

Australian SME slashes H135 starter generator repair times on ADF training program

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Boeing Defence Australia's Helicopter Aircrew Training System (HATS) team has slashed the repair time of H135 helicopter starter generators after contracting Sydney-based small business DC Roberts Aircraft to perform the repairs and overhauls locally.

For the past four years, the starter generators were sent overseas for repair under Airbus's global H135 repair program. The repairs took an average 18 weeks, which increased to 24 weeks during the COVID-19 pandemic due to border closures and freight delays.

Since being contracted in May 2021, DC Roberts Aircraft has repaired 15 starter generators and slashed repair times, returning overhauled generators in an average of just seven weeks.

"We're always working to bring more rotary wing component repair work in country and to grow the number of Australian small-and-medium enterprises supplying our program, and COVID certainly reinforced the importance of strengthening our sovereign repair network," said Ian Gibney, BDA's HATS program manager.

"By working with our HATS teammate Airbus, we determined that DC Roberts Aircraft could overhaul starter generators two-and-a-half times faster than the overseas OEM, meaning less interruption to the training of our frontline helicopter aircrew."

Christian Venzal, Airbus Helicopters managing director for Australia and New Zealand said the company looked forward to working closely with partners to better serve their customers in the region.

"This fast turnaround time on the H135 HATS program to BDA cements the Airbus customer satisfaction commitment and is testament to Airbus' on-going investment into the local aviation industry," said Venzal.

According to DC Roberts Aircraft Managing Director Bryce Roberts, the contract will benefit local jobs and the economy.

"As an Australian-owned and -operated CASA 145 Approved MRO specialising in DC starter generators, DC Roberts Aircraft is thrilled to be working closely with the HATS program in support of the H135 platform. This work is a win-win for all involved, investing into the local economy, and ensuring ongoing employment and development of staff."

As the HATS prime contractor, BDA maintains the ADF's fleet of 15 H135 helicopters at HMAS Albatross in Nowra, which are used for training the ADF's future frontline helicopter pilots, aviation warfare officers and aircrewmen.