Boeing, Thales Select EC135 for Helicopter Aircrew Training System

Eurocopter aircraft offers proven, low-risk solution

BRISBANE, Queensland, Jan. 27, 2012 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] subsidiary Boeing Defence Australia (BDA) and Thales Australia today named the Eurocopter EC135 as the preferred platform for their bid on the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Project AIR 9000 Phase 7 – Helicopter Aircrew Training System (HATS).

"Boeing and Thales' individual expertise and shared strengths, as well as a strong working relationship spanning more than 15 years, have enabled the design of a truly integrated, cost-effective, low-risk aircrew training solution for the ADF," said Kim Gillis, managing director of Boeing Defence Australia. "The Eurocopter EC135 is the ideal helicopter for this mission."

A fleet of more than 1,000 EC135 aircraft worldwide has amassed 2.2 million flight hours to date. The helicopter is part of successful training systems in Germany, Switzerland, Spain, and Japan, and in Australia with the Victorian and New South Wales police forces.

"The EC135 is an ideal training helicopter for defense forces operating new-generation multi-role or combat helicopters, with great maneuverability, high visibility and the most advanced technologies to help instructors perform training missions safely," said Olivier Lambert, Eurocopter senior vice president, Sales & Customer Relations. "Eurocopter is very pleased that the Boeing and Thales team has demonstrated its confidence in our product by selecting the EC135 as their preferred platform."

The Boeing and Thales team conducted a rigorous evaluation of available twin-engine helicopters to identify the aircraft that best met the Commonwealth's training systems goals.

"Thorough flight and ground assessments of the EC135 and its suitability for both ab initio training and as a lead-in trainer to more complex and larger helicopters made it clear the EC135 was the optimum platform to meet the ADF's requirements," said Gillis. "The aircraft's support base, both locally and internationally, presents a significantly lower cost of operation than other aircraft in its class, reducing project-establishment and through-life-support risk."

The Boeing and Thales HATS solution draws on Boeing's sophisticated design tools and extensive aircrew training systems experience, combined with Thales' simulation capabilities, to deliver an ab initio rotary wing training system for all Royal Australian Navy and Australian Army helicopter aircrew.

The Boeing and Thales team has adopted a systems training and engineering approach to development that optimizes training throughput and learning outcomes and reduces life cycle cost, underpinned by a strong focus on safety and military ethos. The solution also draws on Boeing's experience delivering rotary wing training to the ADF for more than 15 years and is backed by the support of The Boeing Company's Training Systems & Government Services business.

Thales Australia is a trusted partner of the Australian Defence Force and is also present in commercial sectors ranging from air traffic management to security systems and services. Employing around 3,300 people in over 35 sites across the country, Thales Australia recorded revenues of around AUD 900 million in 2010.

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 about 1,500 employees at 15 locations throughout Australia and four international sites, Boeing Defence Australia supports some of the largest and most complex defense projects in Australia.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Defense, Space & Security is one of the world's largest defense, space and security businesses specializing in innovative and capabilities-driven customer solutions, and the world's largest and most versatile manufacturer of military aircraft. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Defense, Space & Security is a $32 billion business with 63,000 employees worldwide. Follow us on Twitter: @BoeingDefense.

# # #

Contact:

Melanie Shanahan
Boeing Defence Australia
+61 (0)7-3306-3132
melanie.a.shanahan@boeing.com

Julian Elliott
Thales Australia
+61 (0)2-9562-3716
+61 (0)401-134-415
julian.elliott@thalesgroup.com.au