PILATUS HANDS OVER 1,500TH PC-12 TO THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE OF AUSTRALIA

News / Business aviation, Manufacturer

As part of a big celebration at the headquarters in Stans, Pilatus handed over the 1,500th PC-12 to its loyal customer of many years, the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (RFDS). The PC-12 has become a Pilatus bestseller, and is used all over the world.

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A fitting handover celebration was held to mark this milestone in the history of the Pilatus PC-12. Just under 2,000 Pilatus employees and guests took part, watching with pride as the 1,500th PC-12 with its special livery was handed over to the RFDS by Oscar J. Schwenk, Chairman of Pilatus. The anniversary aircraft had been earmarked for the RFDS as a symbolic thank you for its longstanding loyalty. In the run-up to the handover, Pilatus employees were invited to write thank you messages to the customer, to be displayed on the 1,500th PC-12. The resultant PC-12 was resplendent in a unique livery with a very personal touch, in line with the Pilatus motto "Customer First"!

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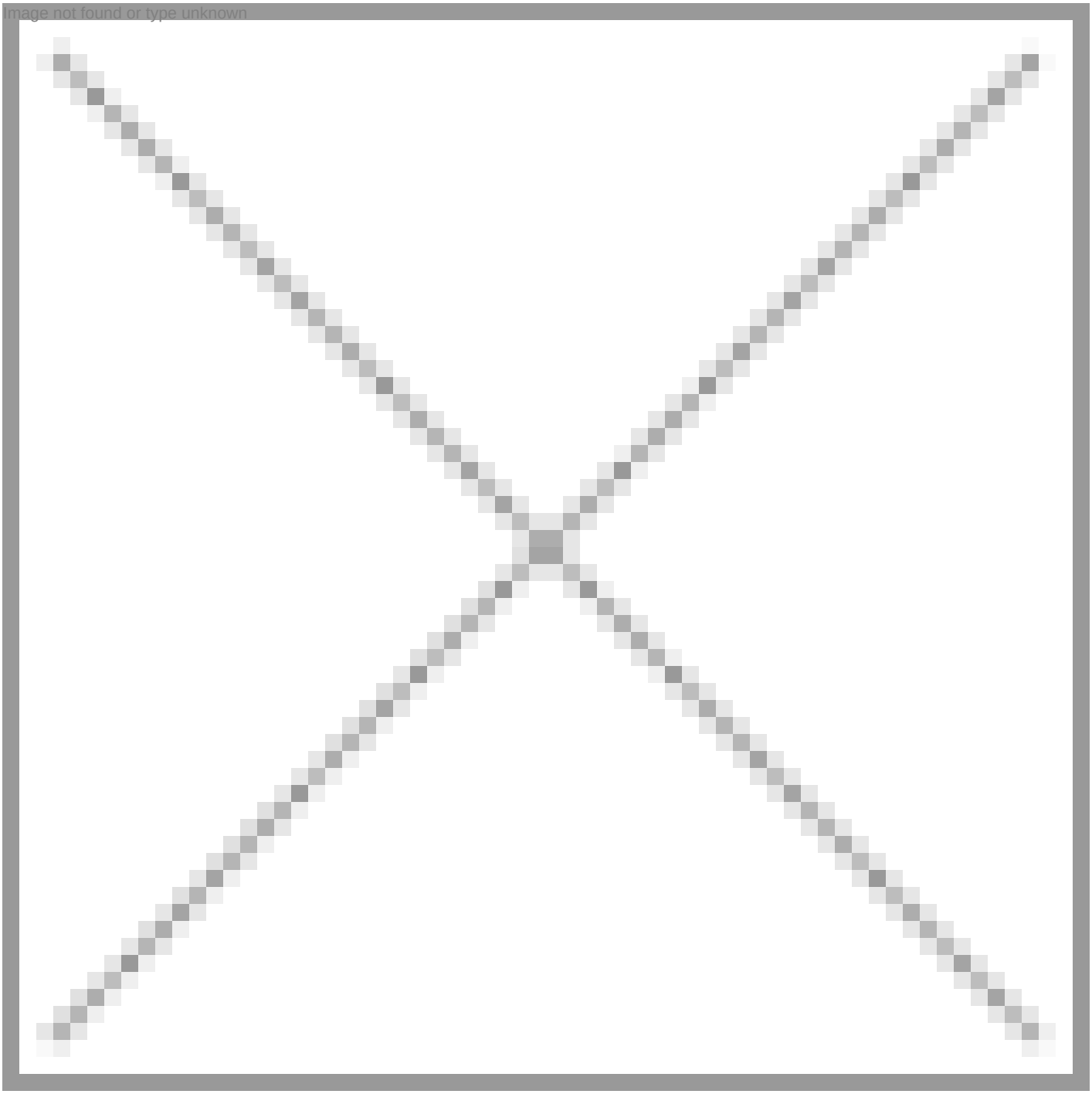

An RFDS delegation accepted the 1,500th PC-12. John Lynch, CEO Royal Flying Doctors Service Central Operations, commented with enthusiasm:

