

Media release

Agreement signed with prime defence contractor for Astra Aerolab as site works commence

Tuesday, 14 May 2019

Today NSW Deputy Premier, the Honourable John Barilaro MP, turned the first sod of soil at the Astra Aerolab site, marking the ceremonial commencement of early works for the Airport's world class defence and aerospace precinct that will ultimately deliver 5500 jobs to the region.

The Deputy Premier's visit coincides with Newcastle Airport also signing a Heads of Agreement with major defence contractor BAE Systems Australia to lease land on the 76 hectare precinct.

Newcastle Airport CEO Dr Peter Cock said the new agreement signified an exciting milestone for Astra Aerolab.

"BAE Systems Australia is the nation's largest defence and security company, so the importance of this signing cannot be overestimated," he said.

"BAE's presence will not only attract further jobs and investment, but help ensure we develop the world-class defence and aerospace precinct that our region deserves."

"RAAF base Williamtown will eventually be home to 56 of the 72 F-35A Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) fleet, so Astra will hold an extremely important place in developing and maintaining our nation's strategic defence capabilities," added Dr Cock.

BAE Systems Australia Managing Director Defence Delivery Andrew Gresham said the company would directly employ about 400 highly skilled people to support the aircraft sustainment, which would be maintained over the 30 plus years of the aircraft service life.

"This milestone is incredibly important for our business and will facilitate the redevelopment of our existing Williamtown site ahead of our work supporting the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter in Australia," he added.

Last year, Deputy Premier Barilaro announced a \$11.7 million grant to kick-off the development of Astra Aerolab to capitalise on the existing economic strengths of the region.

Mr Barilaro said he was proud to see his government's investment start to be realised.

"The infrastructure we have funded will allow aviation companies to quickly establish themselves within the precinct and get on with the job of supporting Royal Australian Air Force combat aircraft, including the F-35A Joint Strike Fighter," Mr Barilaro said.

"By funding the Astra Aerolab precinct, we are helping to create jobs for aerospace engineers, aviation, IT and avionics specialists and attracting workers to the Hunter region.



"I want to thank Newcastle Airport, the City of Newcastle and Port Stephens Council for their hard work and commitment to making this precinct a reality."

ENDS

Further information

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Astra Aerolab: Key facts

- > Up to 73 lots on 76 hectares of land
- > Adjoining Newcastle Airport and RAAF Base Williamtown
- > Direct airside access for selected lots
- > Outstanding onsite lifestyle will include cafes, parks and cycle ways
- > Best of the Hunter Region – affordable living, quality education, beaches, vineyards and more
- > 5,500 new jobs once the site is fully developed
- > \$19.66M project funded by the NSW Government, City of Newcastle and Port Stephens Council
- > BAE employs 83,000 people worldwide and 4000 people in Australia



Notes for the Editor:

Newcastle Airport <https://www.newcastleairport.com.au/>

Newcastle Airport Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/ntlairport/>

Newcastle Airport Twitter Feed: <https://twitter.com/NTLairport>

Newcastle Airport Master Plan: <https://www.newcastleairport.com.au/corporate/about/masterplan>

Astra Aerolab <https://astraerolab.com.au/>

About Newcastle Airport

- > Named 'Major Airport of the Year' at the 2018 Australian Airports Association Industry Awards.
- > Newcastle Airport is the second international gateway into New South Wales and the second busiest airport in the state.
- > Serviced by Jetstar, Virgin Australia, QantasLink, Regional Express, and FlyPelican to nine direct domestic destinations and onward to more than 65 worldwide destinations.
- > Direct international flights to Auckland New Zealand will operate 22 November 2018 - 17 February 2019. Operated by Virgin Australia, the 13-week seasonal service is the first international route in 16 years.
- > FY17/18 passenger results saw Newcastle Airport break its all-time FY record with 1,272,634 travellers passing through the terminal.
- > The record throughput is a result of 25-month consecutive year-on-year monthly passenger growth recorded up until December 2017.
- > A record-breaking 4,823 passengers travelled through Newcastle Airport on Thursday 24 November (the day before Newcastle Supercars). The same weekend (Thurs-Mon), saw more than 21,000 through the Airport.
- > In December 2018, Newcastle Airport welcomed its 18 millionth passenger through the terminal since 1995.
- > Newcastle Airport is the gateway to Australia's largest regional economy, with more than \$43 billion annual output and 48,500 businesses.
- > A significant economic driver, Newcastle Airport contributes more than \$1.1 billion to the state's economy each year. Of this, \$300 million is direct to the visitor economy, supporting 3,300 jobs.
- > Newcastle Airport is internationally ready, the international arrivals and departures fit-out completed in August 2017.
- > In its 70th anniversary year, Newcastle Airport continues to work with its airline partners to increase the number of flights to our current destinations, to add direct flights to even more destinations, and to work tirelessly to secure more international destinations.
- > The more people that choose to fly from Newcastle Airport will provide evidence to the airlines that the demand truly exists and that our region deserves more.
- > On 22 March 2018, Newcastle Airport released its 60-year Master Plan, which includes a 20-year blueprint for growth, projections and business development of the Airport.
- > 30 minutes north of Newcastle, Newcastle Airport is located adjacent to RAAF Base Williamstown on land leased from Department of Defence.
- > Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd is jointly owned by City of Newcastle and Port Stephens Council and is governed by an independent, skills-based Board of Directors.