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## Wedgetail Trainers Honored with Group Commendation

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The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) 2 Squadron Training Flight at RAAF Base Williamtown has received an Air Force Group Commendation for its outstanding work in training aircrew on the E–7A Wedgetail. The award highlights Australia’s growing leadership in airborne early warning and its commitment to strengthening defence partnerships with the United States and the United Kingdom.

On 3 July 2025, Deputy Chief of Air Force, Air Vice—Marshal Harvey Reynolds, presented the commendation for “superior devotion to duty” during a ceremony at Williamtown. Since January 2023, the training flight has qualified 164 aircrew, including pilots, airborne battle managers and electronic warfare specialists. Personnel have been trained not only for the RAAF, but also for the US Air Force and Royal Air Force, enhancing trilateral cooperation and shared air battle management capabilities.

Commanding Officer Wing Commander Samuel Thorpe praised the team’s achievements, stating the training has directly contributed to the effectiveness of coalition operations. The E—7A Wedgetail, based on a modified Boeing 737, provides advanced command and control across air, sea and land operations. Its radar and communication systems allow it to monitor vast areas during missions, often exceeding four million square kilometres.

Australia remains the only nation currently operating a full-scale E—7A training program. The squadron has already delivered trained crews to the RAF and is completing courses for the USAF. These efforts improve allied readiness and ensure interoperability in joint exercises and real-world operations.

This recognition comes as broader debate continues over defence funding and readiness. While the Albanese government has supported international engagement through joint exercises and training, some critics have called for a greater focus on domestic capability development and long-term investment in the RAAF.

The commendation affirms the critical role of 2 Squadron in supporting regional security. The Wedgetail program, backed by skilled personnel

and strong international collaboration, remains a cornerstone of Australia's air power strategy.