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## Joint Strike Fighter engine test facility upgrade underway

TAE Aerospace today announced that construction has commenced on a \$24M upgrade of its Defence-owned engine test cell facility at Amberley.

TAE Aerospace CEO Andrew Sanderson said that the upgrade is to accommodate the F135 engine of the Joint Strike Fighter alongside the existing F414 engine of the Super Hornet.

“Upgrading our test facility to cope with the new F135 engine is one of several major activities underway on the engine side of our participation in the global F-35 program.

“We are also building a \$50M state-of-the-art Turbine Engine Maintenance Facility in Bundamba.

“When complete, these state-of-the-art facilities will enable us to carry out engine maintenance, repair, overhaul, upgrade and test for all F-35 aircraft operating in the Asia-Pacific region,” Sanderson said.

Sanderson said that all aspects of the test cell upgrade were being managed in-house by a specialist team.

“The existing test cell at Amberley was first built in the 1960’s for the arrival of the F-111 aircraft. We last upgraded it in 2010, giving it dual engine capability for the F404 engine of the Classic Hornet and the F414 engine of the Super Hornet.

“Having designed and installed Asia-Pacific’s only dual-redundant afterburning gas turbine test cell for the F404/F414, we were well placed to navigate the complex requirements of the much larger F135 engine.

“While the F404 and F414 engines are of similar weight and length and generate almost equivalent thrust, the F135 engine is a completely different beast. It is almost three times the weight, one and half times the length and generates more than twice the thrust of the F414,” Sanderson said.

To cope with the higher thrust and significant increase in airflow through the test cell, TAE Aerospace engineers designed a completely new engine mounting and thrust measurement system and also reinforced the structure of the existing building.

Sanderson said that the company’s building sub-contractor, Paynters is due to complete works in December 2019. At this point the TAE Aerospace team will take over the site to install the speciality equipment, electronics and engine control systems needed to test both engines.

“The first F135 engine is scheduled to be run in the test cell in April 2020 after integration of hardware and software, with full hand over in July 2020,” Sanderson said.

**ENDS**

TAE Aerospace is a 100% Australian owned aerospace company that operates globally. We create value for customers through innovation and deliver premium quality products and services in aerospace engineering, manufacturing, turbine engine and component MRO.

For further information please contact Jo Kinner on 0411 122 923 or email [communications@taeaerospace.com](mailto:communications@taeaerospace.com)