

Feature Story

Boeing honours 100 years of the Royal Australian Air Force

March 31, 2021

As the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) marks 100 years of service, The Boeing Company has honoured the men and women who have protected Australia and its allies over the past century.

Boeing Defense, Space & Security president and CEO, Leanne Caret, paid tribute to the thousands of airmen and women who have defended and served Australia since the founding of the RAAF on 31 March 1921.

"On behalf of our entire Boeing team, we are so proud of our shared history, and we are honored to work in service to you," said Caret. "Thank you for your leadership, thank you for your service and thank you for your partnership."

Boeing Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific president Dr Brendan Nelson paid homage to the heroism and sacrifice of RAAF personnel through world wars, peacetime operations and humanitarian missions.

"The motto of the RAAF, *per ardua ad astra* – 'through adversity to the stars' – speaks to the courage, professionalism, loyalty and dedication of generations of Australians wearing the RAAF uniform," he said.

"Their willingness to help others, irrespective of the cost to themselves, demonstrates the strength of their character and the values they live by. They make our nation proud."

BDA's vice president and managing director Scott Carpendale said the company's 2500-plus employees – which include many RAAF veterans – are honoured to support the RAAF.

"On this historic occasion, we thank the brave members of the Air Force, past and present, for their courage and integrity," Carpendale said. "The pioneering spirit, determination and innovation that led to the RAAF's establishment has shaped it into the revolutionary, world-leading Air Force it is today."

"Our people strive to honour that legacy every day and feel a deep sense of purpose and privilege in supporting the RAAF's mission."

That sense of purpose is profoundly personal for many Boeing employees who have transitioned from the RAAF and now support frontline personnel and operations.

“As a program manager for the Wedgetail In-Service Support contract I draw on more than 17 years’ experience in the RAAF as an air combat officer, including three deployments to the Middle East,” said program manager, Casey McDonald.

“I feel fortunate to be supporting the people and the platform whose capability in commanding and controlling the battlespace is vital.”

Despite retiring from the RAAF 27 years ago, BDA employee Gordon Ross feels his role at Boeing enables him to continue serving his country.

“From a very young age I was absolutely fascinated by aviation so I joined the Air Training Corp at 15,” Ross said. “I’ve now spent 47 years either in the RAAF, or supporting the RAAF and broader ADF in the defence industry.

“Working in the industry for so long with lifetime mates on cutting-edge technology and aircraft makes me feel like I’m still part of the Air Force.”

To learn about Boeing’s history supporting the RAAF, please visit our [RAAF 100 microsite](#).