



Land 2072 Phase 2B 'Currawong' Battlespace Communications System

In September 2015, Boeing Defence Australia was awarded the Land 2072 Phase 2B contract to replace the Australian Army's battlefield telecommunications network, 'Parakeet', which was developed and fielded in the 1990s.

This new system was called 'Currawong', following the Australian Army's convention of naming its communications systems after native Australian birds. The consequent project has been a trailblazing program in many respects, redefining how deployed forces communicate.

Currawong's self-contained network and infrastructure includes all of the components required to enable Australian Defence Force (ADF) warfighters, including RAAF operators on deployed airfields, to communicate with each other and back to headquarters in Australia while on operations. Contained within portable units, the scalable, state-of-the-art system provides uninterrupted, seamless connection through a variety of bearers including satellite, deployed fibre and line-of-sight links. Never before has such a lightweight, durable system delivered the ability to exchange such large amounts of secure multimedia, voice and video data in the field.

The first of Currawong's three releases, comprising the core network and mission systems management within man-portable units, achieved initial operating capacity in April 2018, months ahead of schedule. Initially meant to be housed in commercial off-the-shelf hardware, BDA developed custom ruggedised hardware that enabled significant advancements to be made in the size, weight and power specifications of the equipment. More than 150,000 lines of code were also written for this release.

By April 2020, Boeing announced the completion of Release 2 – which introduced more powerful transmission bearers, including troposcatters which use particles in the earth's atmosphere to reflect communications signals to enable beyond line-of-sight transmission; and an external network access point which, for the first time, enables the ADF to securely communicate using untrusted, public networks, such as the internet.

The final release, including trailer-mounted satellite communications capability and mobile command headquarters, is due to be completed in 2021.

