Boeing Hands Over Last Kiowa in Townsville

Boeing Australia today handed over the last of the modified Kiowa helicopter to the 162 Reconnaissance Squadron of the Australian Army in Townsville, Queensland.

Over the last few months, Boeing technicians have been working on the squadron's fleet of Kiowa helicopters, fitting a new VHF communication suite, as well as a UHF/VHF Direction Finding System.

With a turn around time for each aircraft of about eight days, the Boeing team has been pushed hard to make the deadline.

The Officer in Command of 162 Recce Squadron , Major Philip Smith, said the new systems fitted to the Kiowas represented a quantum leap in communication standards for the Kiowa aircraft.

He said: "We are delighted to receive the last of our helicopters back from Boeing, and now look forward to full deployment."

The Kiowa, based on the commercial Bell Jet Ranger helicopter, is used by the Army in a forward reconnaissance role.

Boeing Project Manager of the Kiowa Communications Upgrade Project, Peter Ewart-Brown, said the results and aircraft turn around times achieved by the Boeing team had been "excellent."

He said the team will now move on to Darwin, where the new systems will be fitted into 161 Reconnaissance Squadron Kiowa helicopter fleet. Boeing expects that this work will be completed by early October.

Nineteen aircraft have now been modified out of the fleet of 43.

Established in Australia for 60 years and with 1700 employees at facilities throughout the country, Boeing Australia is the prime contractor for the combat and communications systems for the Royal Australian Navy's new Collins class submarines and is upgrading the avionics and electronics for the Royal Australian Air Force's F/RF-111C and P-3C aircraft.

A subsidiary company, AeroSpace Technologies of Australia Limited is a major exporter of aerostructure components to the world's leading aircraft manufacturers.

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