constructed of reinforced concrete but overlaid with spaced rubber matting to ensure a fragment free environment. The omni directional pit has a 360-degree safety trace and has been excavated to below general ground level and is walled by solid sandstone. It provides a perfect forensic capture area with the ability to house a vehicle, shipping container or any medium sized target. A specifically engineered firing point, created with thick reinforced concrete blocks has been placed strategically in close proximity to the firing lanes and omni directional pit, allowing the firer full protection from blast and fragmentation. The range houses an explosive and detonator magazine and has provision for on-site disruptor and ammunition storage. Additionally, the facility is approved for live demonstrations of up to five kilograms of explosives. A site-specific safety trace has been calculated and in conjunction with the quarry and RTI trace, provides a safe environment for all users.

A common-sense approach, backed by Resources Safety and Health, Queensland (RSHQ) advice, and a highly skilled team has allowed EPE to create an effective set of Standard Operating Procedures that allows users with little or no experience, a safe and controlled space for the conduct of their range practice.

Through regular interaction with the Explosives Inspectorate from RSHQ and with adherence to an existing quarry safety overlay, as well as functional understanding of RTI requirements, EPE aims to provide a regional hub, test and evaluation, verification, and validation, that can be accessed by whole of government organisations to optimise domestic skills enhancement and capacity building throughout the region. The training facilities can also be used by neighbouring nations as a venue to develop their capabilities.