

# Shoalwater Bay Training Area

## ASMTI Expansion

### SUBMITTED BY

Royal Australian Air Force – Joint Airspace Control Cell on behalf of Department of Defence – Australian-Singapore Military Training Initiative (ASMTI)

### CONSULTATION SUMMARY

The Australian Government has purchased land in the vicinity of Shoalwater Bay, Queensland under the ASMTI.

<https://defence.gov.au/initiatives/asmti/>

This brief outlines the proposal to expand military restricted areas adjacent to existing Shoalwater Bay Training Area (SWBTA) restricted areas in support of this initiative, referred to as Shoalwater Bay Expansion.

RAAF - Joint Airspace Control Cell (JACC) is providing assistance with the design, assessment and consultation of the proposal at the request of Department of Defence.

### KEY ISSUES

This proposal notes the following key issues:

- Location and design of new SWBTA restricted areas (RA)
- Impact to ERC-L air-routes (activation height dependant)
- Impact on adjacent land-owner use of airspace above private property.

ASMTI seeks feedback from the aviation community on the proposal.

### FEEDBACK TO

Joint Airspace Control Cell - [adf.airspace@defence.gov.au](mailto:adf.airspace@defence.gov.au)

### CLOSE DATE

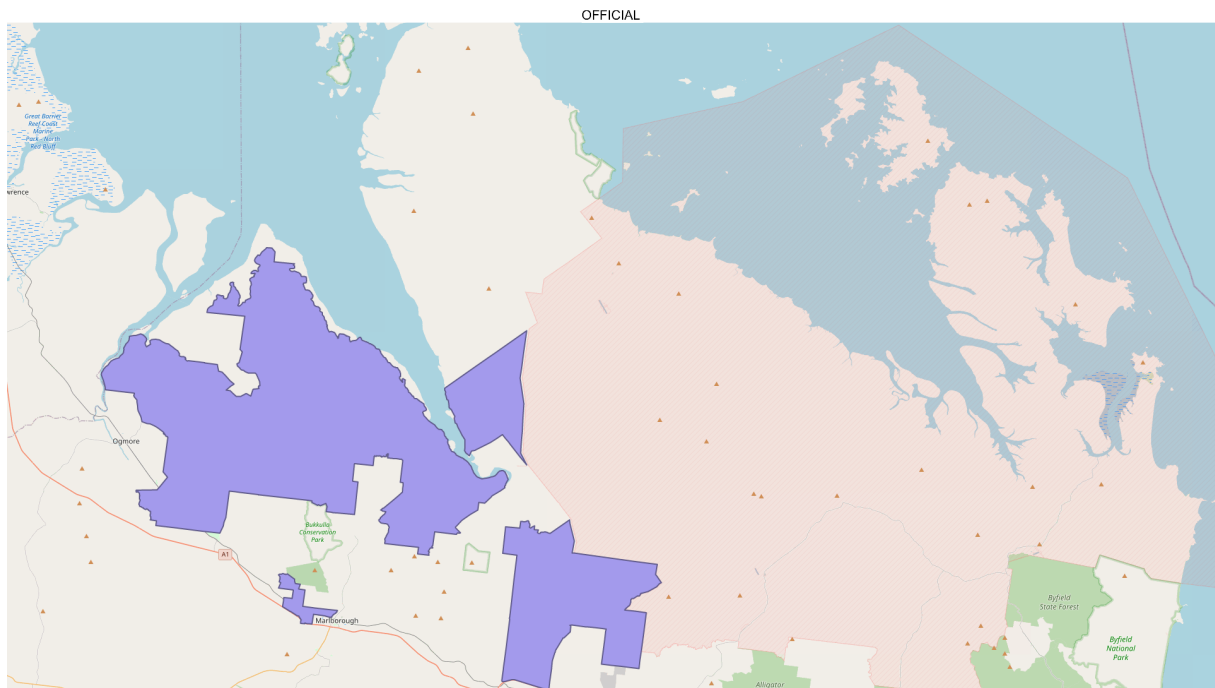
15 January 2023

# AIR FORCE

## BACKGROUND

Defence has acquired additional land to develop and deliver advanced training areas to meet the future needs of the Australian Defence Force and other partner nation forces training within Australia. The existing Shoalwater Bay Training Area (SWBTA) in Central Queensland is being expanded, and a new training area is being established near Greenvale in North Queensland. These training areas are owned and managed by the Australian Government. Additional information regarding the related Greenvale development or associated training area expansions may also be obtained through the [ASMTI website](#).

