

**Question on Notice
No. 30
Asked on 6 February 2007**

MR WENDT asked the Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations (MR MICKEL) —

QUESTION:

How is the Ipswich region booming from the developments in Queensland's aviation sector?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government has made Aviation a priority sector and is committed to developing Queensland as an aviation and aerospace hub for the Asia Pacific. Since 1998 over 6,000 aviation jobs have been created in Queensland as a direct result of Government investment attraction and industry development activities.

Aviation has also been identified as a key contributor to the economic development of the Western Corridor and the Ipswich region generally. Ipswich with its RAAF Base at Amberley continues to be a significant contributor to the growth of Aviation in this State.

This growth will be sustained in the Ipswich region as the Amberley Air Force Base continues to develop into a mega base. Local Government planning to minimise urban encroachment around this base has been a critical contributor to its growth. Whereas two significant RAAF bases in New South Wales (Williamtown and Richmond) face increasing urban pressures through the lack of foresight and support by their local authorities.

To further support the growth of this base, the Queensland Government is working with the Department of Defence and Ipswich City Council to establish the Amberley Aerospace Park. This aerospace park will attract major contractors who will provide critical support to Australia's Air Force capability. This capability support requires highly skilled jobs.

One such contractor who provides this critical support to Australia's aerospace industry is Boeing Australia. This company was attracted to Queensland by the Queensland Government in 1998. Boeing now has almost 2,000 staff in Queensland with 825 employed at Amberley. Boeing's highly skilled Amberley workforce has grown by more than 200 in the past year as it tackles the multi billion dollar Air Force contract to modify four B737 aircraft to Airborne Early Warning & Control aircraft. This is the largest Boeing modification undertaken outside of the United States.

Raytheon, Qantas Defence and Tasman Aviation Enterprises are also major contractors located at RAAF Base Amberley, each providing critical support to ensure the F 111 continues to be one of Australia's leading Defence assets.

These global aerospace firms each have major expansion plans which will significantly add to Queensland's aerospace industry.

A key element of the Queensland Government's Aviation Strategy is a comprehensive Skills Development Initiative that includes courses offered by secondary schools and technical training through to university aerospace engineering programs.

Aviation Australia is a world class aviation technical and cabin crew training provider established by this Government with over \$19 million in capital and operational funding. Almost 500 Aircraft Maintenance Engineering students have graduated from Aviation Australia since 2002. 475 of these students have secured full-time employment.

Aviation Australia and the Ipswich education and training community are working in partnership to deliver a skilled aviation workforce.

Projects include:

- Three Ipswich High Schools – Bremer State High School, Redbank Plains State High School and Ipswich Grammar School are including Aeroskills as a part of their year 11 and 12 syllabus. 17 Queensland High Schools now offer this subject as a part of this activity referred to as the Gateway Project.
- Up to six students from each of these three High Schools are gaining an unconditional offer for Direct Entry to selected degree programs at University of Queensland Ipswich.
- Bremer TAFE providing aeronautical and avionics technical training for Year 11 and 12 students, and with direct participation from Aviation Australia and Qantas Defence is delivering applied avionics courses including Certificate IV in Aeroskills to produce avionics bench technicians.

Attracting major aviation companies such as Boeing, Australian Aerospace, Virgin and Qantas Heavy Maintenance has proved to be the catalyst for almost a decade of unprecedented aviation industry growth and proved to the international aviation industry that Queensland has the capability to provide a pro-business environment, competitive operating costs, high quality infrastructure and a skilled workforce. Queensland is now regarded as the centre of Australia's aerospace industry and the Ipswich region commended for its contribution.