



## **RAAF Plan Jericho: Design-Led Innovation**

**Thursday 6 August 2015, National Gallery of Australia**

In March 2014 the Williams Foundation held a seminar entitled “Air Combat Operations – 2025 and Beyond.” The seminar explored the challenges and opportunities afforded by the introduction of 5<sup>th</sup> generation air combat capabilities – what did the F-35 bring to the fight and to the ADF, and what did it really mean for the future of warfighting?

An overwhelming theme to emerge from this seminar was that the introduction of 5<sup>th</sup> generation air combat capabilities to the ADF was a transformative step-change. This was not another platform replacement that we simply slotted into our inventory – it was not, and could not be, business as usual.

The Air Force and the ADF have been on a journey since that time to understand what 5<sup>th</sup> generation really means. The Williams Foundation has been part of that journey by facilitating the exploration of some of the issues:

- How are the new operating concepts developed?
- How do you integrate 5<sup>th</sup> generation air platforms with the delivery of combat capability on the ground and at sea?
- How does the ADF develop the people and support systems to deal with the increasingly complex and high volumes of data generated in a future battlespace?
- How does the Air Force shape itself to fully and effectively exploit the new capabilities?

This last question was the catalyst for the current Williams Foundation seminar. Air Force cannot afford to allow time and the natural ebb and flow of organisational dynamics to shape the 5<sup>th</sup> generation Air Force. An active, interventionist and innovative approach is the only way to move forward. The future force must be ‘designed’. It must not be constrained by business-as-usual mindsets.

The vision to guide this transformation is RAAF’s Plan Jericho. Launched in February 2015, Plan Jericho will provide the framework to develop a future force that is agile and adaptive, immersed in the information age, and truly joint. Plan Jericho is not the final plan. It is not a glossy brochure. It is the first step on a very long, exciting and challenging transformation.

The seminar today explored how Air Force could learn from the social, technical and organisational design-led innovation practices of leading industry players. Two key questions were posed:

- how can the RAAF, in partnership with the other Services, create the appropriate innovation / transformation environment to support the design and implementation of the RAAF’s Plan Jericho, and

- is the RAAF on track to achieve the “future Air Force by design”

Design-led innovation requires rethinking the norms.

Design-led innovation needs partnerships.

The seminar heard from two leading Defence Industry corporations, Lockheed Martin and Boeing, who have developed and fostered highly sophisticated and exciting innovation arms within their companies. Air Force can learn a lot from industry. The time is right to start teaming with those who have the expertise.

As the Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal ‘Leo’ Davies said in his speech to the seminar:

‘Our airmen and women can learn so much from our business partners who support our capability. I would like to see some of our best and brightest seconded to you and to effectively return to apply the knowledge and experience they acquire within Air Force.

‘We need each other to make this work. Defence needs unprecedented access to the deep research and development capacity of private industry. I am reminded daily that private industry has driven advancement in communication technology and big data management. It frustrates me that our war-fighters are not able to exploit this technology in their work environments to the same extent they do in their private lives. And it alarms me when I see that our adversaries are not similarly constrained.’

The Government has made a considerable investment in Air Force platforms. As Plan Jericho says:

‘Air Force is preparing a fully integrated fighting force for tomorrow...’

‘... We must realize the opportunities afforded to us.’

The Williams Foundation is an independent research organisation whose purpose is to promote the development and effective implementation of national security and defence policies as they impact on Australia’s ability to generate air power appropriate to its unique geopolitical environment and values.

The Foundation aims to strengthen Australia’s national security by advocating the need for forward-looking policies which take full advantage of the potential for air power to shape and influence regional security; and by promoting constructive debate regarding the implementation of such policies.