

AvSEF PAPER

Exercise Pitch Black 2024

Northern Territory

SUBMITTED BY

Royal Australian Air Force – Joint Airspace Control Cell

CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Military Exercise Pitch Black 2024 (PBK24) is a major Australian and International military exercise incorporating a wide range of tactical flying activities across northern Australia over the period 15 July to 01 August 2024. Aircraft will be operating from Darwin and Tindal.

To ensure public safety and meet exercises training objectives, a large volume of military restricted and danger areas will be activated. In addition, supporting procedures, such as MIL priority windows at Darwin Aerodrome and advice of additional holding fuel requirements, are necessary to accommodate high-density fast-jet operations that have limited endurance. These procedures are pertinent to ensuring that both military and civilian traffic can be safely managed with the additional challenge of the Darwin runway works scheduled throughout 2024. The timings have been devised in consultation with Darwin ATC and Darwin International Airport (DIA), and have been designed to ensure sufficient gaps for all traffic types to be facilitated within ATC hours.

Additionally, aircraft of the Australian and International military forces will conduct a flypast overhead Mindil Beach as part of a local community event on the evening of Thursday 18 July. To ensure safety of flight, non-participating aircraft will not be able to take-off or land at Darwin for the duration of the flypast, nor flying operations with the Control Zone during this period (90 minutes duration). Priority flights, such as flights with a declared emergency, or in support of the protection of life and property (MEDEVAC, SAR) shall be facilitated when safe to do so.

KEY ISSUES

This proposal notes the following key issues:

- Northern Territory permanent and temporary Restricted and Danger Areas to be activated in the vicinity of Darwin (YPDN) and Tindal (YPTN) between 15 July and 01 August 2024
- Priority departure windows for MIL ACFT (YPDN)
- Increased air-traffic density resulting in delays to civil aircraft at YPDN
- Civil aircraft diversion routes
- Mindil Beach Flypast on Thursday 18 July and impact to YPDN operations

FEEDBACK TO

Joint Airspace Control Cell - adf.airspace@defence.gov.au

CLOSE DATE

15 Feb 2024

OVERVIEW

Elements of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) will be conducting Exercise Pitch Black 2024 over the period 15 Jul – 01 Aug 2024.

The activity will be conducted from Darwin and Tindal, and will incorporate large volumes of restricted and danger areas in the NT.

PROPOSAL

PBK24 Airspace:

All, or some, of the following permanent Darwin / Tindal areas will be activated, with vertical limits published by NOTAM:

Pitch Black 2024 Airspace		
IDENT	VERTICAL LIMITS	HOURS
R225ABCDEF	9500 - FL600	NOTAM
R230AD (partial) See below	5000 – NOTAM	NOTAM
R230EF	5000 – NOTAM	NOTAM
R230BC	NOTAM – NOTAM	NOTAM
R232	SFC – NOTAM	NOTAM
R238	3500 – NOTAM	NOTAM
R241	8500 – NOTAM	NOTAM
R244	4000 – 9500	NOTAM
R245	9500 – NOTAM	NOTAM
R247	4000 – 9500	NOTAM
R248	4000 – 9500	NOTAM
TDL CTR	SFC – 2500	NOTAM
R249A	1500 – 2500	NOTAM
R249B	2500 – NOTAM	NOTAM
R250	SFC – 9500	NOTAM
R251	9500 – NOTAM	NOTAM
R252AB	9500 – NOTAM	NOTAM

R253	8500 – NOTAM	NOTAM
R264 (partial) See below	See below	NOTAM
R268	SFC – NOTAM	NOTAM
R269	SFC – NOTAM	NOTAM
R270	SFC – NOTAM	NOTAM
D209	SFC – 2500	NOTAM
D210	SFC – BCTA	As per DAH
D223	SFC – 8500	NOTAM
D229	SFC – 8500	NOTAM
D236AB	SFC – 3000	NOTAM

Table 1: PBK24 Airspace

Partial Airspace Activation: In addition, the following portions of R264 may be activated.

