

Australia Set to Acquire Two More P-8A Aircraft to Boost Maritime Patrol Capability



A P-8A aircraft 759 arrives at its parking spot in this 2019 photo. The Royal Australian Air Force will acquire two more P-8A Poseidons, bringing its total fleet size to 14. U.S. Navy / Lt. Cmdr. Alan Johnson

CANBERRA, Australia—The Royal Australian Air Force's maritime patrol capability will be boosted with Australia set to acquire two more P-8A Poseidon surveillance and response aircraft, bringing the total fleet size to 14, the Australian Department of Defence said in a Jan. 4 release.

The government has also approved sustainment funding for the current approved fleet of three MQ-4C Triton aircraft.

Sen. Linda Reynolds, the Australian defense minister, said the announcement is part of the Morrison government's unprecedented \$270 billion investment in defense capability over the next decade.

"Together, the Poseidon and the Triton will provide Australia

with one of the most advanced maritime patrol and response capabilities in the world," Reynolds said. "The Poseidon is a proven capability that will conduct tasks including anti-submarine warfare, maritime and overland intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and support to search and rescue missions. These additional aircraft will enhance Air Force's flexibility to support multiple operations and will play an important role in ensuring Australia's maritime region is secure for generations to come.

"The Morrison government's continued investment in the Poseidon program is also creating more Australian jobs and opportunities for Australian small businesses, she said. "Several Australian companies are already completing work for Boeing Defence Australia, and industry investment including facilities works is over \$1 billion."

The additional Poseidon aircraft are to be purchased through Australia's existing cooperative program with the U.S. Navy. Reynolds said the program allows Australia to share in the benefits of their technical expertise and divide project costs.

"Defence is committed to this cooperative approach; together we are striving to develop this military technology to the highest standards," Reynolds said.

The Poseidon is a highly versatile, long endurance platform capable of a range of mission types including maritime intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance and striking targets above and below the ocean's surface.

The planned integration of the Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) into RAAF capability will also allow it to strike adversary surface vessels at significantly increased ranges.