

Hawker Pacific Ltd

Business summary

Hawker Pacific (Cairns) is a heavy maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) service centre, including the activities of Hawker Pacific Avionics (formerly T/A Australian Avionics). As part of the global Hawker Pacific Company, the Cairns facility provides integrated aviation solutions across Australia, the Asia Pacific and Middle East. HP (Australian) Avionics was originally established in Cairns in 1989 to provide avionics goods and services to the North Queensland General Aviation community.

Since that time HP Avionics has grown to become one of the premier avionics facilities in the country, servicing not only North Queensland, but Australia, the Asia Pacific region and beyond. It is now comfortably in the top 1% worldwide in terms of size, capability and capacity. The MRO business has also expanded and now a regional leader in heavy maintenance.

Our customers include the local aviation sector in Cairns e.g. HeviLift, Skytrans, West Wing, QANTASLINK and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) through to airlines from afar afield as the Philippines, Indonesia, PNG, Korea and the Pacific Islands. We currently have a new contract being supported in India.

In our industry safety is paramount. The success of our business is premised on our ability to deliver high quality MRO outcomes on time and within the requirements of the safety regulators, the Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and USA Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Consequently, we established an industry training partnership through the Cairns Aviation Skill Centre (CASC) with Aviation Australia (AA) = "the school". Their experience and understanding of the aviation and aerospace industries has been critical in the delivery of high quality technical and regulatory training requirements for both our current and future employees.

The most important step we have undertaken in building business capability has been recruiting apprentices/trainees. This has allowed for sustainable growth within an industry experiencing an aging population and acute skill shortages.

Being able to access quality, relevant training has meant that we have achieved an:

- increase in employment of apprentices from 3 prior to 2006 to over 75 over the past 12 years;
- increase in number of staff employed from 50 to around 130;
- expansion of our business from a focus on North Queensland Aviation to attracting business from across the Asia Pacific Region, the Middle East – recently our hangar was full to capacity and every aircraft was from an international customer (refer to attachment)
- initial \$2M investment in infrastructure in Cairns; currently investing another \$4.5M with facility and capability expansion
- successful completion of a joint training venture with Hawker Pacific, CASC/AA and Air Niugini – a first for the industry.

The opportunity to continue to up skill our current employees and attract new entrants to our industry has resulted in Hawker Pacific (Cairns) effectively competing in a global market place. Competitors may beat us on price, however, through world class training our competitive advantage is in fast turn times and reliability of the services we provide.

Criterion 1: Extent and quality of training for employees

Hawker Pacific (Cairns) believes it is imperative that strong partnerships must be established between the industry, and those that deliver the training. We operate in a highly regulated environment. Our core business is servicing aircraft, not training. However, we recognise that the success of our business is dependent on high quality trained staff. Hawker Pacific (Cairns) are extremely proud to have reached the milestone of recruiting 75 apprentices in the last 12 years.

Training in technical skills and regulatory requirements takes precedent when designing training for our business. We need people trained that understand the importance of working in a regulatory environment and can help us deliver a value proposition to our customers. Our chosen training partners, CASC / Aviation Australia are widely recognised as world class training providers with the international approvals behind them.

Consequently - "as a member of the Cairns Aviation Skill Centre (CASC) Industry Board we have been able to significantly influence the type and style of training that suits the need of our industry. The result has been that we have increased the number of apprentices and people we employ because we know they are receiving quality, relevant job ready training." Jason Burzacott, Vice President, Hawker Pacific.

A critical factor for our industry is the ageing workforce, with the average median age of Aircraft Maintenance Engineers being 50-55 years. We have recognised the urgent need to attract young people to consider training for employment in our industry.

Qualifications/Courses

To maintain a highly productive workforce we commit around 5% of our payroll to training expenditures. Monthly time expended on training varies dramatically, from new apprentices (at around 150 hours per month) to some existing staff only doing regulatory / continuation training (at 2 hours per month)

We have 3 strands that support training and skilling for current and future staff:

- Courses that lead to qualifications, maintenance of currency; and
- Courses undertaken to ensure compliance determined by our regulators.
- . Courses for personal development

Our trainees: (4 in the last 2 years)

The success of our apprentices has supported the decision to employ trainees in our administration office and stores area's

- Trainees – undertake Business Administration Certificate and Logistics through RTO Skill360 at the local Cairns Campus.

Our Apprentices: (75 in the last 12 years)

Undertake:

Certificate IV Aircraft Maintenance Engineer – 2 streams Avionics and Mechanical.

