AVIATION STATE ENGAGEMENT FORUM	
NATIONAL	**Submission date: 23/03/2021**

TITLE	**Revised proposal to lower the base of Class E airspace between Cairns and Melbourne**
SUBMITTED BY	Airservices: ContactAMP@airservicesaustralia.com
CONSULTATION SUMMARY	Airservices has revised its proposal to lower the base of Class E airspace, based on industry feedback received. The refined design is now proposed to lower the base of Class E airspace along the east coast to be 4,500ft, 6,500ft or 8,500ft AMSL depending on terrain.
KEY ISSUES	• Based on industry feedback on our initial proposal, Airservices has refined the design and proposed the base level of Class E airspace along the east coast to be 4,500ft, 6,500ft or 8,500ft AMSL.
FEEDBACK TO	Feedback can be provided via Engage Airservices: https://engage.airservicesaustralia.com/lower-base-class-e-east-coast
CLOSE DATE	30 April 2021
ATTACHMENTS	See Engage Airservices for relevant attachments

INTRODUCTION

Airservices would like to thank all airspace users and aviation industry stakeholders that provided feedback on our proposal to lower the base of Class E airspace along the east coast of Australia.

During the initial consultation period of 20 January to 15 February 2021, we received over 1,000 responses including significant feedback from general aviation operators around safety, risk, operational needs, aircraft fitment, cost/benefit and operator workload considerations.

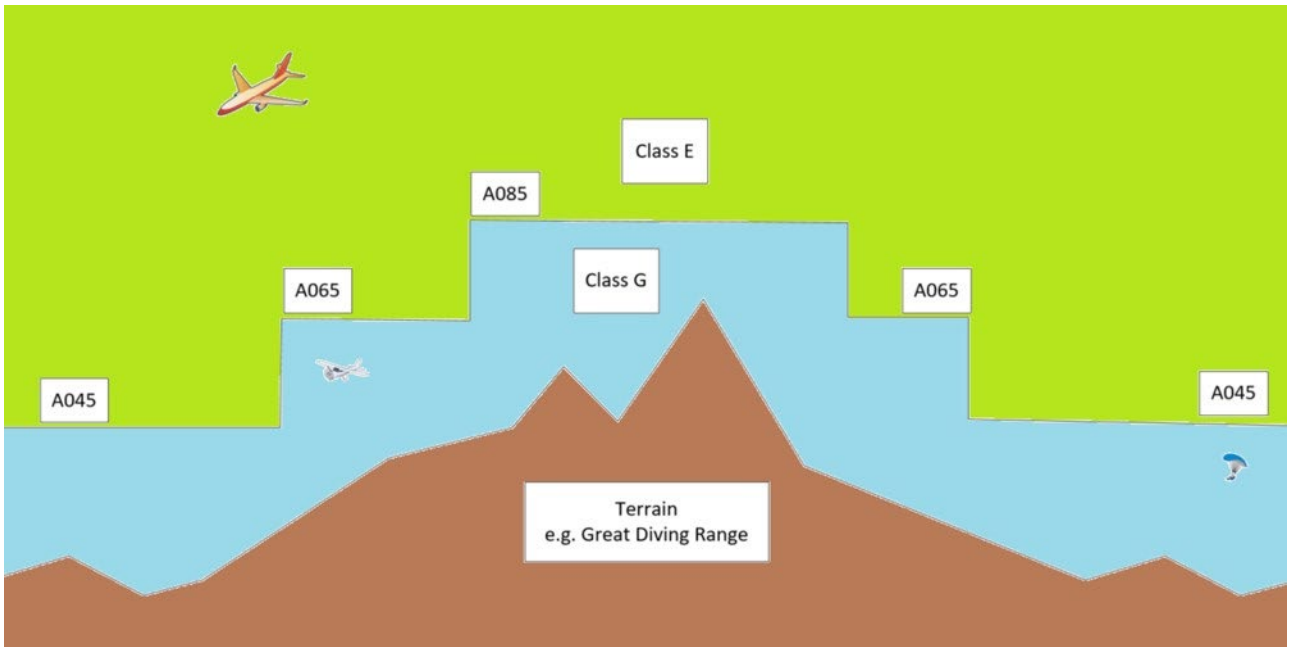
REFINED DESIGN TO ADDRESS INDUSTRY FEEDBACK

Based on industry feedback received, we have refined the design and propose the base level of Class E airspace along the east coast to be 4,500ft, 6,500ft or 8,500ft Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL) depending on terrain.

The refined design seeks to:

- improve safety of Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) operations by providing a more effective risk control against conflict/collision risk than pilot-separation
- minimise adverse impact on the needs of airspace users, particularly general aviation operators, that will continue to require access to Class G airspace, including those without necessary transponder or radio equipment
- provide more levels to cater for safety of operations outside proposed Class E airspace to avoid terrain (including a minimum of 1,360ft of Class G airspace between terrain and the base of Class E airspace in mountainous areas) and cope with convective weather
- remove potential for confusion regarding the operation of aircraft in Class E or Class G airspace, and which frequency the pilot should be on, by referencing airspace levels to AMSL
- reduce the impact of frequency transfer during critical high-workload phases of flight between area frequency and Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) while transiting across Class E and Class G airspace.

