AUSTRALIA

PRIME MINISTER

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PRODUCTION OF PROJECT "N"

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. William McMahon, CH, MP

The Prime Minister announced in Canberra today that the Government had approved the production of an initial batch of twenty Project "N" aircraft, at a cost of $13M, including the cost of completing development work and establishing production.

In January 1970, the Government approved expenditure of $3.2M for the design, development and construction of two flying prototypes and a structural test airframe. A further $1.1M, for the second phase of the project was approved last year.

The Prime Minister said : "Eleven of the first production batch will be used by Army Aviation to replace their Cessna aircraft. These aircraft will be used for command liaison and observation tasks in close support of the Army."

"The remaining nine aircraft of the initial batch will be produced for sale to commercial or other users."

"It is Government policy to maintain a small but viable and effective aircraft industry in Australia. To this end, the Government is actively considering a rationalisation of the existing facilities in the aircraft industry."

"Employment in the industry had risen to high levels with the Mirage and Macchi projects and workload in the industry has declined with the end of these two projects. This experience has highlighted that the industry has so far been unable to establish a significant market outside the defence area."

"The Government's concern for the future of the industry had led it to initiate efforts to establish an improved workload for the industry."

"Project 'N' had been conceived to maintain essential design teams intact for defence purposes and produce a product that had both military and civil potential. The Government had also embarked in 1971 upon a comprehensive programme of local production of light observation helicopters for both military and civil use."

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"In addition, the Government had initiated a programme of seeking offsets to overseas Government purchases aimed at diversifying the industry's market and bringing it into close commercial contact with overseas industries. The development of Project 'N' has proceeded remarkably well. This augurs very well for its success."

"The Government is confident that the widespread interest being expressed in Project 'N' will mean a successful commercial future for the project in addition to the Australian military requirements for the aircraft. The combination of a military and a civil demand for the aircraft should provide a long term and steady workload."

"The light utility aircraft, powered by two Allison 250 series 400 HP turbo-prop engines, was designed at the Department of Supply's Government Aircraft Factories in Melbourne for use in military and civil versions. Two prototypes have flown more than 280 hours and have met or exceeded their design parameters."

"The aircraft shows great promise as a low-cost easily operated utility vehicle. It is widely adaptable in a range of both military and civil applications. Its outstanding short take-off and landing (STOL) characteristics, with its rugged performance in operating from rough fields should ensure its sales success. A novel lateral control system, providing safe operation at or near the stalling speed, overcomes one of the major hazards in STOL operation".

"These factors together with the combination of a relatively high cruising speed with a good rate of climb and excellent range-payload capabilities puts this aircraft in a market slot in which there is no present competitor."

"Project 'N' represents a significant design achievement by Australians and the team at GAF is to be congratulated."

The characteristics of Project "N" are :-

All-up weight (AUW) for take-off and landing		8,000 lbs
Rate of climb on two engines at AUW		1700 ft/min.
Rate of climb on single engine at AUW		450 ft/min.
Service ceiling at AUW		25000 ft
Cruise speed at AUW		175 kt.
Stall speed at AUW		47 kt.
Maximum range at normal cruise		850 n. miles
Maximum endurance		10 hrs.
Take-off and landing distances over 50 ft obstacle at AUW using STOL characteristics		
Normal temperature and conditions (ISA)	960 ft. (take-off) 690 ft. (landing)	960 ft 690 ft.
High ambient temperature (ISA + 25°)	1400 ft. (take-off) 750 ft. (landing)	1400 ft. 750 ft.
Dimensions:		
Wing span		54 ft
Length		41 ft 2 in.
Height		17 ft 11 in.

Typical passenger/range capacities:

12 passengers over 150 n. miles
9 passengers over 450 n. miles
6 passengers over 750 n. miles

CANBERRA, 23 May 1972