

Boeing Puts Australia on Sonic Cruiser Technology Team

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Boeing today named Hawker de Havilland as the latest member of the international technology development team working on the Sonic Cruiser program. Hawker de Havilland, a subsidiary of The Boeing Company, will contribute its expertise in advanced materials, including composites.

The Sonic Cruiser is a new airliner concept unveiled by Boeing on March 29, 2001. The aircraft has a dramatic new configuration and is designed to fly at speeds of up to Mach 0.98, shortening travel times, and with fuel consumption per passenger comparable to today's best performing widebody twinjets.

Boeing already has signed Alenia Aeronautica, Fuji Heavy Industries, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Japan Aircraft Development Corp., Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Vought Aircraft Industries and the Boeing Commercial Airplanes Wichita Division to the Sonic Cruiser materials technology development team.

"It's no surprise that our search for companies with expertise in advanced materials led us to Hawker de Havilland," said Jeff Luckey, director of Supplier Management for the Sonic Cruiser program. "Hawker is known for its work in composites throughout the world. Hawker de Havilland and many other Boeing sites are truly among the best in the world. We will certainly leverage that."

Luckey said the technology development team is really coming together.

"The experts of the world are really stepping up to finding innovative solutions that will help the Sonic Cruiser change the way the world flies," he said.

Lindsay Anderson, Hawker de Havilland managing director, said the decision was a great tribute to the company's skill base.

"There are no free kicks in this business, and we're very pleased to form part of a team which will revolutionize air transport," Anderson said. "This contract is a great start to our 75th anniversary year."

Anderson said the positive attitude of both state and federal governments toward attracting and retaining high tech business, has been a key reason why Hawker de Havilland has actively sought to bring this research to Australia.

"The caliber of the Sonic Cruiser program will put a global spotlight on the resources and capability available in Australia," Anderson said.

Hawker de Havilland, acquired by Boeing in late 2000, designs and manufactures commercial and military aircraft aerostructure components. From plants at Fishermans Bend in Melbourne and Bankstown in Sydney, it makes parts for most Boeing airplane types, including the 737, 747, 757 and 777, as well as Lockheed Martin, Bombardier and Airbus aircraft.

Hawker de Havilland also is the designated primary service center for the repair, modification and overhaul of Boeing-manufactured composite and metal-bonded aircraft components for Australia, New Zealand and Asia. It has received approval from Australia's Civil Aviation Safety Authority and the Federal Aviation Administration to work on U.S.- and Australian-registered aircraft. Hawker is in the process of securing similar accreditation from Europe's Joint Aviation Authorities for European-registered aircraft.

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