Defence has acquired additional parcels of land west of the existing SWBTA to expand the SWBTA, located 54NM northwest of Rockhampton. Figure 1 below outlines current SWBTA restricted areas shaded in light red, and the recently acquired areas as shaded in purple.



**Figure 1:** Land boundaries of the acquired SWBTA properties

## OVERVIEW

It is intended that firing and range templates, aviation risk protection contours and military aviation training activity will be wholly contained within the proposed expansion of restricted areas. Both flying and non-flying activities are proposed to be conducted within SWBTA, including, but not limited to:

- Indirect firing; such as artillery and mortars
- Small arms firing, both blank and live ammunition
- Simulated effects, including lasers
- Electronic and interference effects
- Remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS)
- Rotary wing flying
- Fixed wing flying
- Air to ground firing.

This consultation paper proposes three new restricted areas (RA) and one new Danger Area (DA), as detailed below:

- RXX1A (SFC-2000) – Figure 2,
- RXX1B (SFC-2000) – Figure 3,
- RXX2A (2000-6000) – Figure 4, and
- D698A (SFC-BCTA) – Figure 5

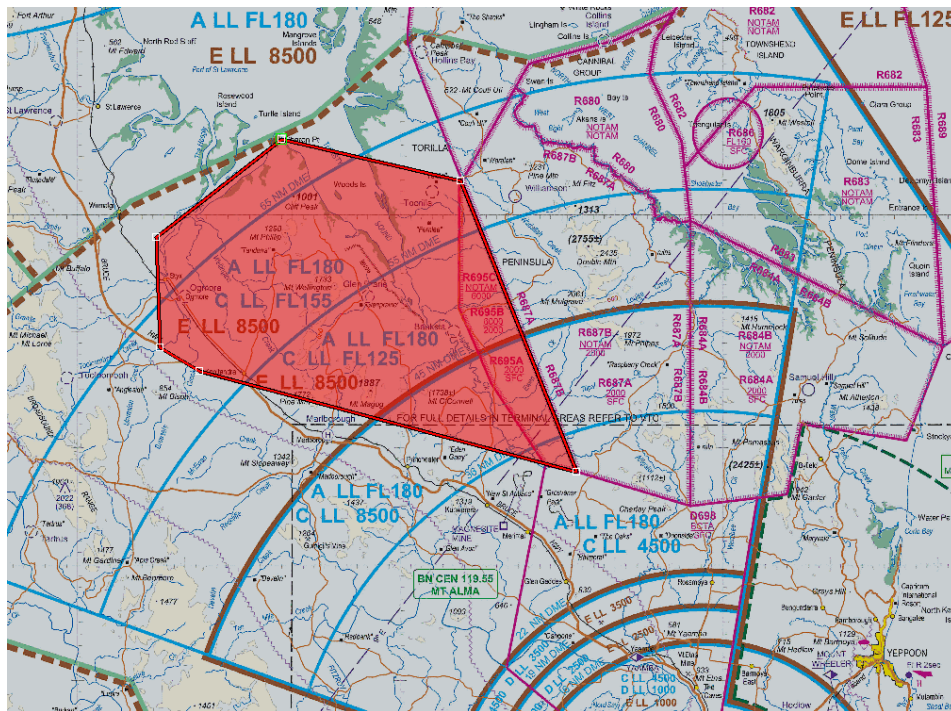


Figure 2: RXX1A (SFC-2000)

