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Tastier food for soldiers with MATS technology



Defence ration packs could get an overhaul thanks to new processing technology that is anticipated to produce high-quality, long-life, shelf-stable foods.

The [Defence Science and Technology Organisation](#) (DSTO) will examine the viability of introducing Microwave Assisted Thermal Sterilisation (MATS) technology, which has been shown to produce better-tasting packaged foods in minutes rather than hours.

The research will be conducted in collaboration with the Australian Army and the [Centre for Food Innovation](#), which includes the [University of Tasmania](#) and the [CSIRO](#). The study was announced during the opening of DSTO's \$19 million redeveloped nutrition research facility.

The Tasmanian facility, which has provided the Defence Force with a food-science capability for the last 60 years, has undergone a major two-year refurbishment that was completed in October.

"DSTO now has a state-of-the-art food-science laboratory designed to deliver the best nutritional outcomes for defence while enhancing combat ration packs and improving the quality of fresh feeding for our troops," said Assistant Minister for Defence Stuart Robert.

"With its new research facility DSTO is well placed to capitalise on the new MATS technology, which has the potential to provide a superior product not only for defence but for emergency, humanitarian aid, disaster relief and commercial applications.

"The DSTO study will provide a cost-benefit analysis and identify the potential applications for the technology beyond defence's requirements, so that industry can take an informed decision to invest in the technology."

The six-month study will involve consultation with the Australian food industry.

"The study will look at opportunities for exploiting the technology to cater to the ready-made meal market in Asia," Robert said.

"If investment in the technology leads to a growth in food production in regional areas, it will be welcome news for Australian jobs and the local economy."



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