

Airfields Airspace and Avionic Officer's Report to the VSA AGM

RAPAC now Aviation State Engagement Forum

Late last year CASA advised that the RAPAC forum was to be renamed the "Aviation State Engagement Forum" to better reflect its charter. They also proposed to cease conducting face-to-face meetings due to the high cost and poor participation by industry in many of the venues (apparently Victoria and Queensland are the best represented by industry), and the Victorian group agreed to trial the concept of virtual meetings. The last face-to-face meeting was on 20 January 2020 in CASA's Melbourne Office. Subsequently, there have been no virtual meetings this year, as flying activity has been limited by COVID-19. All proposals for consideration are currently being dealt with via email.

January 2020 - Avalon 2019 preliminary airspace review

On 25/01/2020 I advised the CFIs of the Bacchus Marsh Clubs that the Office of Airspace Regulation (OAR) was now seeking industry feedback on the draft preliminary airspace review of Avalon. I advised them to review the information and respond as they sought fit. Following discussion with the CFIs I sent an email response to the OAR advising the Gliding Clubs at Bacchus Marsh did not have any objections to the proposal but were concerned that implementation would see additional airspace boundaries allocated and associated airspace reclassification. I sent a formal submission requesting the OAR consider this information in its post-review assessment of airspace classification in the area adjacent to the current control zone to ensure equitable use of the airspace immediately west of the Avalon CTA. At this stage there has been no direct impact on gliding operations.

February 2020 - Proposed change of CTAF – Leongatha (YLEG)

Multiple aerodromes are using 126.7 as their CTAF in South Eastern Victoria, which is causing congestion and affecting the ability to transmit at Leongatha. There has also been an increase in Melbourne based flying schools operating at Leongatha and the general area. Traffic was also significantly increased during the fire season amplifying the operational issues. This proposal is for a discrete frequency at YLEG. The South Gippsland Gliding Club CFI informed me the Club is in favour of this proposal.

June 2020 - Proposal for right-hand circuits from RWY05 at Bendigo (YBDG)

In line with the published limitation for Runway 17/35, the City of Greater Bendigo is proposing that Runway 05 circuits be limited to right-hand only. This approach will minimise the risk of aircraft conflict in the circuit pattern on nil and/or variable-wind days and limit aircraft traffic over densely populated areas of the City of Bendigo resulting in improved aircraft safety and noise management outcomes identified the need to limit the circuit pattern on Runway 05/23 to right-hand, only. This will not impact of the Bendigo Gliding Club operations at Raywood.

June 2020 - Low Cost ADS-B

Last June CASA issued Advisory Circular (AC)91-23 'ADS-B for enhancing situational awareness, which provides general advice to the operators and pilots about using ADS-B equipment and guidance to owners in choosing the best equipment for their types of operations. It is my understanding that ADS-B has limitations for collision avoidance and is not as good as Flarm in this respect. Until the Flarm manufacturers come on board with ADS-B in/out integration, pilots wishing to get the benefits of ADS-B will need to use both technologies.

July 2020 - Proposed new Puckapunyal airspace

Defence plans on conducting Shadow RPAS / UAS flying training at the Puckapunyal Army base. This new airspace is an extended version of existing R352 and increase in altitude to 4 000' useable by Shadow, therefore airspace activated to 5 000' AMSL. It is expected that operations to the south and west of Mangalore may be affected by the proposed changes. While this won't impact glider pilots, a number of flight training organisations and Kestral Aviation have objected to this proposal, as the airspace around Mangalore/ Puckapunyal is getting too complex.

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VSA, AAA Officer

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