Boeing Wins Initial Design Contract for Australian AEW&CS

Boeing today announced it has been awarded one of three Initial Design Activity contracts by the Australian Defence Force for Project Wedgetail, an airborne early warning & control (AEW&C) system.

Managing Director of Boeing Australia Limited, David Gray, said that the contract is worth $6.5 million and during the next year, Boeing will work "closely with the ADF on developing a design solution that meet its AEW&C requirements."

He said that the AEW&C system being offered combines the new high performance Boeing 737-700 aircraft with the Northrop Grumman Multi-role Electronically Scanned Array (MESA) radar.

Included in the platform are an advanced identification friend or foe (IFF) system, an expanded Passive Surveillance System, a flexible, open system architecture and a highly effective self-defence capability. The 737-700 features state-of-the-art avionics, navigation equipment and flight deck. It has a maximum speed of .80 mach, a ceiling in excess of 40,000 feet and a range of 3,000 nmi.

Using the latest sensor technology, Northrop Grumman's 360-degree steerable beam MESA radar is able to track air and sea targets simultaneously and can help the operator track high-performance aircraft while continuously scanning the operational area. More than 400 hours of wind tunnel testing have demonstrated the compatibility of the aircraft and the radar.

Boeing and Northrop Grumman's Electronic Sensors and Systems Division have been leaders in airborne early warning technology for more than 30 years. Boeing Australia and British Aerospace Australia are Australia's most experienced aerospace contractors in the AEW&C field. Boeing Australia is providing system engineering and airplane modification support, and is leading the product support and ground support system teams. British Aerospace Australia is providing the passive surveillance system, Electronic Warfare Self-Protect system, Operational Mission and Mission Support segment and the AEW&C support facility.

Gray added: "We have unique domain and technical experience and have formed a strong project team.

"Boeing and Northrop Grumman's combined airframe, integration, mission avionics and radar experience have made AWACS the premier AEW&C system in the world. Our technical approach provides significant advances in AEW&C capabilities offering a solution with an acceptable risk.

"Boeing Australia and British Aerospace Australia, with their domain experience critical to our AEW&C solution, are helping to develop a plan to transfer technology to support the Royal Australia Air Force's desire to maintain and enhance the system in Australia with Australian workers," said Gray.

A production contract is expected to be awarded in 1999 and the Royal Australian Air Force plans to enter the AEW&C capability into service in 2002.

Boeing Australia Limited is a leading high technology company specialising in design, development, manufacture, installation and support of defence combat and communication systems.

Established in Australia for 60 years and with 1700 employees at facilities throughout the country, Boeing Australia has been selected as the preferred tenderer for the Australian Defence Force's High Frequency Modernisation Program, 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.

Boeing Australia Limited is part of The Boeing Company which employs over 225,000 people and has total worldwide sales in excess of US$48 billion.

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