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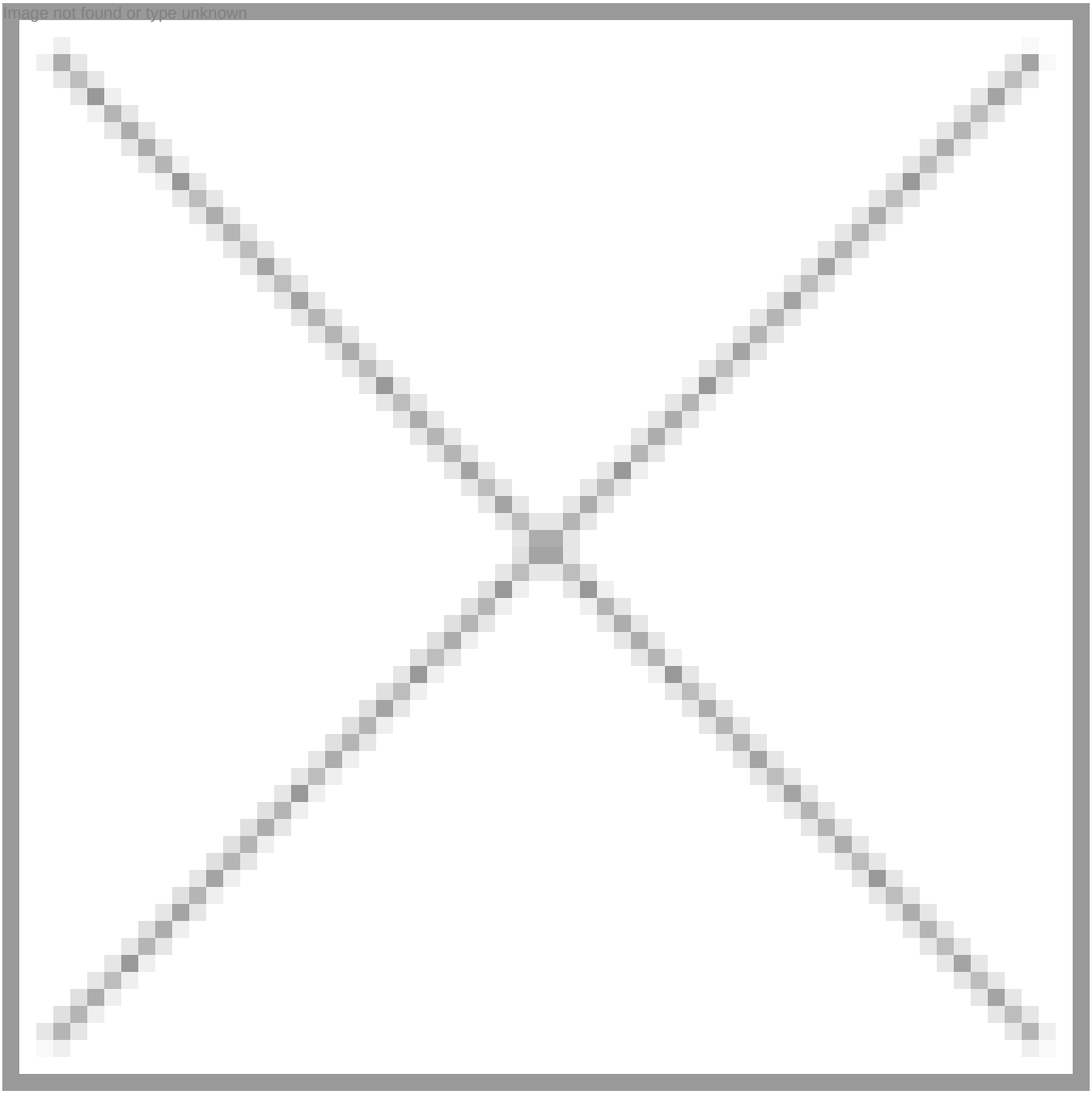

"We are very proud of our partnership with Pilatus and would like to say how honoured we are to accept this anniversary PC-12 today. No other aircraft in the world compares to the PC-12. The PC-12 is perfectly tailored to the rigorous conditions in the Australian outback: we appreciate its special characteristics and recognise the indispensable role it plays in enabling us to meet the challenges of our mission as it is defined today.“

Back in 1994, the RFDS was amongst the first customers to take delivery of a PC-12. This charitable Australian institution currently uses 33 PC-12s to provide medical assistance to people living in the remotest areas, right across the continent. The RFDS transports around 18,000 patients yearly, operating in and out of short and unmade bush strips – ideal terrain for the PC-12.

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Oscar J. Schwenk was equally delighted to be able to hand over the 1,500th PC-12 to the RFDS, and commented:

"We are very happy to be able to hand over the 1,500th PC-12 to an exceptionally loyal customer who believed in the merits of the PC-12 from the outset. The RFDS successfully uses our PC-12 for exceptionally difficult missions, delivering daily proof that it is optimally suited for such work. I am thankful and extremely proud that we may count the RFDS amongst our customers. I am equally pleased that the RFDS is amongst our first customers for the PC-24, which it plans to use for ambulance operations – once Pilatus, always Pilatus!"

