

Boeing Apache offers certainty for Australia's ARH replacement program

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In the Commonwealth of Australia's LAND 4503 program, there is only one attack reconnaissance helicopter that can offer the Australian Defence Force the capability, cost, and schedule certainty it requires - the Boeing AH-64E Apache.

"Apache customers worldwide buy certainty about where this aircraft is today and where it will be in the future," says T.J. Jamison, Vertical Lift International global sales and marketing senior manager, Boeing Defense, Space and Security. "There are other aircraft manufacturers that say they can do what the Apache can do but until they've done it, that's an uncertain situation. And uncertain situations invite potential risk, development issues, cost overruns, schedule delays – you name it."

CAPABILITY CERTAINTY

No risk here: The AH-64E Apache advanced and fully-integrated capabilities are combat proven by more than 1.2 million combat flight hours in service with the U.S. Army and a global fleet of more than 1200 helicopters across 16 countries. It's the most tested, proven attack helicopter flying today, with more than 4.6 million flight hours by the U.S. Army alone. Mission availability rate is greater than 82% "and I've seen it go higher – much higher – over a long period of operations," said Jamison.

It is the only platform that meets all of the Australian Army's expected LAND 4503 program needs without modification. "No additional development is needed for the Apache to fulfill the program requirements," said Jamison, "which is something that our competitors cannot say. And with development comes cost, possible schedule impacts, and other unknowns that can prevent this vital capability from delivering on Army's timeline."

Boeing is currently seeking expressions of interest from Australian small and medium enterprises across 43 capabilities to support future programs like LAND 4503 and its existing programs including the CH-47 Chinook and Helicopter Aircrew Training System. "There are opportunities for local suppliers across our rotorcraft programs here in Australia as well as back into the U.S.", says Steve Lovaszy, capture team lead, Boeing Defence Australia. "More than 130 companies have registered, and it is our intention to help them grow and facilitate opportunities in global supply chains."

COST CERTAINTY

The Apache's foreign military sale process would provide cost certainty through the agreement between the U.S. Government and Australia. Australia would benefit from U.S. Government funded future upgrades as well as efficiencies in its mature sustainment and supply chain arrangements.

"There's some misperception that because of the world-leading capability of this aircraft, there's an incredible acquisition cost. That is completely untrue. In fact, we have won recent down-select decisions based on price against competitors," says TJ. "If cost were really an issue, I can't imagine that Apache would be as successful as it is globally in contrast to other helicopters in the market."

SCHEDULE CERTAINTY

Schedule certainty is achieved through Boeing's active production line until 2028, a U.S. Army modernization program until the late 2040s, and a U.S. Army commitment to operate the Apache until at least 2060. "That is decades of planned and U.S. Government-funded production and development, ensuring that Team Apache global operators get the aircraft, and the service and support they need, when they need it," said Jamison.

The U.S. Army Modernization Program includes improvements to aircraft performance, interoperability, weapons, sensors and aircraft survivability. Each operator country, including Australia once the Apaches are delivered, is part of Team Apache where they have the opportunity to collaborate with the U.S. Army and other international operators to help guide future modernisation efforts.

"The simple fact is that the AH-64E Apache saves lives and protects soldiers," said Jamison. "I know this from personal experience: everyone is safer – whether they're in other aircraft or boots on the ground – when Apache is flying. That's a certainty."

Under the Land 4503 program, the Commonwealth is seeking 29 helicopters to replace its current armed reconnaissance helicopter fleet.