



## Submission No 18

### **Inquiry into Australian Defence Force Regional Air Superiority**

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To:  
The Australian Parliament  
Federal Government Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade  
Inquiry into Australian Defence Force Regional Air Superiority

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Dear Secretary, other Committee Members and all other Citizens of Australia,

I am a citizen of Australia and I am particularly worried about the present planned direction of our air defence force.

With the limited spare time that I have while running a business and tending a family, I have been investigating and following the course of our plan to purchase F-35 Joint Strike Fighters to replace our F-111s and F/A-18s.

This plan, as is currently being pursued by the Federal Government and the Department of Defence, to purchase F-35 JSFs and retire our F-111s is wrong.

The problem is that various SE Asian countries have purchased Russian Sukhoi fighters. Indonesia last year made enquiries to purchase 48 Russian Sukhoi fighters. The F-35 JSFs cannot dominate Russian Sukhoi fighters and with F-35 JSFs we therefore cannot protect Australia or fulfil our traditional role in regional peace keeping.

We should be replacing our F/A-18 Hornets by purchasing F/A-22 Raptor fighters that can dominate Sukhoi fighters and give us back the air superiority that the F-111s and F/A-18 had given us in the past.

We should also keep our F-111s and improve them - they have at up to 40 more years of service life and are the only aircraft available in the world today that can economically and effectively perform the role that they do over the wide open spaces of Australia's large land mass and sea areas.

On 2005 June I wrote a letter that further discusses the above situation. A copy of this letter follows as a part of this submission as Footnote 1 and you can also view another version of it at the web page listed in Footnote 2. I sent it to the editors of the major newspapers (with no action from any).

I have also observed that a considerable amount of money (more than AUD\$1Billion?) is being spent on refurbishing stress cracked main fuselage airframes in our fleet of F/A-18 Hornets. These aircraft cannot properly defend us any more - Why don't we halt this expenditure and use it to purchase our first F/A-22 Raptors and to finance further upgrade of our F-111 fleet?

You can access more formally presented facts and details on the Internet at the website listed in Footnote 3.

Finally in this submission I advise that my primary worry above all other worries regarding these issues is as follows:

Why is it that I (and all the people that I communicate this issue with) need to personally take this extra time out to worry about this fundamental issue of Australia's air defence?

The people that work for us (as employees of we the citizens of Australia) within the Federal Government that are responsible for these fundamental choices should have these major issues in hand and be flexible enough to continue investigations along the way to ensure that past decisions are still currently the best ones.

The basic choices are clearly obvious to me as an interested observer - Why is it that the our specialist expert employees have not been able to see the obvious too and have the courage to make the necessary changes to ensure that our current defence plan the best it possibly can?

Please ensure that you and the other members of this committee execute this enquiry with the complete integrity, perseverance, excellence and courage that is required to find the best path for our Australian air defence.

Please feel free to contact me for any further discussion or assistance in your enquiry.

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Footnote1:

Hello Editor of the Courier Mail, Queensland,

I write as a professional ordinary person with grave concern regarding the apparent lack of integrity of our present government and defence leaders in maintaining their choice of JSFs as our primary military defence aircraft for the next 20 years.

The JSFs are not the right choice for Australia.

Our government is incorrectly choosing to uphold their decision to acquire JSF strike fighters to replace our F-111s and F/A-18s.

Our government and defence leaders appear to be saving face by maintaining this incorrect choice. F-111s with F/A-22 Raptors are the right choice for Australia.

Australia's is the only country that still deploys F-111s in it's air force and we should keep them and improve them.

There is no other aircraft currently available that can effectively provide for Australia's current and near future defence needs better than the F-111 in its long distance strike, recognisance and deterrent role in our defence force.

There are currently plenty of spare F-111s in the USA, we should acquire these before they are scrapped. Our government is planning to scrap the F-111s by 2010 and has already started the early stages of this by closing support workshops (eg:paintshops at Amberley) and is already eroding our F-111 fleet by withholding approval of funds for new and continuing F-111 projects.

We should acquire a fleet of F/A-22 Raptors (not JSFs) to replace our F/A-18s.

Other major and developing nations in our region of the world have acquired Russian Sukhoi fighters which eat JSFs and F/A-18s for breakfast.

F/A-22 Raptors can dominate Russian Sukhoi's and will enable Australia to maintain its traditional role as a primary peace keeper in our region.

F-111s can out-run and out-distance Russian Sukhoi's and F-111s could be made more stealthy. F/A-22 Raptors are complementary to F-111s, the better F/A-22 engines fit directly into F-111s and enable them to supersonic cruise economically.

JSFs have serious limitations, they cannot provide us with air dominance, have only one engine and only one pilot for long distance flights. They cannot supercruise, have limited speed, have limited range and have limited stealth.

The JSF is useful for ground battle support and it's choice suggests aggression to our neighbouring countries.

The JSF choice states our apathy towards sharing the responsibility of keeping the peace in our region of the world.

The loss of the F-111 in Australia will also result in the loss of the 'critical mass' that currently enables our very healthy home grown and highly innovative Australian military and domestic aerospace industry.

To do their job, we must provide our air defence personnel with the very best practical and effective technology that only the F/A-22s and our F-111s can give.

Please feel free to call me to discuss this issue.

You and your staff can find more information on this issue at website: [www.ausairpower.net/index.html](http://www.ausairpower.net/index.html)

Yours sincerely,

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Footnote 2:  
[www.ausairpower.net/contrails-003.html](http://www.ausairpower.net/contrails-003.html)

Footnote 3:  
[www.ausairpower.net/index.html](http://www.ausairpower.net/index.html)