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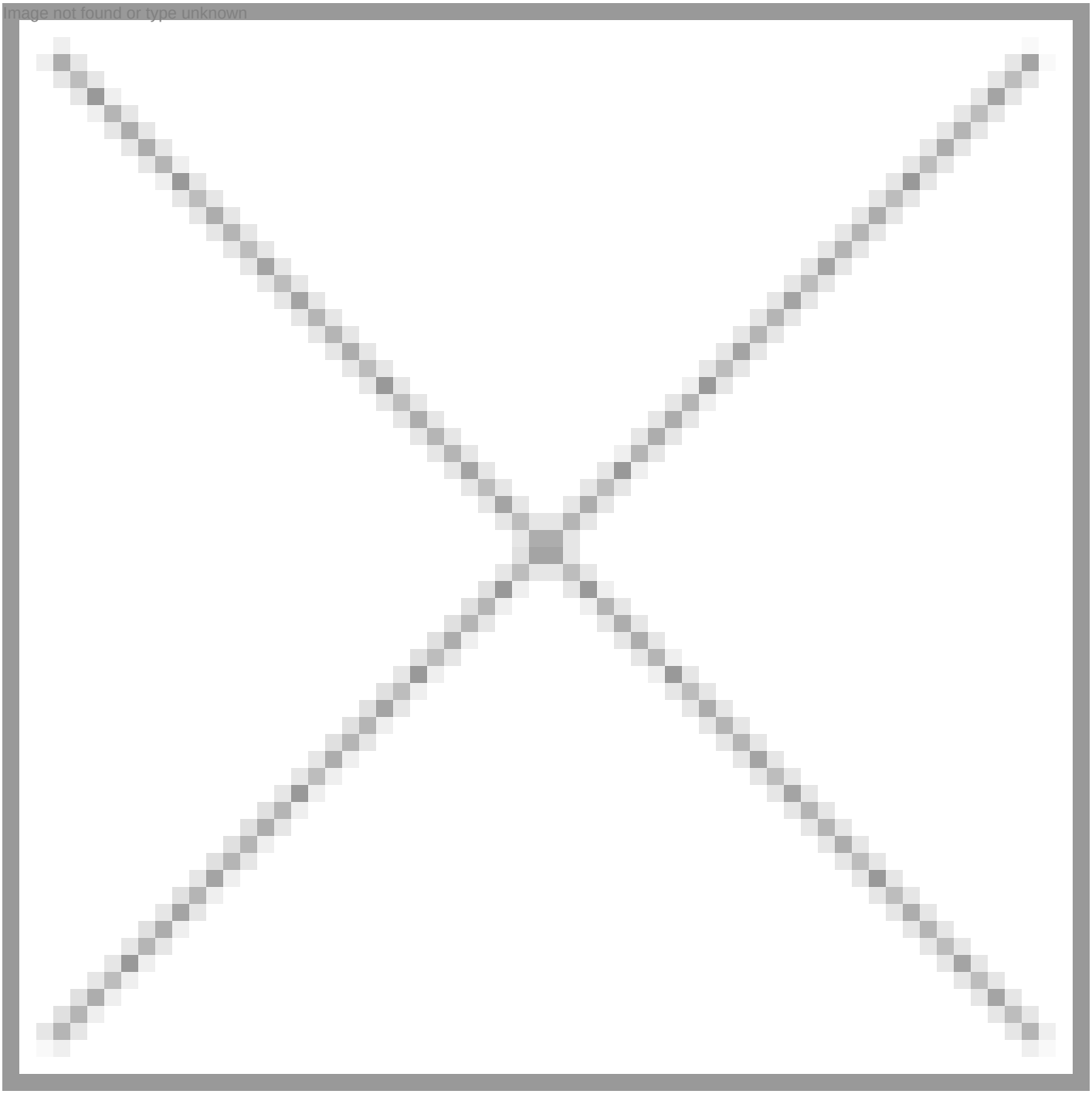

Most sales worldwide

The global PC-12 fleet has already flown over six million hours. The versatility of this single-engine Pilatus turboprop aircraft is highly appreciated by operators worldwide, and the PC-12 is already certified in 55 countries. It is deployed for business travel, cargo flights, ambulance and emergency operations, search and rescue flights and aerial surveillance. Statistics show that 69 PC-12 are in the air at any given time. In 2016 alone, Pilatus produced 91 PC-12s in Stans for delivery to customers all around the world. The PC-12 is the safest, most popular, best-selling single-engine turboprop aircraft in its class. The PC-12 has undergone continuous development since its earliest days and the latest version, the PC-12 NG, is a state-of-the-art machine. The PC-12 was approved for commercial operations in Europe in March 2017, which will ensure an even larger market share for this exceptionally economical aircraft.

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Investment in Switzerland

The handover celebration for the 1,500th PC-12 was combined with the inauguration of a new assembly hangar. The versatile assembly hangar provides a further 10,000 square metres (107,639 square feet) of space and will be used for series production from July onwards. The self-supporting construction was built using local timber from sustainable resources – a clear commitment to the Stans site.

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