



Strike and Air Combat

The Integrated Investment Program will guide approximately \$195 billion in investment to 2025-26 to deliver the future force of the Defence White Paper. The Government will invest around 17 per cent of Defence capital expenditure in our strike and air combat capabilities to 2025-26. More potent strike capabilities will provide flexibility for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to rapidly respond to threats against Australia and provide military contributions to support regional security and coalition operations globally, where our interests are engaged.

The ADF will be equipped with a potent and technologically advanced air combat and strike capability, building on the current fleet of 24 F/A-18F Super Hornets, 71 F/A-18A/B Classic Hornets, and six E-7A Wedgetail airborne early warning and control aircraft.

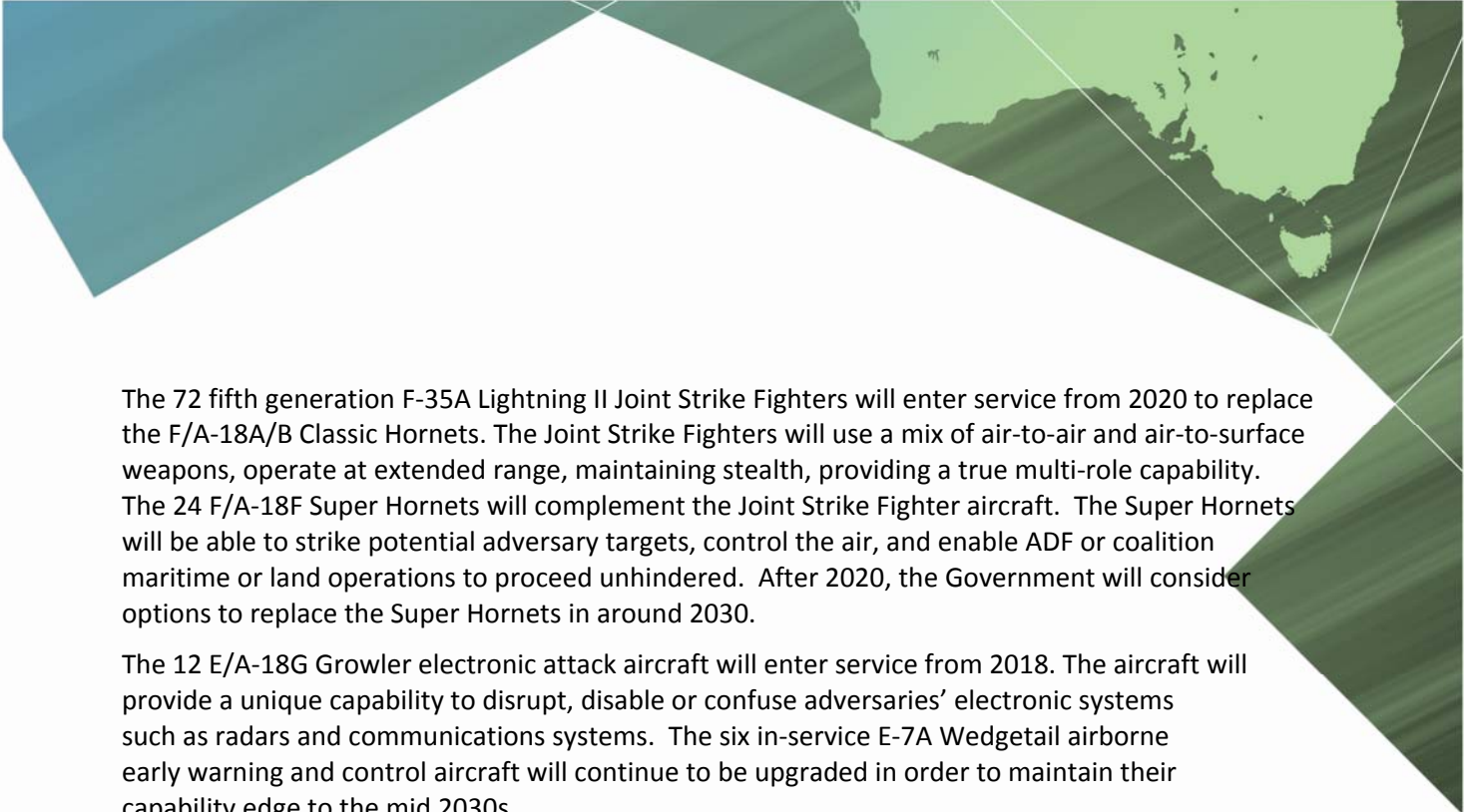
Key Strike and Air Combat capabilities

The Government will ensure that the ADF has the most capable weapons to fulfil its strike and air combat missions in the future. A series of new air-to-surface, air-to-air and high-speed and long-range strike and anti-ship weapons will be acquired for the strike and air combat capability.

The ADF's integrated air and missile defence system will also be enhanced to improve the accuracy and speed of ADF systems' response to air and missile threats, and to integrate and share air and space surveillance information more effectively. The Government will increase investment in capabilities to better connect the communications, sensor and targeting systems of various platforms so that they can more effectively combine their capabilities, generating greater potency and lethality. The ADF's enhanced integrated air and missile defence capabilities will have the flexibility for further enhancement to handle more complex threats that may emerge in the future.

Defence will also acquire ground-based active electronically scanned array radars from around 2020 and expand Australia's access to air and space situational awareness information, including through space-based systems.

The Government will also introduce a more sophisticated ground-based air defence system to replace the short-range RBS-70 missile system. A new man-portable short-range system will be introduced by the early 2020s, and will be supplemented by an advanced tactical and medium-range surface-to-air missile system in the mid to late 2020s, providing layered air-defence against a broad range of capable air threats.



The 72 fifth generation F-35A Lightning II Joint Strike Fighters will enter service from 2020 to replace the F/A-18A/B Classic Hornets. The Joint Strike Fighters will use a mix of air-to-air and air-to-surface weapons, operate at extended range, maintaining stealth, providing a true multi-role capability. The 24 F/A-18F Super Hornets will complement the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft. The Super Hornets will be able to strike potential adversary targets, control the air, and enable ADF or coalition maritime or land operations to proceed unhindered. After 2020, the Government will consider options to replace the Super Hornets in around 2030.

The 12 E/A-18G Growler electronic attack aircraft will enter service from 2018. The aircraft will provide a unique capability to disrupt, disable or confuse adversaries' electronic systems such as radars and communications systems. The six in-service E-7A Wedgetail airborne early warning and control aircraft will continue to be upgraded in order to maintain their capability edge to the mid 2030s.

People

Approximately, an additional 500 ADF positions will be allocated to 2025-26 to support the introduction of more potent strike and air combat capabilities.

Infrastructure

The Government will make a significant investment in new infrastructure and facilities to 2025-26 to support the ADF's strike and air combat capabilities. This will include upgrades to facilities at Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) bases Darwin and Tindal, Northern Territory; RAAF bases Amberley, Townsville and Scherger, Queensland; RAAF Williamstown, New South Wales; RAAF Edinburgh, South Australia; and RAAF bases Pearce, Learmonth and Curtin in Western Australia.