On completion of their Certificate IV they become an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer (AME). They are then encouraged to go on to undertake a Diploma of Aeroskills – Mechanical or Avionics stream.

On completion they become a Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineer (LAME).

The apprenticeship program we developed with CASC/AA provides an opportunity for the apprentice to:

- develop an understanding of the expectations and requirements of the industry;
- become work ready; and
- demonstrate their aptitude and desire for work in the aviation sector.

They begin their first year at “the school” (CASC), undertaking all their theoretical (off the job) training. With the close proximity of “the school” to both the Cairns general aviation precinct and our facility (a mere 350m); this provides them with the opportunity to be exposed to the:

- variety of aircraft that exist and we support,
- knowledge that aligns directly to CASA examinations; and
- nature of the work required by an aviation maintenance engineer (AME) first hand.

Once they have completed their first year, they go through the job interview process and we generally endeavour to select the top 4-5 students to continue with us to complete their apprenticeship, on the job. We currently have 12 apprentices employed.

Our design engineering Cadets (4 in the last 6 years)

Undertake “on the job” training in our facility to meet the requirements of their degree.

- Our current graduate design engineer is working in our structures department, one of 5 in the team.

Beth: “the advantage of working at Hawker Pacific (Cairns) – a small company - is the variety and diversity of aircraft I have the opportunity to work on. This exposure is enabling me to develop a broad range of skills across the whole scope of the aerospace industry, which will provide me with a solid grounding if I want to pursue a career in aircraft crash investigation or aeronautics”

Our external Cadets (10 in 3 years)

- 10 Air Niugini cadets, as part of our joint venture with AA and the airline, undertake on the job training to become qualified LAMEs.

Qualified / existing employees (all HP staff do training throughout the year)

Undertake the following:

- Courses that further develop their technical skills e.g. composites, safety – working from heights – negotiated with individuals in line with company requirements.

As part of the audit process in maintaining our registration with the aviation regulators it is mandatory for all staff to undertake our:

- Learning Management Systems which integrates our quality system with our safety management system including Human Factors & Safety.

Criterion 2: Achievements of the business and its employees that can be attributed to training

Building the skills and capability of our employees has been critical in enabling Hawker Pacific (Cairns) to develop a comparative advantage in specific areas of MRO and avionics attracting business from across Australia and internationally.

We have, through effective training and employment of quality staff, been able to:

- increase productivity and profitability;
- expand our customer base, even with international competitors having significantly lower rates
- create the only recognised service facility for Bombardier's Dash 8 Q-Series aircraft in the southern hemisphere;
- create the largest avionic facility in Australia & the southern hemisphere, with EASA & FAA approval for MRO services;
- become the first to obtain CASA part 145 regulatory approval, critical in both maintaining and growing our future business;
- creating employment opportunities; and
- contribute to growth in a regional area for an industry with skills shortages.

Access to competently trained staff has also enabled us to expand the range of aviation services offered providing:

- heavy maintenance and line maintenance to fixed and rotary wing aircraft
- complete refurbishments on private, corporate and commercial jets and logistics support
- substantial aircraft maintenance facilities.

Training has resulted in:

Highly qualified staff > less rework> greater reliability of service >increased productivity>less time aircraft spend on the ground >satisfied customers = profitability.

When we opened our expanded \$9M (Refer to Attachment) service centre in Cairns, Australia, and established a training partnership with CASC/AA we employed around 50 staff. We have since employed over 130 staff, and have provided employment opportunities for over 75 apprentices. Construction has commenced (\$4.5M) on a hangar expansion and we forecast an additional 40 full time employees as a direct result, most coming on as apprentices. (Refer to Attachment)

Our apprenticeship program, developed through "the school", assists our apprentices in making an informed choice as to whether or not they want to work in the industry. This has resulted in:

- high completion rates of our apprentices, around 93%;
- employment of over 75 apprentices;
- high retention rates of apprentices during and on completion of their course; and
- reduced the average age of our Aircraft Maintenance Engineers to around 30 years.

The majority (90%+) of our apprentices have continued to remain with the company working either as:

- licensed aviation maintenance engineers (LAME), and
- aviation maintenance engineers (AME).

The training we organise for our current and future employees makes them attractive to other organisations in the industry. A challenge we have faced in the past is not only how to effectively train our staff, but how to retain them. We overcame this by creating an environment of training and skilling that supports our staff to maintain currency build a knowledge and understanding of the safety regulations of our industry. This is why we still have a large number of staff that have remained with us for over 10 years.

