

A Boeing 737 Wedgetail aircraft, registration N378BC, is shown in flight over a coastal landscape. The aircraft is white with "ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE" written on the side. The background features a sandy beach, green vegetation, and a blue body of water under a clear sky.

Demonstrating *Success*

When export challenges threatened a 737 Wedgetail demonstration flight, a 'One Boeing' team sprang into action *By Matt Grimison*

PHOTO: A Wedgetail flies over Newcastle, Australia. ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

It was the kind of task that seemed straightforward at first. The Boeing 737 Airborne Early Warning & Control Program team was planning a demonstration flight for representatives from the United Arab Emirates—an important potential customer.

The program also was preparing its first two aircraft to be accepted into the Royal Australian Air Force fleet. Australian officials agreed to host the demonstration while a group of UAE military leaders was in Australia on an official visit. Everything seemed to be coming together.

But as the demonstration grew near, a number of export control issues cropped up that threatened to undermine the effort. In true "One Boeing" fashion, AEW&C program leaders and Boeing's Global

Trade Controls organization came together to tackle the export hurdles. The result: a "picture-perfect" demonstration in March.

"For all of the challenges we had in pulling this together, this flight represented a very big step forward," said Egan Greenstein, AEW&C business development manager. "The system worked beautifully and the crew was humming as if they'd been flying together forever."

Called the Wedgetail by the RAAF—a name derived from Australia's largest bird of prey—the 737-700-based derivative provides state-of-the-art airborne surveillance, communications and battle management. The program kicked off in 1999 when Australia chose the aircraft to meet its airborne early warning and control requirements. Since then, Korea

and Turkey have ordered the aircraft.

The program's business development team also had been in detailed talks with the UAE military, and as is customary, the potential customer wanted to see the aircraft perform in a detailed demonstration. Boeing representatives went to work putting a demonstration together.

The aircraft to be used in the demonstration was still owned by Boeing—it had not been accepted by the Royal Australian Air Force at that point. As such, Boeing secured an export authorization from the U.S. State Department to conduct the exhibition.

At this point, however, things got a bit more complicated.

U.S. Government export policy restricts a company's ability to simultaneously transfer U.S. military technology to

multiple foreign governments. Even one-time events like a flight demonstration are carefully regulated, and the license the U.S. government issued dictated specific restrictions on participation by non-U.S. persons. This meant that the Australians would be limited in what they could take part in during the demonstration.

The solution? A new license.

But timing was a limiting factor. A new license would require review by several U.S. government agencies that normally would take weeks—well past the visit to Australia by the UAE officials.

Boeing and its Australian partners sprang into action on several fronts. AEW&C program managers worked closely with Global Trade Controls to coordinate with the appropriate government agencies,

with the "heavy lifting" being performed by Boeing's Washington, D.C., office. The Australians requested an expedited license through their embassy in Washington; the U.S. embassy in Canberra also provided strong support.

This global working-together combination paid off with a license approval in a matter of days rather than weeks—and just in time for the flight demonstration March 31 at RAAF Base Williamtown on Australia's southeast coast.

Greenstein said the UAE representatives were impressed and the program gained significant credibility with a potential customer. The AEW&C program expects a decision from the UAE this year.

The first two Wedgetail aircraft were officially accepted into the Royal Australian

Air Force on May 5 during a ceremony in Williamtown. Boeing is scheduled to deliver three more aircraft to Australia by the end of this year.

Global Trade Controls Vice President Kathie Greaney said the effort to support the UAE flight demonstration shows the potential of all forms of collaboration.

"This is a perfect example of how working closely with partners—both inside and outside of The Boeing Company—can pay great dividends," Greaney said. ■

matt.grimison@boeing.com

For more about Boeing's Global Trade Controls, read the Leadership Message by Greaney in this issue of Frontiers, on Page 6.