

Surveillance Plane Stranded

20 February 2018

A multi-million-dollar Pacific aerial surveillance program to combat illegal fishing and smuggling — and which the Defence Minister boasted was under way in December — has failed to fly one mission, with the aircraft grounded by administrative issues in Micronesia.

The grounding occurred when concerns were raised about whether the correct local permits had been issued following the plane being used for a Defence -- related “photo op” in the Federated States of Micronesia in December.

ADF Firm Lacks Pilots

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An American company awarded a multi-million-dollar Australian Defence Force contract to provide aerial surveillance of the Pacific and which was supposed to start in early December is still trying to hire pilots for the job.

And the contract won by the Maryland-based Technology Service Corporation to conduct the surveillance has no special requirement to employ Australians.