R230A PARTIAL

Conditional Status: RA2

Military Flying / Non-Flying

Lateral Limits: 114506S 1305433E - 110502S 1305339E

then along the clockwise arc of a circle radius 80.00NM centre

122524S 1305423E (DN/DME) - 112050S 1314257E

115301S 1311847E

then along the counter clockwise arc of a circle radius 40.00NM centre

122524S 1305423E (DN/DME) - 114506S 1305433E

Vertical Limits: 5000 – NOTAM

Hours of Activity: NOTAM

Controlling Authority: FLTCDR 452SQN DARWIN

R230D PARTIAL

Conditional Status: RA2

Military Flying / Non-Flying

Lateral Limits: 115301S 1311847E - 112050S 1314257E

then along the clockwise arc of a circle radius 80.00NM centre

122524S 1305423E (DN/DME) - 120220S 1321238E

121426S 1313330E

then along the counter clockwise arc of a circle radius 40.00NM centre

122524S 1305423E (DN/DME) - 115301S 1311847E

Vertical Limits: 5000 – NOTAM

Hours of Activity: NOTAM

Controlling Authority: FLTCDR 452SQN DARWIN

R264EFG PARTIAL

Conditional Status: RA2

Military Flying

Lateral Limits: 134618S 1282100E – 124436S 1301824E then along the counter clockwise arc of a circle radius 40.00NM centre 122524S 1305423E (DN/DME) – 125549S 1302738E

– 143432S 1290013E then along the clockwise arc of a circle radius 170.00NM centre 122524S 1305423E (DN/DME) – 134618S 1282100E

Vertical Limits: FL200 – NOTAM

Hours of Activity: NOTAM

Controlling Authority: FLTCDR 452SQN DARWIN

R264HJK PARTIAL

Conditional Status: RA2

Military Flying

Lateral Limits: 125549S 1302738E then along the counter clockwise arc of a circle radius 40.00NM centre 122524S 1305423E (DN/DME) – 130327S 1304117E – 150544S 1295421E then along the clockwise arc of a circle radius 170.00NM centre 122524S 1305423E (DN/DME) – 143432S 1290013E – 125549S 1302738E

Vertical Limits: 8500 – NOTAM

Hours of Activity: NOTAM

Controlling Authority: FLTCDR 452SQN DARWIN

Notes: R226AB and R228AB may be activated for non-PBK24 activities however shall not be activated during PBK24 airspace activation windows.

Flight diversion routes: Flight diversion routes are yet to be developed. Diversion routing will be published via AIP SUP.

Airspace Activation windows: The following indicative timings for activation of PBK24 airspace are as per below, Table 1. Actual timings will be confirmed via AIP SUP and NOTAM.

PBK24 Airspace Activation Windows		
Week One 15 – 19 Jul		
Mon – Wed	0830 – 1800 (local time – I/K)	2300 – 0830Z UTC
Thu	0830 – 1900 (local time – I/K)	2300 – 0930Z UTC
Week Two 22 – 26 Jul		
Mon – Thu	0900 – 1230 (local time – I/K)	2330 – 0300Z UTC
	1330 – 1700 (local time – I/K)	0400 – 0730Z UTC
	1800 – 2130 (local time – I/K)	0830 – 1200Z UTC
Week Three 29 Jul – 01 Aug		
Mon – Thu	0900 – 1230 (local time – I/K)	2330 – 0300Z UTC
	1330 – 1700 (local time – I/K)	0400 – 0730Z UTC
	1800 – 2130 (local time – I/K)	0830 – 1200Z UTC

Table 2: PBK24 airspace activation windows

Access to PBK24 airspace: Access to PBK24 restricted areas by non-exercise aircraft is not available, with the exception of:

- Aircraft operating in the preservation of life or property (MEDEVAC, FFR, POL, SAR), and
- Aircraft with a declared emergency.

Danger Area Flight Planning:

Coolibah Corridor North and South (D236AB) and Victoria Highway Corridor (D209):

- The Victoria Highway VFR Transit Corridors, D236AB and D209, will be available during military exercise activation periods. Victoria Highway Corridor procedures are specified in ERSA under the Tindal Flight Procedures entry.

D210/D229 civil transit routes.

