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Talisman Sabre Showcases Air Power and Combat Readiness

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Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025, Australia's largest military exercise, demonstrated unmatched air power and readiness, with over 5,500 flight hours and 2,000 sorties across 3 million nautical miles. Involving 279 aircraft from 19 nations, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and allies tested high-end warfighting capabilities, reinforcing regional security amid growing Indo-Pacific tensions.

From July 13 to August 4, 2025, Talisman Sabre 2025 unfolded across Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Christmas Island, and, for the

first time, Papua New Guinea. The RAAF deployed nearly every aircraft type, including F-35A Lightning II jets, P-8A Poseidon surveillance planes, and C-17A Globemaster III transports, alongside allies' assets like the United Kingdom's (UK) F-35B jets launched from HMS Prince of Wales. "This exercise tested our ability to project air power across vast distances," said Air Commodore Louise desJardins, Commander Air Task Group 640.7, emphasizing the integration of air, land, sea, and cyber operations. Missions ranged from air defense to anti-submarine warfare, showcasing interoperability among nations like the United States (US), Japan, and India.

The exercise's scale—over 35,000 personnel—underscored a commitment to a free Indo-Pacific, countering concerns about regional powers like China, which deployed surveillance ships to monitor activities. Critics, including peace activists, raised environmental concerns, but the Australian Defence Force (ADF) conducted pre-exercise environmental briefings to mitigate impacts. The first-ever Multinational Information Operations Centre (MIOC) enhanced narrative control, with Lieutenant Colonel Peter Power noting, "Every nation's perspective strengthens our ability to shape the information environment."

While the ADF and allies flexed military muscle, questions linger about the Labor government's defense priorities, with some arguing funds for such exercises divert resources from domestic needs like infrastructure. Nonetheless, Talisman Sabre 2025 sent a clear message: Australia and its partners are ready to deter aggression and uphold regional stability through unmatched air power and collaboration.