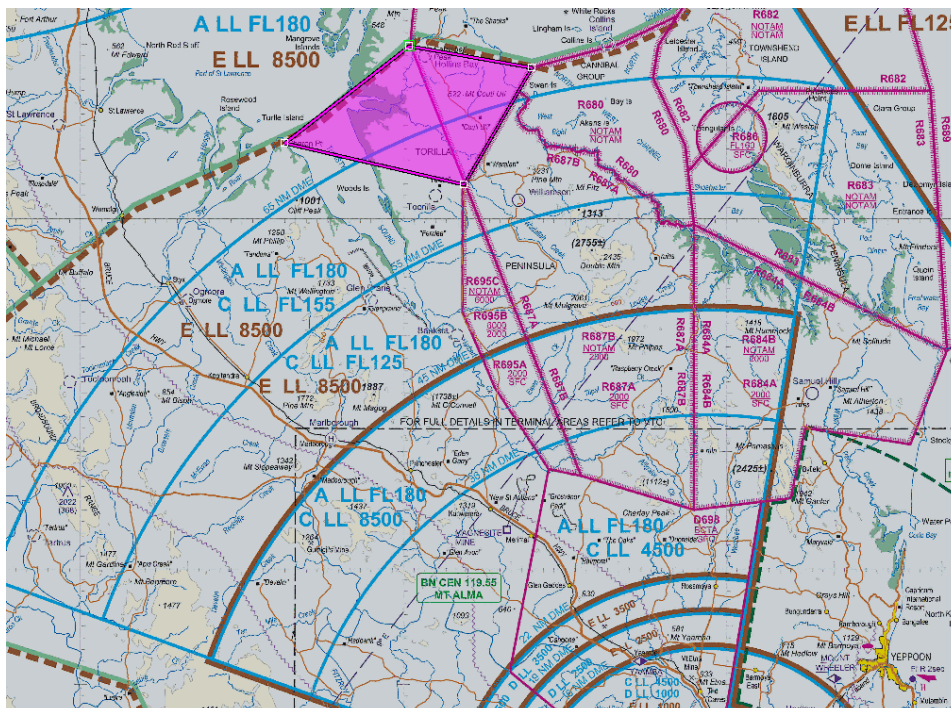


Figure 3: RXX1B (SFC-2000)



