



SOUTHERN CROSS SC-1

Was this a missed opportunity for Australian aviation?

History

The SC-1 is a prototype aircraft designed by Southern Cross Aviation Ltd – a wholly owned division of Toowoomba Foundries. It was designed as a four seat aircraft to rival the more popular aircraft made by American firms Cessna and Piper.

Newton D. Hodgekiss and Brian Wager designed the SC-1. It was test flown by Rod J. Trousdell at Oakey Aerodrome on 6th February 1961. The SC-1 made many other flights, demonstrating the aircraft's excellent short take-off and handling capabilities. After some 23 hours of flight-testing, the prototype SC-1 flew for the last time on 1st June 1961.

The aircraft required costly alterations before entering full-scale production, and with the economic climate as it was at the time, the board members of Toowoomba Foundries voted five to four against continuing with the SC-1 project.

The SC-1 comes home

After its last flight the SC-1 was ferried from Oakey to Toowoomba airport where it sat in a hangar for several years, until the Moorabbin Air Museum in Melbourne acquired it in 1970. Nothing was done to the aircraft and for many years, it was neglected. In 1988 on a visit to Moorabbin, Rod Trousdell discovered the SC-1 in storage and suggested that it return to Oakey. After lengthy negotiations, the SC-1 returned to Oakey in late 2002 and has since been restored by volunteers at the museum.