A visualisation of the refined design is illustrated below (note this is not representative of specific areas or locations).



SUPPORTING CHARTS

A number of supporting airspace charts, volumes, surveillance and communications charts are available on Engage Airservices.

DRIVER FOR CHANGE

In recent times there has been a relatively significant change in airspace usage and risk profile. While there has been an overall reduction in air traffic due to the COVID-19 crisis, we have seen in a surge in general aviation activities. We also expect the traffic mix and interactions between diverse types of airspace users to continue to change dynamically in response to the Government support for tourism recovery and regional aviation development, as we start to emerge from the pandemic.

This increased airspace complexity requires us to rethink traditional service provision and ensure that we are proactively adjusting to new and emerging risks. We also have had the opportunity to learn from recent safety occurrences, particularly in areas where there is a reliance on pilots self-separation.

The primary driver of the proposal is to deliver a net safety benefit to industry with minimal adverse impact on access, cost and other needs of individual airspace users. We aim to achieve this outcome by:

- proactively reducing the conflict/collision risk between IFR and IFR aircraft in proposed airspace volumes that will be changed from Class G to Class E
- retaining a portion of Class G airspace to meet the needs of non-transponder equipped aircraft and as part of supporting the general aviation sector.

SAFETY BENEFIT

Today, a large portion of Australia's regional enroute airspace is Class G, requiring pilots to actively assess the traffic situation, comply with the rules of air to self-separate and rely predominantly on see-and-avoid principles to avoid conflicts/collisions. Pilots on IFR flights are provided with traffic information about other IFR flights. These are long standing procedures which have been used for several decades.

As our surveillance network has expanded, we are now in a position to deliver a more effective risk control against collision/conflict risk by replacing a portion of Class G airspace with controlled airspace (Class E) that continues to allow appropriately equipped Visual Flight Rule (VFR) operators access to airspace without a clearance.

This change will replace up to 4,000ft of Class G airspace with Class E airspace where terrain allows. This airspace between 4,500ft and 8,500ft overlies numerous non-towered aerodromes on the eastern seaboard. Many of these aerodromes have IFR operations, requiring pilots to process large amounts of information while climbing or descending near an aerodrome.

Provision of an air traffic control service delivers positive control between IFR aircraft through the issuing of clearances and tactical intervention to maintain separation. This will deliver a net safety benefit, particularly in IFR conditions (Instrument Meteorological Conditions) to reduce the likelihood of potential aircraft conflicts (or conflicts with terrain) escalating to a collision.

ENGAGEMENT

Airservices is actively seeking industry feedback on the impact of the refined design via the following channels:

- Engage Airservices
- Email communications to stakeholders across all segments of industry
- Industry workshops
- Targeted meetings
- AvSEF Discussion Paper

INDUSTRY WORKSHOPS

A number of workshops for industry will be held in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Canberra. You can participate at these workshops either in-person or via Webex. To register for your preferred workshop, complete the registration form under 'Feedback and Workshops' at the bottom of this page.

Date	Time	Location	Venue
26 March 2021	10:00am - 11:30am (local)	Melbourne	Airservices Melbourne Air Traffic Services Centre Tower Road, Melbourne Airport
30 March 2021	9:30am - 11:00am (local)	Sydney	Bankstown Airport Building 3 Arvo Street, Bankstown
31 March 2021	2:00pm - 3:30pm (local)	Canberra	Airservices Office 25 Constitution Avenue, Canberra
1 April 2021	10:00am - 11:30am (local)	Brisbane	Airservices Brisbane Da Vinci Building Lomandra Drive (Da Vinci Business Park), Brisbane Airport

Pre-registration is essential for these workshops to ensure relevant security access is provided

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Airservices invites industry to provide comments on our revised proposal using the feedback form, found at the bottom of this page. If you have questions on the revised proposal, please utilise the Q&A box at the bottom of this page.

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) is conducting a separate anonymous survey to understand what communication and surveillance equipment pilots use when flying under VFR conditions. The survey can be accessed on CASA's Consultation Hub(External link).

We support the CASA survey and appreciate industry response that will provide invaluable information to gain a whole-of-Government understanding of the fitment status and plans of VFR operators to inform airspace policy.

NEXT STEPS

Consultation on the revised proposal is now open until 5:00pm (AEST) 30 April 2021. Airservices will be reviewing and monitoring feedback received during this time and will regularly update industry on the progress of the proposal.

At the completion of consultation, Airservices will produce a detailed report on the consultation process, how industry feedback has been sought and considered, and finalise a decision regarding the final design and Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) submission to CASA. This will be circulated among industry for further comment prior to submission.

We are also continuing our detailed analyses as part of the ACP preparation that will cover safety, efficiency, equitable access, economic and cost impact, regulatory impact statement, national security, environment and implementation aspects.