

Boeing teams with Australia on fighter drone

Boeing is partnering with Australia's military to develop a stealthy combat drone capable of flying as a "loyal wingman" alongside manned aircraft, offering fighter jet-like performance at a much lower cost

BOEING AIRPOWER TEAMING SYSTEM

Due to make first flight in 2020

Tail: Outward-canted twin fins

Speed: Drone would keep pace with modern fighter aircraft

Range: More than 3,700km

Length: 11.7m

Powerplant: Light commercial jet engine, likely recessed to reduce infrared signature

Payload bay: Sensors provide intelligence-gathering and electronic warfare capabilities. Could also accommodate weapons

Fuselage: Possible stealth shaping

"LOYAL WINGMAN" CONCEPT

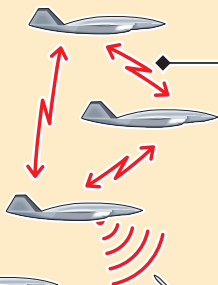
Drone's software allows it to fly independently or in support of manned aircraft while maintaining safe distance between other aircraft



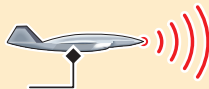
Manned aircraft



Control via data link from nearby manned aircraft or ground station



Drones networked together into swarm to pinpoint and jam enemy radar and missile systems



Drones could fly ahead to probe enemy defences rather than risking costly aircraft and their crews

If system enters service with Royal Australian Air Force, drones would be used to shield manned aircraft such as F-35 Lightning II fighter jets and E-7 Wedgetail early warning and control planes