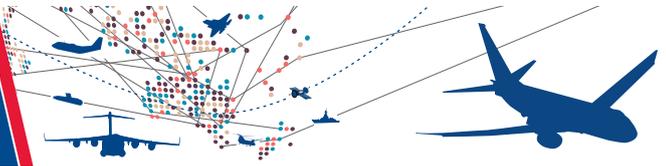




2020  
AIR POWER  
CONFERENCE

AIR POWER AND  
INDO-PACIFIC SECURITY



Release Date: Thursday, 4 June 2020

# Chief of Air Force's Intent and Air Power Conference Closing Statements

Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld

Hello, and thank you once again for joining me and our eminent speakers for the 2020 Air Power Symposium and for listening to the many thoughts and experts opinions on our theme of Air Power and Indo-Pacific Security.

As we wrap up conference proceedings I would like to take the opportunity to reflect on our Royal Australian Air Force and how it has shaped my Commander's Intent for its future.

Since my appointment as Chief of Air Force in July 2019 I have been observing our Royal Australian Air Force in action, taking stock of exactly where we are on our transformational journey, and mapping out where we need to go from here.

I believe it is now an appropriate time to share my Commander's Intent for the Royal Australian Air Force under my tenure as Chief. It reflects the changes that we as a military institution must make, and the reality that we must consider if we are to continue to deliver a strong and effective air power capability for Australia, in support of our national security, sovereignty, and our national and regional interests.

In 2020 the Royal Australian Air Force is 99 year years old, the oldest air force in our region, and the third oldest anywhere in the world.

We are embracing a period of unprecedented change across many fronts.

On the one hand we are close to completing the most significant update to our platforms since WWII – and arguably since our formation in 1921, when the potential and strategic significance of air power and of the air domain were beginning to be realised.

In doing so we are transitioning from a bespoke force of impressive standalone capabilities to a formidable networked force capable of delivering air power effects for the integrated force.

A transformation from a team of champions into a truly champion team.

At the same time, on our doorstep and beyond, the global rules-based order is under growing pressure, and we find ourselves in an increasingly competitive and less predictable geopolitical environment.

To succeed in this new reality, the Royal Australian Air Force must continue to evolve.

Culturally, we need to understand that the Royal Australian Air Force cannot, and does not generate air power for itself. Rather it provides air power options as a component of Australia's military power, realised by the Joint Force in support of broader Australian Government objectives.

More broadly, we must acknowledge that in some areas we shape strategy, while in others we act on strategic direction. To shape strategy, we must continue our evolution into an intelligent and skilled workforce that develops its people and places them in positions where they will achieve the greatest strategic effect. In essence, we must develop and post our people for effect – not simply to fill liabilities. To effectively act on strategic direction we will build a force of air power professionals capable of conceptualising strategic intention and empowered to apportion resources to the Joint Force consistent with my priorities.

This means that the Royal Australian Air Force can no longer operate in independent silos of excellence – and as technical experts in our own specialised fields – without leveraging the capacity and benefit of every part of our organisation.

Our fundamental purpose is to deliver air power as a component of the Joint Force, and to do so we must be integrated and connected both as an air force and with the Joint Force. We must understand the difference between air force and air power, as this nuance will ensure that we avoid prioritising tactical excellence over strategic effect, or platforms over systems.

The Royal Australian Air Force must become a force of networked military professionals, and we must deepen relationships and strengthen our engagement. We must build, nurture and use networks across operational, enterprise and human domains.

We must also commit resources to building agile and coherent governance, to ensure that our resources – people, money, capabilities and time – are utilised to provide enduring value for the Australian Government across the spectrum of conflict, and to meet emergent challenges.

We will not succeed just by treating risk – we must also drive success by seizing opportunity. To that end, I am reviewing our governance structures, battle rhythm and strategic guidance to ensure leaders at all levels are provided with the direction and resources they need to achieve their missions, both enduring and immediate. These mechanisms will be used to inform the progress of these changes, so that we can make adjustments and prioritise where required. This will serve to empower our commanders to succeed, and in doing so will drive better decision making at all levels of the organisation.

On the eve of our centenary we are now half way to realising an integrated air force – we have the tools required for the job the Australian Government and Australian people require us to undertake. Our task now is to ensure we have the culture and behaviours necessary to harness them effectively across the spectrum of conflict.

As Chief of the Royal Australian Air Force I will ensure that our air force has the direction and agility it needs to realise this task. And lead each and every member as we jointly embrace this paradigm shift in what it means to deliver a strong and effective air power capability for Australia, and to provide the highest level of air power to the Joint Force.

Thank you once again for joining the Royal Australian Air Force and the Air Power Development Centre for the 2020 Air Power Conference, and for considering our theme of Air Power and Indo-Pacific Security. May Australia and our Indo-Pacific region continue to enjoy sovereignty, security, peace and prosperity.

End Transcript.