



Australia and Japan Successfully Test High-Energy Laser Project Boobook

The Defense Ministries of the two countries announced the completion of field tests for an advanced laser system destined for terrestrial and naval platforms.

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CANBERRA — Australia and Japan have taken a historic step in their strategic cooperation by successfully conducting the first field tests of a co-developed high-energy laser system. Named "Project Boobook" (after a species of owl native to Australia), the project represents the first joint development initiative between the defense industries of the two countries.

The announcement was made in Canberra by Australian Defence Industry Minister Pat Conroy, on the sidelines of a bilateral meeting between Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles and Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi.

Project Boobook: surveillance and advanced protection

The prototype combines over twenty years of research and development conducted by the *Defence Science and Technology Group* (DSTG) with the optical and electronic expertise of *Mitsubishi Electric Australia* (MEA) and its parent company *Mitsubishi Electric Corporation* (MELCO).

Although technical details regarding power and range have not been made public, Minister Richard Marles clarified that the system is designed to be installed on ground and naval (coastal) combat platforms. Unlike other laser programs focused on the physical destruction of drones or air threats, *Project Boobook* is primarily developed as a **surveillance and protection capability**, leveraging laser technology to optically detect

incoming threats and enhance situational awareness.

Major industrial investment in Sydney

The program will not remain confined to the experimental phase. Mitsubishi Electric Australia has announced a **70 million Australian dollar investment** (approximately 49.8 million US dollars) for the creation of a new division and advanced manufacturing facilities in Rydalmere, in the western suburbs of Sydney.

This industrial hub will serve to lay the groundwork for large-scale production in Australia, while ensuring privileged access to advanced defense technologies for the *Australian Defence Force* (ADF) and driving employment growth and technology transfer.

New horizons: testing for Australian hypersonic missiles

During the joint press conference, bilateral cooperation touched on a further strategic pillar. Canberra and Tokyo have agreed to **accelerate talks to allow Japan to use Australian missile ranges** over the next decade.

Should the Japan Self-Defense Forces begin testing *stand-off* long-range missiles and hypersonic weapons on Australian territory, it would represent an epochal development. According to Minister Marles, an agreement of this magnitude would be "second only to similar cooperation that Japan maintains with the United States", confirming the progressive and rapid consolidation of the security axis among Indo-Pacific regional powers.

News link: <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2026-08-18/successful-trial-laser-marks-deepening-australia-japan-defence-collaboration>