Dan Mueller (current Apprentice): "I have always had an interest in electronics, when I found out there was an opportunity to pursue a career in avionics I decided to attend CASC to kick-start my career. After graduating from the college I applied for an apprenticeship as an avionics aircraft maintenance engineer for Hawker Pacific (Cairns). I am currently in my second year with Hawkers and have had the opportunity to work alongside great people and experience the many different aspects being an AME has to offer."

Dan is currently undergoing training in our Radio Workshop to expand on his skillset that he has gained through performing heavy maintenance on various aircraft in the hanger.

HP apprentices have been awarded several training awards and finalists, AEA apprentice of the year (3 times), Aviation Australia northern Australian apprentice of the year (1), finalist, QLD training awards (2 times), RAAA apprentice of the year (1).

Our commitment to training goes beyond our staff and aims to build strong relationships with our clients and our neighbours in the Pacific Region.

In 2015, we established a partnership with HPA and Air Niugini to develop a new engineering cadet training program, modeled on our training programs, aimed at building capacity of the aviation sector in the region. The training of the 10 cadets from Air Niugini was completed in 2017 and has enabled them to become licensed LAMEs and work on their own aircraft in PNG. (Refer to Attachment)

Chris Pigott, Business Manager CASC/AA highlighted the importance of the Air Niugini joint training venture: "This joint venture is a world class project and the benefits to the aviation industries in both countries as well as the economic benefit to Cairns cannot be understated".

With the increased demand for aircraft, particularly in the Asia Pacific Region, there will be a continued growth in MRO requirements. Consequently the need for maintenance personnel will continue to grow and if we are to maintain our competitive advantage, we must continue to invest in training both future and current staff.

Criterion 3: Integration of training into business planning

Safety is paramount in our industry. The success of our business is premised on our ability to deliver high quality, safe MRO outcomes within the requirements of the regulators. Including, but not limited to CASA, EASA and USA FAA. All within a identified skills shortage industry. The need to bring new staff into the industry drive the bulk of our training activity,

This year with the hangar expansion and the fact we are targeting a new type of aircraft, HP Cairns have budgeted a significant amount (\$200K) towards training specific to this aircraft.

Our business relies on skilled and competent staff and our aim, through training and skilling, is to provide:

. A path into the industry to mitigate the skills shortages.

- our employees with a safe workplace,
- the capability to pro-actively implement our quality system (safety management system);
- access to current technical training, within the regulatory framework in which we operate;
- exposure through on the job training, within a live maintenance facility, to a diverse range of aircraft; and
- new entrants with an understanding of the industry, its pathways and safety requirements.

. Australia is more expensive than regional competitor's, so our product must be superior to compete, And training assures this.

At Hawker Pacific (Cairns) we have a team based structure – MRO, Avionics, Design and Administration (stores). The teams consist of apprentices, trainees, cadets and aircraft maintenance engineers, providing opportunity for diversification of learning and skills development. Our managers are encouraged to take responsibility for ensuring that training is embedded in our business operations, and this is best demonstrated through our quality management system.

An element of our training is driven by compliance and therefore mandatory, in line with our commitment to training a significant effort and expenditure as been made to make this training more than just a "tick in the box". It is a closed loop system whereby training is revised / adjusted and added as occurrence lessons are learnt.

Our focus of on-the-job training has resulted in the integration of our quality management system and its training requirements into the day-to-day business of our facility. Resulting in our capacity to consistently meet our auditing requirements enabling us to continue to grow our business and our creditability.

Our staff play a critical role in ensuring the practical effectiveness of our quality system, which is integrated with:

- aviation safety,
- security,
- occupational health and safety: and
- environment management systems.

Integrating safety training into our business builds skilled capable people, our Learning Management System (LMS), provides staff with the courses/modules required to effectively implement our quality system (SMS). (Refer Attachment) Provides a snapshot of the modules employees, including our contractors, must complete:

The LMS enables us to capture:

- an individual's training profile;
- training completed;
- training required to maintain currency;
- capacity to monitor training;
- assessment outcome; and
- provide information to the regulators should there be an incident with one of the planes we have serviced.

The outcome of our commitment to both safety and technical training resulted in the significant achievement our facility at Cairns becoming the first in Australia to be granted the capacity to operate under new CASA air safety regulations - maintenance regulation Part 145.

"The new CASA rule suite is safety based and our approach has been to integrate other important elements such as Quality, Aviation Security, OH&S and Environment into our existing Safety Management System. This brings benefits in efficiencies but most importantly promotes a healthy and compliant culture."

Hawker Pacific Vice President of Quality and Systems William Arthur.