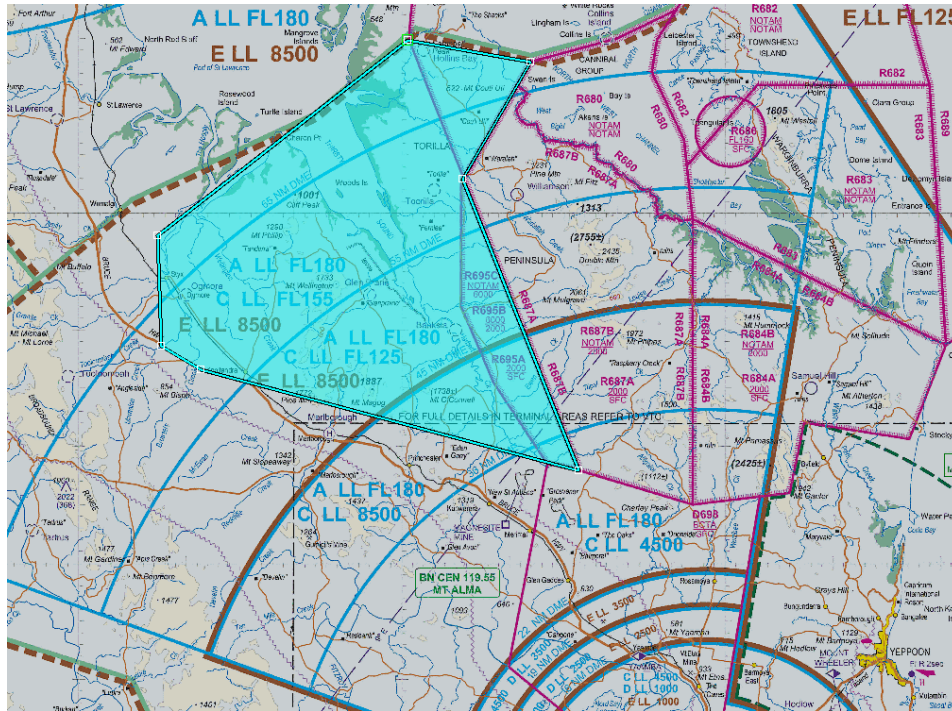


Figure 4: RXX2 (2000-6000)

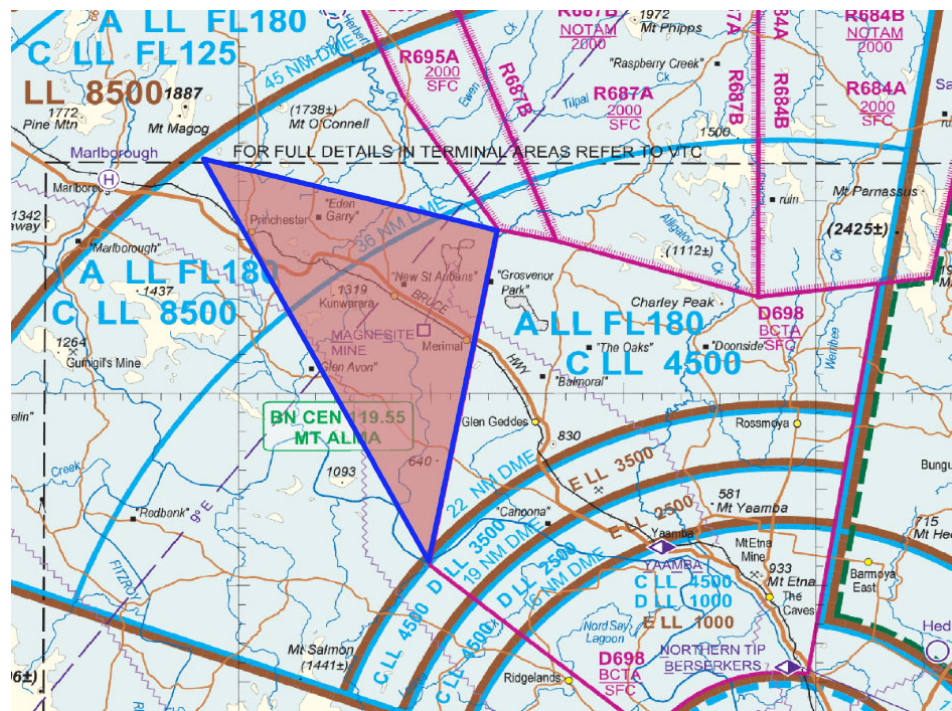


Figure 5: D698A (SFC-BCTA)

In designing the proposed airspace, the following design principles have been considered:

