



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

BILLS

Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2012-2013

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Thursday, 31 May 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 31 May 2012
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Questioner
Speaker Neumann, Shayne, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (10:45): Minister, I want to thank the government for the transfer of further land adjacent to the RAAF base at Amberley to the Queensland government for the Aerospace and Defence Support Centre. This 22.6 hectares of land has been combined with the 143 hectares already owned by the Queensland government. That will see the transfer of aerospace and defence support industries and companies such as Boeing, currently located at the RAAF base, which will make sure that there are thousands of jobs and the viability of that sector. Over the years, the RAAF base at Amberley has seen a dramatic increase in operational capacity and the number of personnel.

I notice that there were cutbacks in the budget and I have questions about that. But 24 Super Hornets are located in the area and they are operated by No. 1 and No. 6 squadrons at the RAAF base at Amberley. The Minister for Defence Materiel was with me on the day that four fighter jets were delivered. We have delivered 24 Super Hornets in the past 20 months. Those Super Hornets are particularly important in air-to-air combat, strike targets on land and sea, suppressing enemy air defence and conducting reconnaissance. I notice we are the first country, other than the United States, to fly the Super Hornet. The C17s are also located at the RAAF base at Amberley and they made a big contribution during our assistance missions to Papua New Guinea, Christchurch and Japan.

I have noticed some media commentary in relation to the cutbacks. My questions relate to the RAAF base at Amberley, particularly the operational capacity of the RAAF base. I know that the government has made a decision to buy the fifth and sixth C17 Globemasters to be based at the RAAF base at Amberley. We welcome that and the military personnel. Ipswich has had military personnel since 1861, when we were not flying planes. I note the cutbacks are mainly in civilian and administrative capacities. Minister, will the cutbacks have any adverse operational impact on the RAAF base at Amberley? Is the government's commitment to the RAAF base at Amberley undiminished? Please update the chamber on the procurement of battlefield airlift aircraft to replace the retired Caribou.