NEW RAAF RECRUIT IS FULL OF HOT AIR

News / Events / Festivals



The latest addition to the Royal Australian Air Force fleet prefers life in the slow lane.

And instead of having radar-avoiding stealth qualities, this aircraft has been designed to turn heads.

The RAAF on Friday unveiled a new helmet-shaped hot air balloon, complete with Air Force fighter pilot helmet, visor, oxygen mask and oxygen hose. It replaces the previous Air Force hot air balloon, which had been used for marketing and promotional purposes.

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Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Leo Davies. (Defence)

“For more than 25 years, the Air Force balloon has travelled throughout Australia, inspiring an interest in aviation among young people, and promoting the professionalism of the Air Force and its personnel,” Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Leo Davies said in a statement.

“While hot air balloons are one of the oldest forms of aviation, they still attract a huge amount of interest from the general public and schools and pique a fundamental interest in science and technology.

“With the replacement of the old balloon, there was an opportunity to create a new, custom, modern design to inspire a new generation of Australians to learn about aviation and their Air Force.”

The new Air Force balloon will make its public debut at the Canberra Balloon Spectacular on Saturday at Old Parliament House. It is expected to travel to the Illawarra region and Gold Coast over the next few months.

Defence said the new hot air balloon was designed and manufactured by UK-based company Cameron Balloons, and comprised 1,574 panels.

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Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Leo Davies and Chaplain, Squadron Leader James Cox, at the launch of the new Air Force hot air balloon. (Defence)



Air Force hot air balloon on its first Australian flight just outside Canberra. (Defence)

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Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Leo Davies and balloon pilot Squadron Leader Damian Gilchrist. (Defence)



The new Air Force hot air balloon prepares to take off. (Defence)

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