

Premier

The Honourable Anna Bligh

Wednesday, January 23, 2008

BLIGH WELCOMES BOEING RESEARCH CENTRE FOR QLD

News world-aviation leader Boeing is to establish a branch of its Phantom Works advanced research and development unit in Australia, with a significant presence in Queensland, has been warmly welcomed by Queensland Premier Anna Bligh.

“This is a real feather in the cap for Queensland and puts the Smart State at the forefront of the booming global aviation and aerospace industry,” Ms Bligh said.

Boeing announced today that it would locate the head office of the newly formed Phantom Works branch in Australia in Brisbane and initial plans to employ 30 scientific and engineering staff, split evenly between Brisbane and Melbourne.

Headquartered in St Louis, Missouri, and employing about 2,000 people, Phantom Works supports Boeing’s commercial and integrated defence systems business units and has developed technologies that are used by a host of aviation and aerospace organisations, including NASA and the US Department of Defence.

The Phantom Works branch in Australia will concentrate on several major research programs, including advanced composites, light robotics, Unmanned Airborne Vehicles (UAVs) and ageing aircraft technologies.

“It will also conduct research that addresses aerospace environmental issues through innovative air space management concepts to improve airport efficiency and reduce noise and fuel burn when aircraft land,” Ms Bligh said.

Ms Bligh, who met with senior Boeing and Phantom Works executives during a trade mission to the United States in 2006, said that having Phantom Works set up shop in Brisbane is a tremendous boost to the State’s R&D capability.

Phantom Works operates collaboratively on its research projects and an example of this is the Scramjet Project which is a partnership between the University of Queensland and the US based Phantom Works and supported by the Queensland Government.

“The partnership allows the University of Queensland’s Centre for Hypersonics to continue to build advanced scramjet prototypes and undertake prolonged flight tests at speeds of more than Mach 8, or 8000km/h.”

Deputy Premier Paul Lucas, who is in the United States and is meeting with Boeing executives, said Phantom Works was attracted to Queensland because of the State’s growing reputation as a major hub for aviation and aerospace.

“A decade ago Queensland did not have an industry to speak of. In 1998 the

Queensland Government attracted Boeing Australia Limited's headquarters to Brisbane and today the industry employs about 6000 people across about 550 firms and is still growing.

"Queensland is regarded as a centre for Australia's aerospace industry. We undertake leading research and development into the use of UAV technologies, one of the fastest growing segments of the global industry. We're also marking out a reputation for ourselves in helicopters, aviation education and training, and in the development of new technologies."

Mr Lucas said none of this was by accident, but a concerted effort by the Queensland Government to build up the industry in the State.

"We recognise that aviation and aerospace is critical to the State's long-term economic prosperity and accordingly have gone all out to develop the industry," he said.

"This has involved establishing key infrastructure throughout Queensland, building up the State's skills' base with several high schools and many of the State's universities offering specialist aviation and engineering courses, as well as helping out companies achieve supply chain and export opportunities," he said.

Ms Bligh said it also involved attracting major companies to Queensland to produce the necessary critical mass for the successful establishment, development and growth of the industry.

"Attracting Boeing Australia Limited has been a success story for Queensland. The company now employs about 2000 staff in the State, primarily in support of high technology aerospace and communications systems for defence and commercial customers, including upgrading the RAAF's F-111s at Amberley," Ms Bligh said.

"In fact, the company is an integral part of Queensland these days as demonstrated by its strong support of R&D and education in the State."

Between 1997 and 2006, Boeing Australia conducted more than A\$300 million of R&D in Australia, much of which was spent in Queensland.

"Queensland can now look forward to an even greater emphasis on R&D following the Phantoms Works announcement," Ms Bligh said.

Ms Bligh said Boeing Australia's success in Queensland was the catalyst for Phantom Works to establish a branch here.

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