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Next generation search and rescue aircraft comes online

The first of Australia's new dedicated search and rescue aircraft has officially been accepted into service in Cairns.

This is the first of four Bombardier Challenger CL-604 jets to replace the tier one search and rescue aircraft used by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), Acting Chief Executive Officer Gary Prosser said.

"This capability is vital in Australia's search and rescue response arrangements, in a vast area of about one tenth of the earth's surface," Mr Prosser said.

"These new aircraft will use new technology and equipment to ensure there is a rapid response capability to rescue people in distress at sea or on land.

"This is a significant investment in the safety of Australians and underpins AMSA's commitment to Australia's international obligations for aeronautical and maritime search and rescue."

Cobham SAR Services Pty Ltd was awarded the contract to provide the aircraft and crew.

The first jet to be based in Cairns has been accepted into service with two additional aircraft to come online in Perth and Melbourne in the coming months. An additional ancillary operational aircraft will also be based in Melbourne.

Modifications have been made to the jets to allow vital stores, including survival equipment and satellite phones, to be delivered to people in distress.

The aircraft has a range of new technology on board including infra-red cameras to search at night and sensors to complement the trained air search observers on board the planes.

AMSA's Joint Rescue Coordination Centre is headquartered in Canberra where a team of search and rescue officers works around the clock to coordinate responses to incidents.

A selection of still images and videos is available to download via the following link:

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/glMXd>