

Australian Modifications to the PC-9

0 Standard PC-9 landing gear struts modified to accept low-pressure tyres and brakes; heavy landing indicator provided on the oleo struts

0 Engine secondary display panel incorporates allowance for engine and propeller transients during manoeuvring and rapid throttle movements

0 All permanently fastened metal-to-metal faying surfaces wet assembled using a corrosion-suppressant barium chromate compound

- Anti-collision beacons fitted to upper and lower surfaces of aircraft fuselage

0 Landing gear up/down audio indicator fitted

0 Oxygen-pressure reducing valve installed in oxygen system

0 Mute buttons incorporated on control columns

0 Fatigue data recorder fitted

0 Modification to cowl inlet and ducting installed for compressor air at low gas generator speeds

0 Relabelling of certain switches.

stands it to be in the range of 20-30 per cent.

Asta and HdeH are independent, but they share incestuous relationships through the distribution of government defence contracts during the past decade. For instance, Asta builds the PC9 fuselage for HdeH, while HdeH manufactures components for the Asta-assembled McDonnell Douglas F-18. In all these programmes the companies have been subcontractors to major overseas primes, which proved far from satisfactory for the Australian industries. To quote Asta's managing director, George Stuart, "Subcontracting is a word we are still struggling with in Australia ... it has not brought profits in the past".

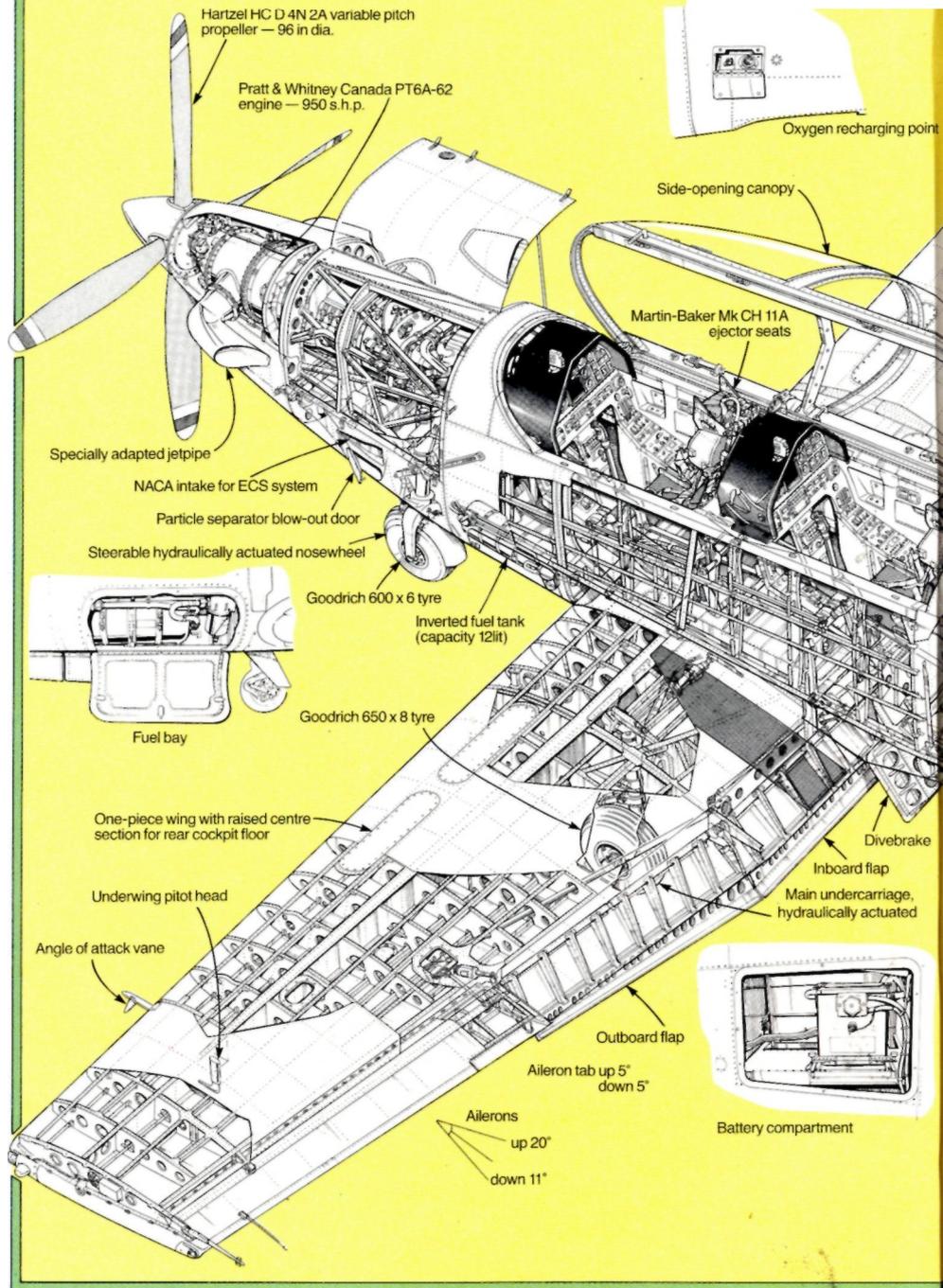
Australian aerospace executives agree that partnership in future programmes is the vital ingredient for success. The very diversity of the industries' capabilities means that an Australian partner could bring genuine strength to an international collaborative team. Moreover, the major Australian companies are prepared to back their words by becoming risk-sharing partners. Asta, for example, is negotiating to supply a number of bid packages to British Aerospace for the Airbus A330/A340 programme.

This transition from subcontractor to partner is a key challenge facing the Australian industry. Nearly every civil airliner in production contains components produced on a

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sole-source subcontract by an Australian company, and Peter Smith argues that, if a comparative advantage is to be retained over the emerging aerospace industries of developing countries, "Australian industry will have to place greater emphasis on design skills and production ingenuity taking responsibility for the design, development testing, and production of major aircraft subassemblies".

Central to Australia's participation in future aerospace projects, Smith believes, will be the integration of all aspects of the

country's industry, including the Government Research Laboratories, software houses, and component and airframe manufacturers. He adds that, in such groupings, "It will be necessary for the larger industry firms to assume the role of project integrator."

The future refit and update of Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) aircraft clearly demonstrates the need for the integrated approach. In the past, Australian industry has carried out these programmes largely under the direction of overseas prime contractors. The RAAF's need to update its