

Hon Martin Hamilton-Smith MP

Minister for Defence Industries

Thursday 24, November 2016

First P-8A Poseidon aircraft to touch down in new Adelaide home

A ceremony to welcome the first of 15 new P-8A Poseidons will be held tomorrow to officially welcome the aircraft to the Edinburgh RAAF Base.

The arrival heralds the start of a new era of maritime surveillance and patrol for the Royal Australian Air Force, Australian Defence and South Australia.

The new aircraft also sees \$380 million of upgrades to the RAAF Base and the creation of a significant number of direct jobs to undertake works including a new hangar maintenance and operational facility, operational conversion facility (including aircrew and maintenance crew training facilities), and airfield works, including a runway extension.

The new aircraft, based on the Boeing 737, flies faster, higher and further than the ageing AP3C Orions and with aerial refueling, can stay in the air for up to 20 hours. The P-8A Poseidon is a modern, highly reliable aircraft incorporating the latest maritime surveillance and attack capabilities.

Minister for Defence Industries Martin Hamilton-Smith said that the arrival of the new aircraft signals the ongoing commitment to supporting the Air Force maritime surveillance and patrol capabilities in South Australia.

This is the first of 15 aircraft the Government committed to in the 2016 Defence White Paper, with the first 12 to be progressively delivered by March 2020. With the \$297 million project to upgrade the Woomera Test Range equipment, plans to upgrade the Woomera airfield and town and the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and electronic warfare (ISREW) support required for the P-8As and unmanned aerial systems (UAS), South Australia's aerospace presence is continuing to increase.

Background

In addition to undertaking sophisticated surveillance operations at great distances, the P-8As can also undertake offensive operations against submarines and ships, as well as supporting search and rescue operations. The aircraft will all be based at Edinburgh's RAAF Base and operated by Number 92 Wing. To complement the surveillance capabilities of the Poseidon, the Australian Government will acquire seven high altitude MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft from the early 2020s as part of the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability stream. The Triton aircraft will also be based in South Australia.

Boeing has been awarded the initial contract for logistics and engineering support for the new aircraft creating 30 new ongoing jobs in South Australia.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Defence Industries Martin Hamilton-Smith

The 2016 Defence White Paper confirmed a number of projects in the aerospace sector which will have a positive impact for South Australia.

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The arrival of the new P-8A Poseidon aircraft cements South Australia as the centre of the nation's military intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and electronic warfare capabilities.

South Australia is committed to maximising opportunities for local industry in the project, which will involve 30 years of sustainment and upgrade work. We anticipate the aircraft will create approximately 50 jobs in maintenance and support by 2018.

The P-8As will be complimented by the new Triton unmanned aerial vehicles and we are also hopeful that the new Gulfstream G550 aircraft will be based at RAAF Base Edinburgh, further boosting our intelligence surveillance reconnaissance and electronic warfare capabilities.

We also have the \$1-2 billion Jindalee Operational Radar Network upgrade, due to commence in mid-2018, which we expect to peak at around 250 jobs – so there is a great deal of activity to look forward to.

MEDIA NOTE:

Ceremony - 9.30am for a 10.00am start, Friday 25 November 2016.

Where - RAAF Base Edinburgh, West Avenue, Edinburgh. Media are to assemble at the front gate to be escorted on to the base.

The P-8A Poseidon will be static throughout the event, however a link to file vision of the aircraft's arrival at RAAF Base Edinburgh will be made available to media on the day.