

the mid-1970s. The industry studies, principally by Amalgamated Wireles (Australasia) Ltd. and managed by Department of Defence Support, should be completed in a year at an estimated cost of \$A600,000.

Should a ship be located, the warships of the Royal Australian Navy could investigate. Under the Australian Frigate Project the decision has been taken to build two of the six new FFG-7 Perry class ships at the Williamstown Naval Dockyard at an estimated cost of \$A830 million. Since previous vessels in this class have been built in the United States, this decision is an important move not only for the naval dockyard where \$A40 million has been spent over the past years to upgrade the facilities, but for the wider field of Australian engineering and shipbuilding. The FFG-7 class vessels will be fitted with Australian designed-and-built *Mulloka*

sonar, 76mm guns locally manufactured as well as steering gear, propeller, shafting, fire pumps, capstan and windlass from indigenous industries.

The Carrington Slipways of New South Wales will deliver two new Australian designed Catamaran minehunters in 1985-86, at a cost of nearly \$A19 million.

Carrington launched HMAS *Tobruk* in 1982—the biggest ship constructed for the Royal Australian Navy in an Australian shipyard for 15 years. *Tobruk* is a 6,000 tonne amphibious heavy lift ship capable of moving a squadron of Leopard MBTs or wheeled vehicles and between 350 and 500 troops.

The *Ikara* anti-submarine weapon system which is in service with the RN and Royal Australian Navy was developed by the Australians. It comprises a guided missile and homing torpedo. The missile is launched from a surface ship and target information

from sonar, with in-flight position of the missile as well as wind speed and the ship's position are analysed and fed in to the missile to place it in the best position for a kill. The *Ikara* missile can carry a variety of lightweight torpedos including the British Stingray, Swedish TP42, Italian A244's and the Japanese Type 73. The *Ikara* vehicle places the torpedo into the sea close to the target submarine and then the homing head on the torpedo takes over the search.

Though Australia has both Lockheed P-3C Orions from the United States, these aircraft are to be equipped with the Australian-designed *Barra* ASW sonobuoys. The *Barra* is a considerable defence success story with sales to the UK as well as Australia, the current value of these orders is \$A48 million and work for over 400 Australians in more than 60 companies.

However, the introduction of the McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Hornet tactical

## PERENTIE Project Perieate

In July 1982 tenders were invited from the Australian Government for Project *Perieate*. This required the replacement of all vehicles beneath the 4 tonne payload class. Above the 4 tonne payload vehicles the replacement vehicles are the Mercedes U1700 and the 8 tonne Mack 6x6. Below this category the army had previously operated a 0.75 tonne 6 cylinder Land/Rover, 2.5 tonne International 4x4 and 4 tonne payload International 6x6. These vehicles will now be replaced by two vehicle types, a one tonne vehicle and a two tonne vehicle. Tenders for the project have now closed and Defence believes that the army have chosen the following vehicles for evaluation.

- 1 tonne: Land Rover 110 4x4
- Mercedes Benz 300 6D
- Jeep M10
- 2 tonne: Land Rover 110 6x6
- Mercedes Benz Unimog V1300

All vehicles will be subjected to a 24,000km durability trial as well as a series of user studies.

Land Rover must have a very good chance of winning both contracts due to the spares commonality of both vehicles. Indeed, Land Rover saw the need for a 6x6 vehicle in Australia in early 1981 and commissioned a trials vehicle from SMC Engineering in Bristol designed by Mike Stone using the same drive through system as the Sandringham 6 but utilizing the new 110 chassis. The trials unit had a Rover V8 unit and coil springs all round. JRA in Australia have altered the design by using the 1ZUZU diesel with the petrol V8 as an option. They have also replaced the rear coil springs with leaf springs using a different drive through system.

The advantage of leaf springs on the back axles, while not giving quite such great articulation as coils, the platform created is far more stable for missile mounts and anti-aircraft systems. Defence believes that one of the requirements for the *Perieate* project is for the vehicle to mount certain types of weapon fits. The 6x6 Land Rover is ideal for this configuration as it offers:-

- A stable weapons platform
- A lower profile than comparable payload vehicles
- A long mounting platform
- Excellent cross country ability
- For towing the twin axles cut out any vehicle swaying when crossing boggy terrain
- Airportability

This is the first time a Land Rover 6x6 has been proposed to an overseas army and it will have to prove its worth against the tried

and trusted Unimog which has been chosen by the New Zealand army, amongst others. In the 1 tonne area Defence sees the ultimate competition being between the Mercedes and Land Rover. Here Land Rover have the advantage as they have been used in the Australian Army for many years and are in service worldwide. The Mercedes, although new on the scene, is in service with Kuwait, Nigeria, Argentina, Germany, Norway and is built under licence in France.

The outcome of the trials will be of great interest to all. The winning vehicle will have to prove an extremely large local content and build to enable the Australian Army to maintain its logistic self-dependence.

Land Rovers under trial on an outback road.  
(Photo: JRA)

