

**KEYNOTE SPEECH BY CHIEF OF AIR FORCE
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**RAAF AIR POWER CONFERENCE, CANBERRA
16 MARCH 2016**

At the outset, I wish to thank yesterday's speakers for their presentations. There is a common thread running through the discussion concerning how to extract the best from military capability through integration and that is the human element. The technology may be cutting edge, but no matter how sharp that edge, it is the people on the front line and, in a networked environment, working seamlessly with the other tactical operators and supporters, who create and sustain the effect. It is that dimension, the human dimension, that sits at the heart of my command philosophy.

Military aviation has a relatively brief, but already distinguished, history. In the decade after the Wright brothers' first powered leap into the third dimension in 1903, the potential for military effect from the air had only been imagined. By the Armistice of 1918, a range of relatively simple flying machines had not only been imagined, but fielded in the majority of roles immediately recognisable to 21st century airmen. The constant evolution of refining them through technological innovation exploited by human ingenuity had already begun. It is not by luck that we find ourselves here today as part of that journey.

The Royal Australian Air Force will mark its 95th anniversary at the end of this month. In less than a century of operation, it has continually, if not always consistently, exhibited the traits that have marked successful air forces: technologically driven, adaptable, responsive and innovative. The last three are human attributes delivered by people who know how to exploit the technology and develop and optimise operating procedures. Air forces thrive and succeed when their airmen are technically trained, are versed in air power, and are capable, trusted and empowered to adapt, respond and innovate.

This is the type of Air Force I have been appointed to lead and one I intend to take further, along a trajectory that organisationally and culturally entrenches adaptability, responsiveness and innovation. A trajectory enabled by trusted commanders who in turn trust their people to perform. My priorities, outlined in my Commander's Intent, should come as a surprise to no-one: providing Government and joint force commanders the best possible air power options, primarily through technologically advanced systems, operated, adapted and optimised by a skilled, supported and air power-savvy workforce.

Mine is the Air Force's third Commander's Intent, the first having been released by CAF Binskin in 2008. There is a consistency among them. Clever people optimising the performance of technologically advanced equipment is an enduring characteristic of air power and of air forces.

We—you and I—are expected to deliver. Smart people acquire, operate and sustain Air Force. But it is not just about a technician turning a spanner or providing air traffic services to launch and recover aircraft. Those and many other aviation skills can be equally found in the civilian world. We are an Air Force, a force of air power professionals. People trained in their specialisation, and educated in what it means to create air power. That's what truly makes Air Force tick.

I want them to strive to do their best. I will ensure they are trusted and are confident to do so. Appropriately trained and educated, supported and empowered. Nothing less will suffice if Air Force is to deliver the full potential of the networked force it will soon become. Delivering air power also requires the ability to advocate, argue and explain, at all levels and to all levels, its undeniable value.

In the past, Air Force has relied on our 'strategic spokespeople' being officers who have developed an 'air power brain' through their years of service. They have often arrived in those senior engagement roles without the opportunity to reflect upon that accumulated knowledge and hone it for use with best effect.

A number of officers with the potential to serve in roles linked to senior engagement and strategic shaping have been identified to undertake sponsored doctorate-level studies, with a focus on air power. This will represent the culminating point of their formal air power education. At last evening's reception, the Airpower Scholar program, initiated in conjunction with the Williams Foundation, was announced. Today, behind me, you see that first group of Sir Richard Williams Scholars. I congratulate them on their selection, wish them well in their application to studies and look forward to their emergence as key senior influencers and commentators on air power.

The officer corps does not hold a monopoly on leadership; I also depend greatly on our warrant officers and NCOs to provide values-based leadership. Therefore, Air Force will be implementing a Warrant Officer Employment Continuum, a framework that recognises, cultivates and exploits the value of our senior airmen. Air Force requires critical thinkers at every level, equipped with experience through greater and more diverse employment opportunities along with honed, tailored, professional development and education programs. This framework is intended for future application to the development and management of all Air Force warrant officers and airmen.

I am focussed on the people who are Air Force. While the Airpower Scholar, Warrant Officer Continuum and other training and education programs put this into practice, we must be mindful of the tools, resources and systems they will need to build, evolve and maintain an air force of strategic importance.

Air Force now has the systems and capabilities to offer a balanced and truly capable force. Our ongoing contribution to Operation *Okra*, Australia's military contribution to the fight against Daesh, is testament to this. Detachments of Super and 'Classic' Hornets, sustained on mission by KC-30 refuellers, made aware by Wedgetail AEW&C, and with a sustainment bridge enabled in part by C-17s and C-130s, are making a significant contribution to operations, well beyond 'niche'. This integrated capability will be further enhanced in the coming decade when it is joined in service by E/A-18G Growlers, F-35 Lightning IIs, P-8A Poseidons, MQ-4C Triton UAS and Gulfstream G550 electronic warfare support aircraft. We will also have transitioned to a new pilot training system, based on the PC-21. We have and will continue to build in our ground systems an environment fit for the purpose of supporting our air assets to their full potential.

