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Beechcraft Continues to Lead Australia's Business Turboprop Market



BY TEXTRON AVIATION

More than half of King Air deliveries to Australia over the past decade serve special mission purposes

According to Beechcraft, which is displaying a King Air 350i turboprop this week at the Australian International Airshow and Aerospace & Defence Exposition, research¹ shows that Australia represents one of the largest business turboprop markets outside of North America, with a total of 285 aircraft.

Beechcraft products represent a 53 percent share of the Australian business turboprop market, and deliveries of King Airs to the country have increased by more than half over the past decade.

This growth in demand has propelled the total business turboprop fleet size in Australia to 285 aircraft, accounting for approximately 43 percent of the total number across Asia Pacific, and Beechcraft expects this figure to continue growing.

“Due to its size and geography, air travel is particularly important for businesses in Australia,” said Ted Farid, vice president, Beechcraft Asia-Pacific Sales. “This is reflected in the size of the turboprop fleet in Australia. Turboprops such as the King Air 350i and King Air 350ER provide the perfect solution as they combine the range needed to make business air travel in Australia convenient with the performance and efficiency that make it accessible and viable.”

The King Air’s popularity in Australia can be attributed to a number of factors, notably its range, flexibility and reliability. The King Air 350i can carry eight passengers up to 2,750km (1,485nm) on a single tank of fuel – far enough for nonstop cross-country flights from Adelaide to Perth or Darwin. Furthermore, the King Air’s flexibility makes take-off and landing at the majority of Australia’s 130-plus airfields with unpaved runways possible, while its enhanced performance ensures that it can fly in adverse conditions such as the highs of 50°C (122°F) seen in some areas of the country.

More than half of Beechcraft’s turboprop deliveries to Australia over the past decade have been for special mission operations. Of the 36 special missions-capable King Airs delivered between 2001 and 2011, 27 aircraft were to air ambulance operators, with the remaining nine delivered for training, flight inspection, airway calibration and utility transport missions.

“Special missions are an important segment of our fleet in Australia, as well as across Asia Pacific as a whole,” said Dan Keady, senior vice president, Beechcraft Special Missions. “A growing number of companies and government agencies are realizing the benefits of special missions capabilities such as air ambulance, ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) and flight training, and we expect to receive further interest from customers looking to reduce costs without sacrificing quality or performance.”

In February 2012, Beechcraft and its local distributor, Hawker Pacific, announced the delivery of a fleet of five King Air turboprops to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Eastern Division in Australia. The three King Air B200Cs are utilized extensively throughout Australia by the RFDS for aeromedical primary response and inter-hospital transfers, while the two King Air 350Cs are the first aircraft in the region that are fully dedicated to air ambulance missions.

Beechcraft and Hawker products continue to be well supported in Australia through the company's authorized service centers of Hawker Pacific in Bankstown and North Cairns; Premiair Aviation in Perth; and ExecuJet Australia in Mascot and Essendon.

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