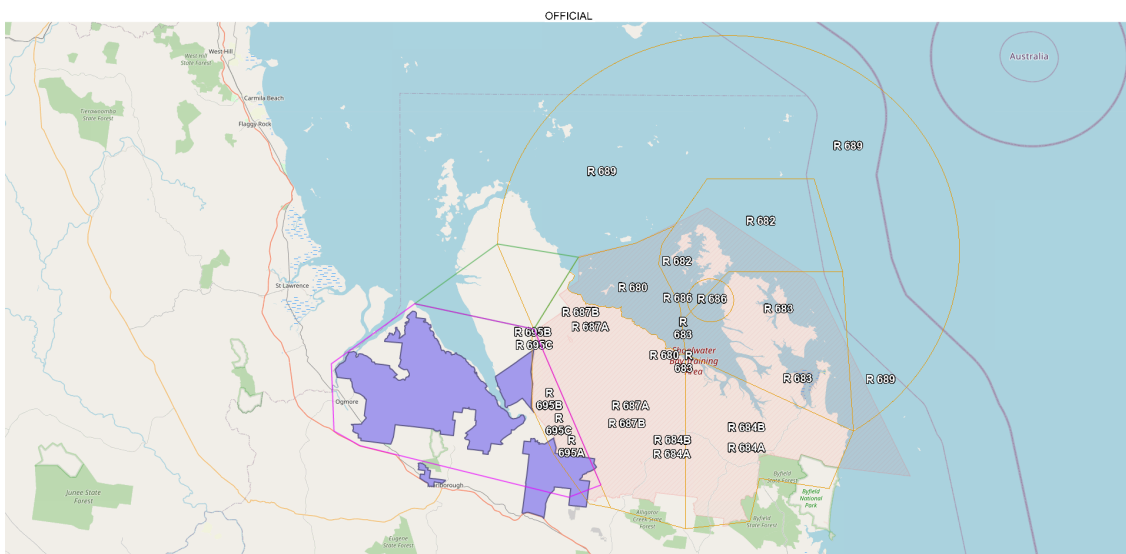
- The lateral boundary of the proposed RA have been simplified to encompass the majority of the acquired land. In doing so, the proposed lateral dimensions provide appropriate airspace to ensure the safe conduct of Defence activities above Defence land and reduce the impact on adjacent land owners. Figure 6 depicts the disposition of Defence owned land, proposed airspaces and extant SWBTA airspace.

- The lateral boundary of D698A extends current D698 (to be re-designated D698B), ensuring increased military flying within uncontrolled (Class G) airspace is communicated through activation. This proposed DA extension and existing DA does not restrict access to other airspace users.
- Where RA is proposed to be established above land not acquired by Defence (i.e. RXX1B) it is done so with the intent of simplifying the overall SWBTA airspace system, so as to avoid military use of uncontrolled airspace (Class G) when operating between existing and proposed restricted areas. This measure is designed to reduced risk to both military aircraft and non-participants (civil operations) through segregation during periods of increased air traffic density. Activation of RXX1B is expected only to occur in support of medium-large scale military exercises. Its design is not for daily use.

It is understood that this airspace volume overlies private property and stations that require civil use of uncontrolled airspace (Class G) to support business activities. Defence is motivated to better understand these requirements in an attempt to secure a mutually agreeable outcome, where practicable. This may simply be through the establishment of robust coordination measures between Range Control and affected landowners to deconflict airspace usage.

When RXX1B is not active, RXX2 lower limit of 2000FT AMSL (when active) is useable by non-participating aircraft. The military useable lower limit in this instance would result in military aircraft overflying private property not below 3000FT AMSL.

- The proposed airspace does not encompass a portion of the southern acquired land and excludes land near Marlborough, primarily to avoid the township of Marlborough.
- Alignment of the southern boundary has been designed to simplify navigation for non-participating (civil) aircraft transiting to and from Rockhampton airport (YBRK). The southern boundary accounts for use of the Bruce Highway as a prominent visual feature to assist VFR navigation by enabling the traffic to remain west of the highway and thereby outside of proposed RA.
- The vertical extent of the proposed RA has been designed to integrate with extant adjoining airspaces (PRD and CTA), comprising of two vertical fixed layers, of SFC to 2000 (RXX1AB) and 2000 to 6000 (RXX2). This modular division ensures Defence retains the ability to optimise and only activate the airspace that is necessary to achieve training outcomes whilst ensuring public safety and compliance with flexible use of airspace principles, as per the Australian Airspace Policy Statement.
- In entirety, the military highest usable level within proposed RA will be 5000FT AMSL.