By 2025, Air Force will be a truly 5th-generation force. Our oldest aircraft will be the C-130J, certainly not a legacy platform. Our systems will be world class, and in many respects, world leading. This is the Air Force we are building. We have runs on the board through recent operations. We have established a reputation as a 'go to' option

available to Government across a range of contingencies. But we don't live in a 'blue vacuum'.

Increasingly we are not constrained by the three physical domains of air, land and maritime. The cyber and space domains increasingly network the world. Fifth-generation systems will permit us to connect through these intangible domains to create enhanced joint effects encompassing the air, land and maritime environments.

The 5th-generation Air Force platforms do perform the traditional roles we have always associated with their predecessors. However, in many cases the modern solutions are multi-role, with the ability to conduct various roles in one sortie. Traditionally, this has meant fighting your way to the target in air-to-air mode, switching to air-to-ground to prosecute a target, then reverting for the egress. Fifth-generation combat aircraft will do this and much more. The F-35 will be our primary control-of-the-air platform, with innate strike capability. However, with its comprehensive sensor suite, it will also be an integral and essential element of the RAAF's ISR network. It will contribute to and draw from the networked array of sensors present in the battlespace. It will largely accomplish this in the background, leaving the pilot to concentrate on prosecuting the mission as the aircraft synthesises data and contributes to the campaign. The potential for the use of these platforms and systems will only be constrained by the imagination of our airmen and women.

Military history shows that the leaps of advancement have resulted from networking. The impacts they create have been felt most strongly by those on the wrong end of the stick; those unable to comprehend the art of the possible and either enact it, or prepare to defend against it.

Blitzkrieg, which enabled the conquest of vast tracts of Europe early in World War II, had been evolving in Guderian's mind since shortly after the Armistice of 1918. Some may argue that this was an extension of a concept first employed by Sir John Monash and Sir Arthur Curry. But as a concept, it took the systems then available, and networked them, with devastating effect. Notably, Guderian struggled against a hierarchy mired in tradition and process to get traction for his ideas. More recently, a similar effect was achieved by the networked and precision-enabled latter day blitzkrieg that was Operation *Desert Storm*, whose 25th anniversary was marked recently.

Within the ADF, as in the militaries of many nations, the Services have evolved along different cultural lines, but increasingly have commonality in the abilities of their workforces. They share the human attributes of versatility and inquisitiveness. When we reflect on what a few men of foresight were able to achieve in the past, with relatively primitive technology by today's standards, then the future has boundless promise—if we empower our people in uniform and our partners in industry. Air Force has already embarked down this path.

Plan *Jericho* is already demonstrating the art of the possible in developing ways in which to better integrate the elements of Air Force, drawing heavily on what the cyber and space domains add. Only a year since *Jericho*'s announcement, significant progress has already been made. For example, we have demonstrated the ability to stream remote sensor video into the cargo bay of C-17s, conceived by airmen and delivered by L3 and ViaSat. Airmen saw the need for MiRC on Wedgetail and Boeing said OK. Soldiers and airmen wanted to connect Tiger [helicopters] to Super Hornet and Northrop Grumman said we can do that.

The transformation of Air Force through Plan *Jericho* is not an endstate. It is a way forward. We are discovering the art of the possible through empowering our people. These are two of the strong themes of *Jericho*—a plan that will forge the elements of Air Force into a fully integrated force and build upon its human capital to maintain momentum.

Jericho will sustain the journey in the short term, but it is more like a compass than a map. It builds upon the force-in-being and points us into the future. A future that becomes less certain the farther we peer into it. In 2007, Air Force released the Future Air and Space Operating Concept to provide the vision of 2025. Circumstances have changed; however so have responsibilities for generating doctrine. Therefore, I have directed the Air Power Development Centre to bring forward a new vision statement, set in the 2035 timeframe, when we will once again be deeply contemplating force renewal. This document will guide Air Force, and inform our sister Services and the wider community, of where we are heading. It will chronicle the potential threats, challenges and opportunities we may face along the way: technological, societal and economic. It will be a map, but not of the high-resolution type we are familiar with today.

While we are certain of where we are now, the cartography becomes less certain the further we project ahead. There will be uncharted areas along the way, which must be navigated cautiously if we are to arrive at our intended and preferred destination a truly multi-domain fighting force. This document will describe that destination and detail those risks and opportunities we can conceive of as lying along our path, to inform those who will travel along it.

What is certain is that it is not a journey we will be taking alone. Air Force has been fortunate at being at the forefront of bringing into Service the platforms and systems which will enable the fullest exploitation of networking and integration, which in turn are enablers of the joint force. As the White Paper states, the ADF's future lies in jointery, permitting the rapid and more effective delivery of force, when required. The benefits accruing will be equally applicable in operations other than conflict. Achieving the joint force will require the active participation of all elements of Defence: uniformed, civilian and of our industry partners.

Thank you once more to those who have already spoken. Today's focus will be on providing insight into our experience, on the ways in which the Royal Australian Air Force intends to prepare for success in an environment where joint success is enabled and sustained by multi-domain integration.

Thank you.