



South Australian Aviation Museum
66 Lipson Street, Port Adelaide, S.A. 5015
Ph: 08 8240 1230

Hastings Deering Air Stairs

SAAM's Air Stairs were acquired from Uluru (Ayres Rock) and restored in our workshops. They feature a 6-cylinder Ford Falcon motor.





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History of Type

In 1958, Qantas Technical Services Division saw the need for a modern motorised air stair to complement its newly ordered Boeing 707 jet airliner which was due to enter service in 1959. A team of Qantas engineers lead by George Roberts designed the all hydraulic stairs around readily available Ford car components.

Qantas Empire Airways as it was known at that time ordered 14 Air Stairs from Hastings Deering Services Ltd of Parramatta Rd Lidcombe in 1959. Hastings Deering Services Ltd was an off-shoot of the Ford and Caterpillar Tractor Dealership of the same name. The Air Stairs were designed to be disassembled and to easily fit into a DC3 for transport to other locations around Australia. However, in spite of being able to be broken down for easy transport, there is one famous instance a set of air stairs being driven all the way to Alice Springs from Sydney.

All the major Australian airlines soon adopted the design, as did Pan Am, Air New Zealand and Malaysian Airways. Although 14 were ordered by Qantas it is unknown how many were ordered by other Airlines. There is at least one of this type at Wanaka, New Zealand in Air New Zealand livery.