

First Step in Super Hornet

Defense-Aerospace



The Royal Australian Air Force's entire fleet of F/A-18F Super Hornet fighters have now completed their first upgrade, as part of the Spiral Upgrade Program under which the fleet will receive incremental capability upgrades. (RAAF photo)

Australia's Super Hornets have undergone their first major upgrade. The job was finished on budget and two weeks ahead of schedule by the Electronic Attack Enterprise team, consisting of Air Force, Defence's Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group, Boeing Defence Australia and Raytheon Australia.

The work was the first stage of the Super Hornet Spiral Upgrade Program under which the fleet will receive incremental capability upgrades.

The program is being conducted in parallel with the US Navy F/A-18F upgrade program to ensure the technology remains in line with the world's largest and only other Super Hornet operator.

The 12-month Increment 1 program delivered updates to the aircraft training system, as well as to software and hardware.

These included the installation of Navigation Warfare to provide GPS navigation protection, a Distributed Targeting System to enable precision targeting, and an upgraded Solid State Recorder for the cockpit.

Five separate structural modifications to improve fatigue life and eliminate hazards were incorporated with the hardware upgrades.

OC Air Combat and Electronic Attack System Program Office GPCAPT Jason Agius said the program's success demonstrated a mature and integrated support capability.

"The completion of Increment 1 was essentially a coming-of-age for the Super Hornet support system," he said.

"It was the first time we brought together every element of the support system, from program management, logistics and engineering through to training and deeper maintenance.

"The project's completion on budget and ahead of schedule is a testament to how well it worked.

"As prime contractor, Boeing Defence Australia exhibited ingenuity and innovation in foreseeing and addressing challenges.

"They used their knowledge to add value and insight at every stage and worked in close partnership with both Air Force and training system services provider Raytheon to guarantee the program's success.

"The project's completion ahead of schedule is a strategically important achievement for Air Force and one of which all involved should be proud."

Boeing Defence Australia's Super Hornet Program Manager, Chris Gray said the program demonstrated the value of Air Force and industry working as one team."