

KC-30A MULTI ROLE TANKER TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT

ISSUE:


Safety incidents involved KC-30A landings at Cairns and RAAF Base Amberley

Current media:

KEY POINTS:

- Defence publishes its aviation safety reports widely within the Defence aviation community. Defence follows the principles of International Civil Aviation Organisation Convention Annex 13 (accident, incident and investigation).
- Defence actively shares its safety investigation results with external agencies that may be impacted by the event
- The event in Cairns occurred during a training mission and was the result of an error in the flight management system data entry which led to a requirement for crew intervention during the approach. At no time was the aircraft in an unsafe condition.
- The event at RAAF Base Amberley occurred during a training mission and was the result of a decision to complete a steeper than normal approach due to runway works at the airfield. The early flight profile necessitated advice from the safety pilot and adjustment by the flying pilot, and the landing was conducted normally, and safely.
- Both events were reported by the operating crews, and investigated within the approved aviation safety management system, including independent review by Defence aviation safety officers external to the operating Squadron.
- Both events were debriefed appropriately by senior 33 Squadron aircrew and executives. The incident at Amberley is still under review by the Defence Aviation Safety Authority

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BACKGROUND TALKING POINTS:

- Defence has previously acquired five KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport aircraft from Airbus Defence and Space in Madrid, Spain.
- These aircraft were new A330 passenger aircraft modified to conduct air-to-air refuelling roles in addition to transportation roles.
- On 23 June 2015, Government approved the acquisition of two ex-QANTAS A330 aircraft and their modification to the Multi Role Tanker Transport configuration.
- The ex-QANTAS A330 aircraft were acquired at about half the price of a new A330 aircraft with substantial life remaining for military use. Defence secured a competitive price for the subsequent Multi Role Tanker Transport modification.
- In February 2016, Government approved a modification to one of the additional Multi Role Tanker Transport aircraft to provide a government transport and communications capability.
- This aircraft will provide the range, passenger capacity, and secure communications capability needed to support the long-range international travel by government that enables engagement with our key allies and partners.
- This modification does not impact the aircraft's ability to perform its primary tanker role.

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Cost

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Modification

- On 3 August 2016 a contract was signed with Airbus Defence and Space to modify one KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport aircraft to include a government transport and communications capability.
- Government business aircraft modifications of this type are highly specialised with a small number of highly experienced companies around the world accredited by the major aircraft manufacturers.
- Lufthansa Technik (Hamburg, Germany) was selected through a tender process performed with Airbus Defence and Space partnered with Airbus Corporate Jets.

Layout

- The capability will provide accommodation, a meeting room, a working area, airline style seating and secure government communications.
 - The aircraft will be fitted with the same Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM) protection system as currently fitted to the other KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport aircraft.
- 75 per cent of the seating from the ex-Qantas aircraft has been retained.
- The two first class seats installed in the accommodation area have been refurbished and were sourced from a Lufthansa A330.

Further Background

- An earlier project (AIR 5402) procured five Multi Role Tanker Transport aircraft from Airbus Defence and Space (Airbus DS) based in Madrid, Spain. These five aircraft have been delivered and are in service with the Royal Australian Air Force under the designation KC-30A.
- AIR 7403 Phase 3 Stage 1 received Combined First and Second Pass approval by the Government in June 2015 to acquire two additional aircraft at a capital cost of \$677.1 million (Budget 2015-16 Out-Turned Price and Exchange). Defence has contracted Airbus DS to modify two additional aircraft previously leased by Qantas. The two ex-Qantas aircraft completed their Multi Role Tanker Transport modification in August 2017.

- The sixth MRTT entered RAAF Service on 13 September 2017.

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Recent media:

28 February 2018, ABC Radio Canberra, 18:00 News. The Defence Department is spending more than \$180m to upgrade a secondhand plane for the PM and the Governor-General to use for long-haul flights. The Air Force bought two former Qantas A330s for \$60m each to convert them into air-to-air refuelling aircraft. One is now being further modified for the Air Force's VIP flights complete with first-class seating, secure communication, and Wi-Fi. Leo Davies, Air Force Chief, says purchasing the two planes was good value.

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