The LMS allows us to more effectively integrate safety training into our business along with the specific technical training required by our employees.

Training requirements of staff are identified through individual training plans, developed on a yearly basis, within the context of the business requirements of Hawker Pacific (Cairns) and the needs of the individual.

Workforce development opportunities allow:

- our apprentices to gain first hand aviation industry and safety experience while undertaking the on the job practical component of their Certificate IV in Aeroskills – either through the avionics or mechanical streams, in the 2nd year of their apprenticeship;

Our employees maintain and/or build skills through:

- working on a diverse range of aircraft and aircraft product, unlike other maintenance facilities where staff only work on one type;
- undertaking technical training, identified through their training plan, e.g. Every year Cairns send people to the USA for product, technical and regulatory training, As well as Australian events;
- capturing their safety skills through our on-line "Learning Management System"; and

- supervising and mentoring our apprentices, cadets and international students.
- our management team has the key responsibility to ensure our facility meets and maintains the global safety regulations in which we operate, therefore:
- undertake regular training to maintain knowledge and currency of safety requirements, at a strategic level together with managers from other Hawker Pacific locations.

Criterion 4: Innovation and excellence in design and delivery of training

- Hawker Pacific (Cairns) commitment to quality, customer service, and safety has led us to play a key role in developing the aviation industry in our region. Taking a pro-active role we have influenced and driven the training and skilling agenda for the aviation sector, firstly locally – North Queensland and now throughout our region.

This has been achieved through:

- membership on the CASC Board, established to drive partnerships between the sector and training organisations, ensuring relevant industry training;
- designing a training program that would attract young people to our industry and minimise attrition rates of apprentices;
- sponsorship of scholarships/awards e.g. the Regional Aviation Association of Australia (RAAA) – Aircraft Maintenance Avionics Scholarship; and
- joint venture partnerships with CASC/HPA and regional airlines such as Air Niugini
- Joint venture apprentice training in conjunction with RFDS (QLD)
- Initiating and participating in an industry careers day and opening the facility for that event.
- Provide access to the facility to Aviation Australia for its students at any time they need.
- encourage and allow staff to visit schools and events to promote career paths into aviation. A recent example of

HP support to a Schools gateway programme was reflected in the letter from FNQ regional planning officer for Schools Cindy Perry. (Refer Attachment)

Our apprenticeship-training program creates pathways into the industry:

- providing entry points for school leavers;
- new entrants wishing to change careers; and
- current workers wishing to up skill e.g. move from an AME to LAME or into management positions.

The program also provides our potential employees with:

- an understanding of the pathways into the industry;
- the regulatory environment in which we operate;
- on the job training within a live aircraft maintenance facility rather than in a simulated training environment; and
- exposure to the diversity of aircraft that exist and we service.

As mentioned previously our apprentices complete their first year at “the school”, providing experiences that enable them to make informed choices as to the pathway they wish to follow.

Our commitment to training goes beyond our staff and aims to build strong relationships with our clients and our neighbours in the Pacific Region.

In 2015 we established a partnership with Aviation Australia and Air Niugini to develop a new engineering cadet training program, modeled on our training programs, aimed at building capacity of the aviation sector in the region. (Refer to Attachment)

"The new training program allows graduates to attain specialised “on the job” training within an actual live aircraft maintenance facility which is a first for Cairns and this program. In the past this type of training was conducted in a simulated training environment. This new form of training is world-class cutting edge training with the graduates leaving highly qualified and meeting international standards. At the end of the two-year period the cadets will

become qualified LAMEs, with the capabilities of working on their own aircraft, meeting the safety requirements of international regulators including CASA" said Chris Pigott, general manager, Aviation Australia.

"We believe the quality and dedication of our engineering staff and their level of experience, professionalism and dedication to developing individuals will set this world class training program apart," said Jason Burzacott, Vice President, Hawker Pacific.

Additionally with the introduction of a new contract with RFDS supporting the maintenance across QLD, Hawker Pacific (Cairns) are extremely proud to be working with RFDS and Ergon energy in recruiting people from Mt Isa, Rockhampton, and Charleville as apprentices, training them in Cairns before placing them back into their towns to provide support the RFDS fleet.

