Boeing Begins 737 AEW&C Maintenance Training for Royal Australian Air Force

RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN, New South Wales, March 3, 2010 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] has launched the first maintenance training program conducted under the five-year In-Service Support (ISS) contract for Project Wedgetail, Australia's 737 Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) program.

Training began on Feb. 15 with five Boeing Defence Australia instructors and 32 students from the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) No. 2 Squadron. The 147-day program, held in the AEW&C Support Centre at RAAF Base Williamtown, is a combination of classroom- and computer-based lessons, Operational Flight Trainer (OFT) simulator sessions, and "real life" flight line training.

"Realistic, integrated training is essential to mission readiness, and our Wedgetail 737 AEW&C training programs are designed to mirror the way RAAF personnel are expected to perform maintenance activities in the field," said Grant Drew, an AEW&C maintenance instructor for Boeing Defence Australia.

The AEW&C Support Centre, established in 2004 under the Project Wedgetail System Acquisition Contract (SAC), houses the OFT, an Operational Mission Simulator and a Mission Support System to support Australia's six 737 AEW&C aircraft.

ISS training follows a series of basic maintenance training courses delivered under the Project Wedgetail SAC. Boeing delivered the first two Wedgetail aircraft to the RAAF on Nov. 26, allowing flight and mission crews to launch the first ISS maintenance training programs using the aircraft.

Four Boeing Defence Australia employees also entered the ISS maintenance training program on Feb. 15 in order to become maintenance instructors. In addition to completing the program, they also will learn teaching techniques, curriculum development and how to deliver training using the Wedgetail Maintenance Training System.

"My colleagues are operating at the forefront of defense training with Boeing's 737 AEW&C platform. I'm privileged to learn from them, carry on their exceptional work and teach future RAAF maintainers," said Peter Whitty, who will become a Wedgetail ISS avionics maintenance instructor for Boeing Defence Australia after completing the program.

When they graduate, the new Boeing Defence Australia instructors will take on the job of delivering RAAF Wedgetail 737 AEW&C maintenance training programs. The five current Boeing Defence Australia instructors will move on to train instructors and maintainers for Boeing AEW&C systems in production for Turkey and the Republic of Korea.

"Boeing Defence Australia is already a key training service provider and integrator for the Australian Defence Force," said John Duddy, vice president and managing director of Boeing Defence Australia and vice president and general manager of Global Services & Support – Australia. "Training Wedgetail AEW&C maintainers and maintenance instructors will not only strengthen our relationship with the RAAF, but also increase our in-country and international training footprint."

Based on the Boeing Next-Generation 737-700 commercial airplane, the 737 AEW&C aircraft is designed to provide airborne battle-management capability with an advanced multirole electronically scanned radar and 10 state-of-the-art mission crew consoles that are able to track airborne and maritime targets simultaneously. The mission crew can direct offensive and defensive forces while maintaining continuous surveillance of the operational area.

Boeing Defence Australia, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Boeing Company and a business unit of Boeing Defense, Space & Security, is a leading Australian aerospace enterprise. With a world-class team of nearly 2,000 employees at 13 locations throughout Australia and two international sites, Boeing Defence Australia supports some of the largest and most complex defense projects in Australia.

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