- When operating in D210 and/or D229 and proceeding no further north than the southern boundary of R248 in exercise airspace, non-exercise aircraft are requested to track via the following routes to assist in de-confliction with military fast jets:
 - a. YAUV (154200S 1300024E) – YTBR
 - b. YTBR – YVRD
 - c. YHBR (162930S 1303742E) – YVRD
 - d. YVRD – YKLE
 - e. YKLE – Yurengen Waterhole (161224S 1322342E).

Darwin Aerodrome procedures: Due to increased congestion, Darwin runway works, and the nature of high-density military fast-jet operations, all aircraft should anticipate some delays during exercise traffic periods.

- **Holding Fuel**

- **Aircraft > 7000kg MTOW:** It is anticipated that aircraft above 7000kg MTOW planned to arrive during PBK24 airspace activation periods will be required to carry 30 minutes holding fuel in addition to normal requirements.
- **Aircraft ≤ 7000kg MTOW:** Due to restrictions imposed by aerodrome works at Darwin, LAHSO operations to Runway 18/36 will not be available. Due to this restriction, aircraft with an MTOW 7000kg or less that are planned to arrive during PBK24 airspace activation periods can anticipate a requirement to carry 15 minutes of holding fuel in addition to normal requirements for traffic management.
- Confirmed holding fuel requirements shall be published via AIP SUP.

- **Cable engagements**

- The possibility of arrestor cable engagements at Darwin on runway 11/29 is increased. Aircraft captains should be aware that runway 11/29 may be unavailable for periods up to 30 minutes following an engagement. Aircraft captains should consider the possibility of the requirement for diversion to alternate airfields following a cable engagement.

- **Military Priority Windows**

- It is necessary that military priority be afforded for small windows to enable

expeditious tactical departure from Darwin INTL airport, and to minimise the impact to civil operations. The windows proposed below include mitigations for runway works and backtracking requirements. Included in the priority windows table is the Mindil Beach Flypast period. Where possible, civil operations should plan to avoid these periods. Departures will be held on the ground and arrivals held outside the Darwin Control Zone or 40NM Darwin as applicable, until the display window and/or priority window has ceased.

- Outside of published military priority windows, equal priority will be afforded to all aircraft IAW extant AIP procedures.

Week One 18 Jul (Mindil Beach Flypast Only)		
Thu*	1700 – 1830 (local time – I/K)	0730 – 0900Z UTC
Week Two 22 – 26 Jul Military Aircraft Priority Windows		
Mon - Thu	0920 – 0950 (local time – I/K)	2350 – 0020Z UTC
	1350 – 1420 (local time – I/K)	0420 – 0450Z UTC
	1820 – 1850 (local time – I/K)	0850 – 0920Z UTC
Week Three 29 Jul – 01 Aug Military Aircraft Priority Windows		
Mon – Thu	0920 – 0950 (local time – I/K)	2350 – 0020Z UTC
	1350 – 1420 (local time – I/K)	0420 – 0450Z UTC
	1820 – 1850 (local time – I/K)	0850 – 0920Z UTC

Table 3: PBK24 Military Priority Windows at Darwin Airport

Note*: The exact window timings for the Mindil Beach Flypast will be published in AIP SUP, however will not exceed 90 minutes' total duration. The earliest the flypast will commence is 1645 local (0645UTC) and the latest it will conclude is 1845 local (0915UTC).

Mindil Beach Flypast

- The Mindil Beach Flypast is a civil community engagement event, which has also occurred in previous Pitch Blacks. The flypast involves aircraft from Australian and International military forces. The flypast route occurs over Mindil Beach, located 2NM upwind of Darwin's main duty runway, which for safety reasons requires that no non-participating aircraft take-off, land, or conduct local flying operations within the Darwin Control Zone for the duration of the flypast activity (90 minutes total). To avoid delays, operators are encouraged to review their schedules to avoid this priority window period. Aircraft unable to avoid this window will be held by either Darwin ATC or Brisbane Centre until such time the flypast has concluded and it is safe to proceed.
- Expected timings of the flypast are at Table 3. Confirmation of timings and procedures shall be published in AIP SUP and NOTAM.

