

Boeing Hornets Enter Phase 2 of Australia's Upgrade Program

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The Royal Australian Air Force, or RAAF, has embarked on the second phase of the Hornet Upgrade Program. When the upgrade is complete, the RAAF A (single seat) and B (two seat) model F/A-18 Hornet will be comparable to the latest C and D model Hornets.

Representatives of the RAAF, Raytheon, the U.S. Navy and Boeing gathered today to commemorate the induction of the first Hornets to receive the APG-73 radar. Replacing the original APG-65 radar, the APG-73 significantly adds to the combat capability of the Hornet and gives the RAAF the ability to upgrade with new software. Incorporation of the APG-73 is scheduled to be complete in mid-2003.

"The continuing success of the RAAF Hornet program and the Hornet Upgrade Program is proof of the excellent working relationship that has developed over the years among the RAAF, the U.S. Navy and Boeing," said Tony Parasida, Boeing vice president, F/A-18 program. "Phase 2 and the APG-73 radar will give the RAAF the winning edge in the region for the foreseeable future."

This is the most significant upgrade to the RAAF aircraft since the aircraft were delivered between 1985 and 1990. The fleet of 71 Hornets is based at RAAF Base Williamtown near Newcastle and RAAF Base Tindal in the Northern Territory of Australia. Modification work for both phases is conducted at RAAF Base Williamtown.

Phase 1 of the upgrade is near complete. Under this phase, the Hornets are being equipped with improved communication and navigation capabilities including a sixth avionics multiplex bus, new mission computers, a secure radio system, a global positioning system, enhanced Identification Friend or Foe system and the extension of the armament multiplex bus within the outer wing. This phase of the upgrade is scheduled for completion in June 2002.

The F/A-18 Hornet was built by an industry team lead by Boeing. Boeing built the forward fuselage and wings, and conducted final assembly. Northrop Grumman Corp., the principal airframe subcontractor, built the center and aft fuselage. General Electric produced the engines, and Raytheon manufactured the radar.

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