**PROPOSAL**

The following definition of the acquired property SWBTA airspace is to be promulgated within Designated Airspace Handbook (DAH):

**YBBB/RXX1A****CONDITIONAL STATUS:** RA2**MILITARY FLYING/NON-FLYING****LATERAL LIMITS:** 222331S 1494905E, 222704S 1500546E, 225205E 1501631E, 225130S 1501330E, 224325S 1494127E, 224122S 1493747E, 223156S 1493725E, 222331S 1494905E**VERTICAL LIMITS:** SFC - 2000**HOURS OF ACTIVITY:** NOTAM**CONTROLLING AUTHORITY:** Army RCO Shoalwater Bay

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**YBBB/RXX1B****CONDITIONAL STATUS:** RA2**MILITARY FLYING/NON-FLYING****LATERAL LIMITS:** 221509S 1500040E - 221700S 1501200E - 222704S 1500546E - 222331S 1494905E - 221509S 1500040E**VERTICAL LIMITS:** SFC - 2000**HOURS OF ACTIVITY:** NOTAM**CONTROLLING AUTHORITY:** Army RCO Shoalwater Bay

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**YBBB/RXX2****CONDITIONAL STATUS:** RA2**MILITARY FLYING/NON-FLYING****LATERAL LIMITS:** 221509S 1500040E, 221700S 1501200E, 222704S 1500546E, 225205S 1501631E, 225130S 1501330E 224325S 1494127E, 224122S 1493747E, 223156S 1493725E, 221509S 1500040E**VERTICAL LIMITS:** 2000 - 6000**HOURS OF ACTIVITY:** NOTAM**CONTROLLING AUTHORITY:** Army RCO Shoalwater Bay

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**YBBB/D698A****MILITARY FLYING****LATERAL LIMITS:** 224733E 1495807E, 225130S 1501330E, 230854S 1500954E, 224733E 1495807E**VERTICAL LIMITS:** SFC – BCTA**HOURS OF ACTIVITY:** NOTAM**CONTACT:** DEFENCE JACC

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**Relationship to R695 series**

The new proposed volumes overlay existing R695ABC. This design feature has been included as there is some degree of expectation that R695ABC may not be required once the new volumes are declared. However, this is yet to be confirmed through assessment of use, review of range firing templates and development of local range standing orders.

In the interim, the retention of R695ABC supports ongoing ‘business as usual’ use of SWBTA and provides additional scalable activation, ensuring only airspace that is required is activated. Either outcome is assessed as not being an impact civil aviation or ATS.



The proposed lateral design is in conflict with the following air routes:

- Due to the proposed areas RXX1A, RXX1B and RXX2 existing below Class C and E airspace (with exception of the southeast corner of RXX2), these proposed volumes present limited impact to the listed air routes.

## Stakeholder Engagement

- Dimensions of the proposed airspace volumes,
- Impact on high and low-level air routes,
- Impact on flights with MEDEVAC status,
- Impact on transiting VFR flights, including but not limited to general aviation, agricultural or mustering operations and use of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) for commercial enterprise, and
- Impact on flights arriving/departing from Rockhampton (YBRK), both general aviation and civil aviation industry.

**Future Airspace Development**

Following this Airspace Change Proposal, it can be expected that ASMTI will commence development of a subsequent proposal to secure additional RA above this expansion to further support Defence's intended usage of SWBTA. The design of higher airspace is expected to replicate these proposed lower airspace volumes, however, may vary slightly due to associated conflict with the above controlled airspace and civil air-routes structures.

Due to the strategic nature of higher airspace and the expected effect towards civil aviation industry, this subsequent proposal will require a higher degree of collaboration, detailed design and review in conjunction with Airservices Australia.

**SUMMARY**

Land acquired by Defence under the ASMTI requires accompanying restricted areas and danger areas to segregate civil and military aviation activity to ensure public safety and support priority access to Defence, enabling military training and exercise.

Defence seeks public comment and feedback in order to develop a well-consulted proposal for CASA Office of Airspace Regulation review, consideration for approval.

For queries relating to this proposal or information contained within this brief, please do not hesitate to contact the Joint Airspace Control Cell (JACC), 02 6128 4856 or via email [adf.airspace@defence.gov.au](mailto:adf.airspace@defence.gov.au).