Outcomes achieved have been:

- low attrition rates, in fact we still have employees working for us who began their aviation career with an apprenticeship with us;
- . significant growth in a skills shortage environment, including significant growth in the utilisation of the Cairns Facility by international customers. We have become the largest Hawker Pacific support facility, and a major player in this regional location.
- . the business is competing successfully on the international stage, with capabilities and representations few in the world hold.
- our apprentices have won numerous industry awards and scholarships, including AEA Apprentice of the Year three years in a row;
- . workforce pride in bringing in new employees and see them thrive and succeed.
- stronger partnerships established with our clients; and
- a pool of quality, motivated technically trained staff for a global industry.
- . our strong support and promotion of Aviation Australia and CASC has helped ensure their local presence and contributed towards their significant achievements in training people in our region.

All these outcomes are driven by a strong leadership team, who understand the value of an integrated and modern training plan.

Criterion 5: Commitment to equity in training

As an organisation we recognise the need for diversity – it means as a global organisation we are better positioned to understand our clients – who come to us also from not only Australia, but the Asia Pacific region, the Middle East and Europe. Locally Hawker Pacific enjoys and benefits from a team with diverse ethnic backgrounds, including, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Pacific Islanders, Papua New Guineans, Filipino and Europeans. In fact having several Filipinos in our team has been a significant asset with the language and cultural interface with the on site teams from Philippine Airlines during heavy maintenance events in Cairns. As previously mentioned all HP Cairns staff carry out annual compliance and company training as a minimum.

The General Aviation industry has historically been, and continues to be a male dominated environment. The maintenance and servicing activities of our industry has been perceived to be the domain of male members of the employment community in a similar way that males still tend to hold significant representation in other traditional male dominated occupations such as motor mechanic, electrician, fitter and plumber.

The key challenge is the competition we experience with Airlines and large Aviation service organisations when we want to attract and recruit female apprentices and graduates. The competition for female candidates is considerable. This is also the case when it comes to recruiting Indigenous people who want to work in our industry.

It is often said of our industry that employer engagement is based on "people wanting to work with aircraft NOT the company... if you are truly passionate about the industry, love planes and love aviation then there is a high chance you will be employed in the industry". Mary O'Dowd | Organisation HR Development Manager, Hawker Pacific

To deliver our services we employ a mix of the following staff:

1. Operational staff – 79 (70 male 9 female) includes some contractors
 - avionics specialists
 - structures designers;
 - apprentice aircraft maintenance engineers; and
 - sheet metal workers – usually contracted.
2. Support staff - 54 (33 male 21 female)
 - including logistics and administration staff of which two are trainees.

To date the challenge has been to find those who are passionate about working in our industry and encourage them to join our company, particularly those who are young, those who are female and those who come from more diverse backgrounds.

Our commitment to equity can be demonstrated by:

- the employment of over 133 full time staff of which 103 are men and 30 are women;
 - employing in our design team an aerospace engineer – one of the five graduates out of 100 from University of NSW;
 - working with CASC/AA to promote women in the industry, through the development of a brochure “don’t let the guys have all the fun!
 - providing up skilling and mentoring opportunities for the employees of our clients – building diversity e.g. Solomon Islands; and
 - employment of a variety of age groups - average age of our workforce is 44, with the youngest being 18 and the oldest 78 - there is no age discrimination experienced in our company
- .Working with CASC and Aviation Australia and international training programs, currently this team is endeavouring to start an aboriginal and torres straight islanders training program based on the very successful PNG cadet program.

HP employees were involved in the recent "international womans day" initiative by the Cairn airport, celebrating and promoting their achievements.

“In the past 8 years, Hawker pacific have encouraged and supported my professional growth and development through providing licence training, providing opportunities to perform higher or varied duties gaining valuable experience and later allowing me to work a flexible roster so I can pursue a career in training and assessment with Aviation Australia. HP has genuine understanding of the benefits enabled by increasing diversity in the workplace”
Emma Mahoney (Licensed Aircraft Engineer HP Cairns)

Our staff are supported with relevant training in accordance with their needs, which they determine in consultation with management.

In 2012 we signed an MOU with CASC/AA to provide advanced practical expertise to AME students graduating from AA International Training Diploma program. The first 10 international engineers, to train in our Cairns facility, came from the Royal Oman Police.

“It was an exciting and ground breaking program for Cairns, Aviation Australia and Hawker Pacific, in being able to provide AME students with a tailored training solution through access to a world class working facility with a focus on practical training outcomes”. Chris Pigott Business Manager Cairns Aviation Skill Centre.


This program created the impetus for, as mentioned previously, the Hawker Pacific (Cairns), Aviation Australia and Air Niugini joint venture to implement a new engineering cadet-training program supporting our client Air Niugini. The program has also provided greater opportunities for women in PNG, as noted in the Cairns Post article in 2015 (Refer Attachment).


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RFDS Magazine ...	5.6 MiB

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