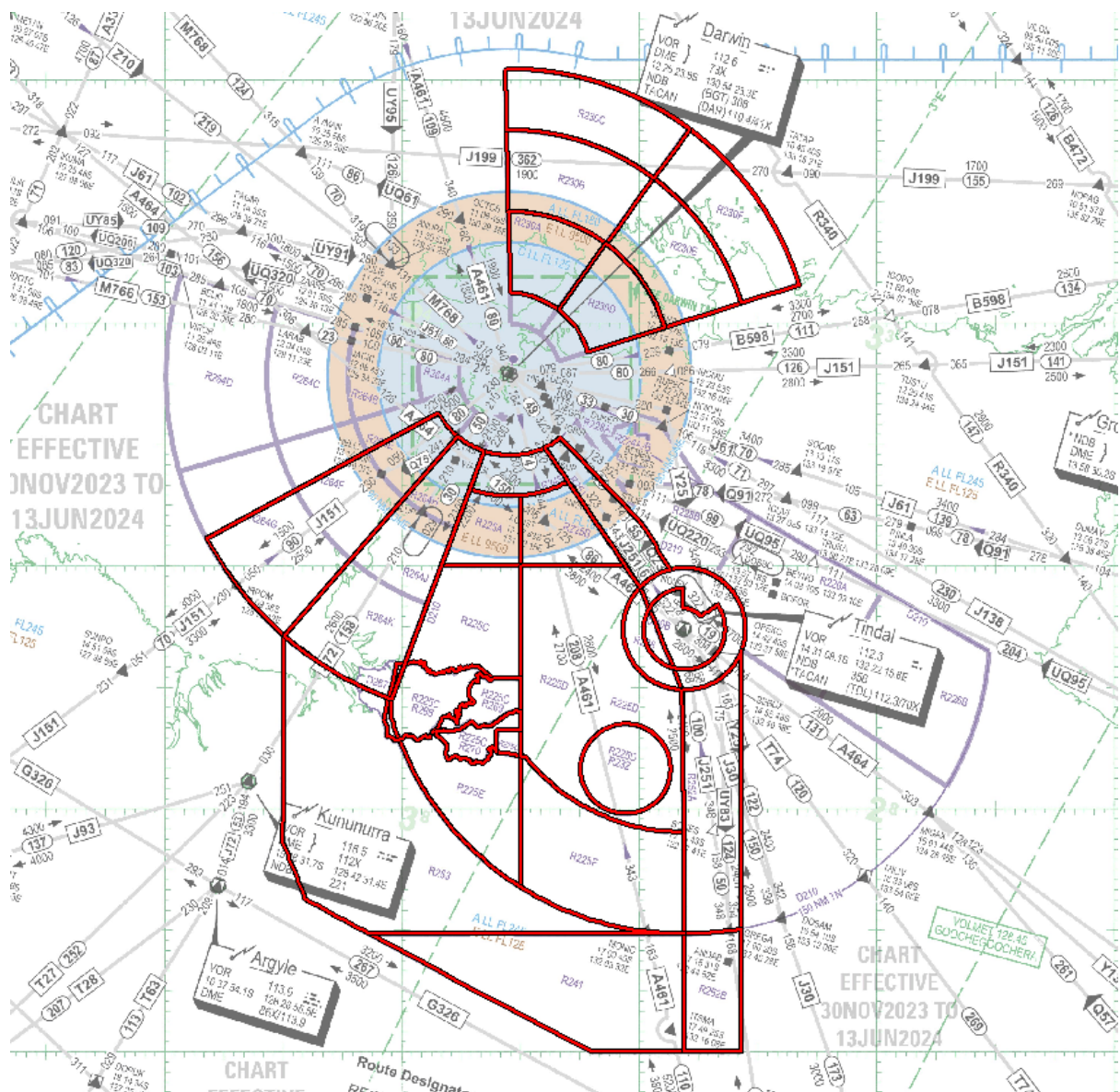


Figure 1. PBK24 Special Use Airspace

Stakeholders are invited to provide feedback to JACC: adf.airspace@defence.gov.au by Friday 05 May 2024