



Australian aerospace:

The post-war development of the Australian aerospace industry has been wrought with good intentions, but has seldom lived up to expectations. **Eric Beech** reviews current initiatives in the industry's bid for long-term survival. Cutaways by **Tim Hall**.

"In the year 2000 the Australian aerospace industry could be the largest in the region, employing some 30,000 people—more than twice the size it is now."

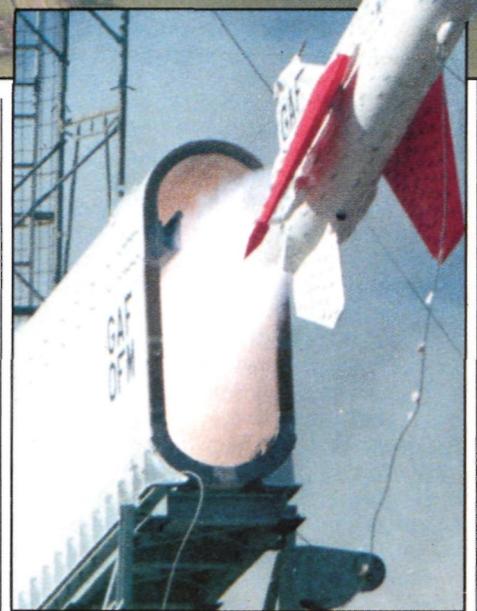
Hawker de Havilland commercial director Peter Smith's view contrasts with a recent warning from Air Vice-Marshal Tan Sutherland, president of the Royal Aeronautical Society's Australian division: "Should [the industry's] design and development component be allowed to further decline, the civil and defence structures, depending on a sound base of professional engineering, will be at risk". The Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce, meanwhile, predicts future growth outside the airframe and engine sectors taking the

industries exports to a peak of (A\$1.4 billion) by 1995.

These diverse views emanate from an industry which is itself diverse and which is still working out its recent reorganisation. However, a coherent industrial strategy is starting to emerge.

The Australian Government's decision to abandon the Government Aircraft Factories Nomad and the ill-fated indigenous A.10 Wamira basic trainer marked a watershed for the country's aerospace industry. By 1984 the message was clear: either the industry rationalised itself or the Government would attempt the job.

The privately owned Hawker de Havilland of Sydney (HdeH) bought out the engine and



Top Australian industry's participation in the RAAF's F-18 programme has resulted in a major upgrade of facilities. Above Asta's Super Ikara surface-to-underwater guided weapon. The "boxed round" is the latest version of this proven system.

aircraft manufacturer Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation. By July 1987 the other main aerospace company, Government Aircraft Factories, emerged as the new Aerospace Technologies of Australia (Asta). The company is still in the public sector, but has a mandate to act like a private concern and ultimately to attract private investment. The level of any future private capital injection has not been specified, but *Flight* under-