

Airspace Update

Flexible Use of Airspace

Richmond and Williamtown Airspace Reform

Flexible Usage of Airspace (FUA) has delivered significant reform with Defence working closely with the Office of Airspace Regulation (OAR), located within the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), to deliver more efficient usage of airspace. Availability of access to military Restricted Areas (RA) is now more transparent with the net result of more equitable sharing of airspace volumes, without increasing the impact of aircraft noise on local communities underneath the flight paths.

June 11 FUA update to RA classification

A post implementation review identified potential improvements to the definitions of Conditional Status (CS) to show accessibility. Remember these conditions are for planning and there is nothing stopping you asking for a clearance in RA1 and RA2.

- **Conditional Status RA 1** – Pilots may flight plan through the RA and under normal circumstances expect a clearance from ATC.
- **Conditional Status RA 2** – Pilots must not flight plan through the RA unless on a route specified in ERSA GEN FPR or under agreement with the Department of Defence, however a clearance from ATC is not assured. Other tracking may be offered through the Restricted Area on a tactical basis.
- **Conditional Status RA 3** – Clearance must not flight plan through the Restricted Area and clearances will not be available.

Note: In a declared emergency, every effort will be made to obtain approval to transit a Restricted Area, irrespective of its conditional status.

Conditional status is for planning purposes only. Conditional Status can change from day-to-day, and changed Status will be notified on the Activation NOTAM.

AIR FORCE



Airspace Reform

Additional airspace access opportunities have been identified with the development of VFR lanes at both Richmond and Williamstown effective November 2011. Also, the Richmond southern and eastern boundaries have been altered and are now based on Sydney radials 284 and 327 respectively. This will reduce the amount of violation of controlled airspace incidents on the eastern boundary and should make the existing VFR lanes from Bankstown easier to follow as the powerlines are outside the proposed Richmond changes areas, as shown in Figure 1 below.

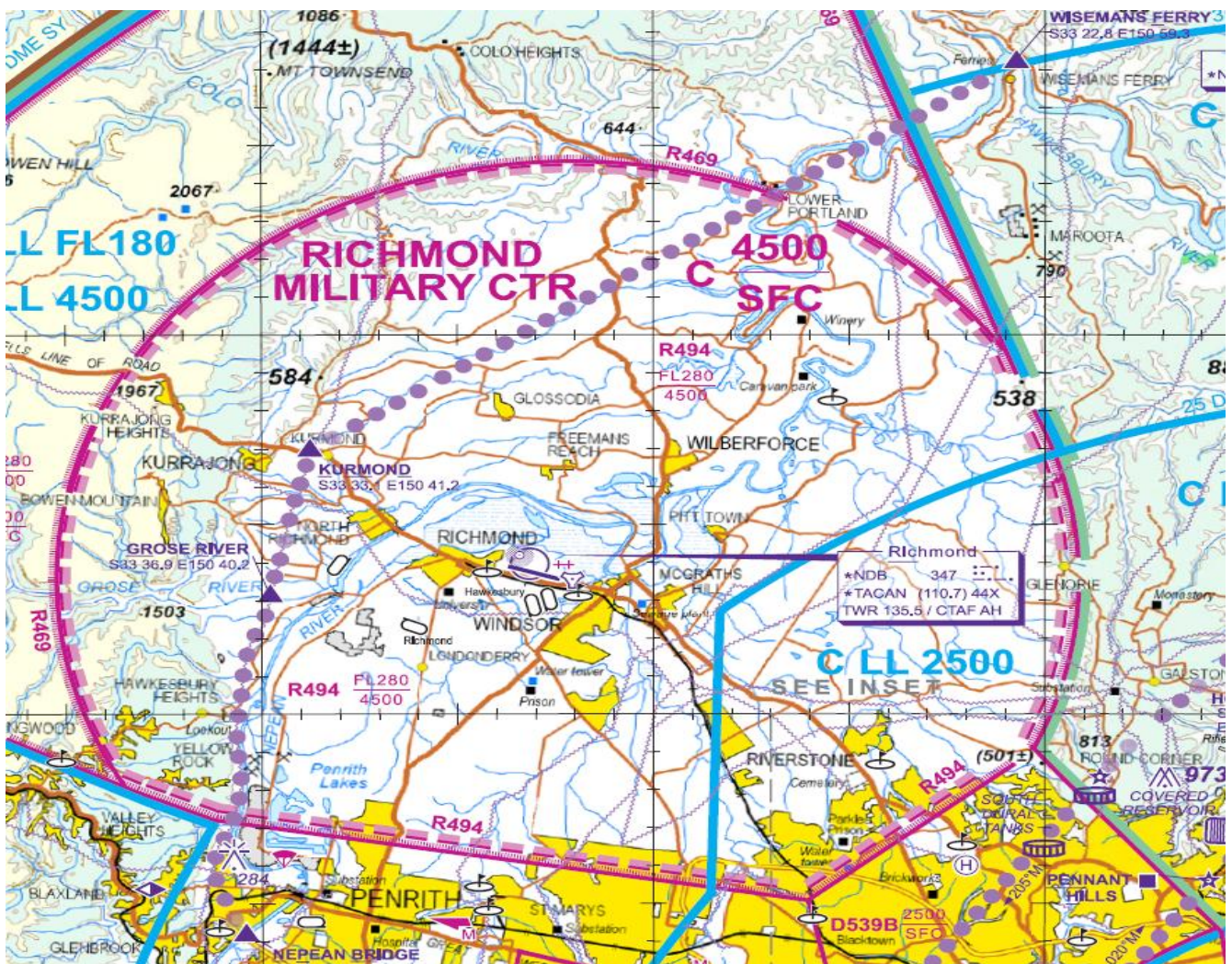


Figure 1: Richmond reform and VFR route.

In addition to the lateral dimension changes, two new RAs will replace extant airspace. The CTR changes to an 11 mile radius RA, and the outer portion is from 11 miles Richmond to 45 DME Sydney, both SFC – 4500 AMSL. R493 above will change to the lateral dimensions of the 2 new RAs. Normal operations at Richmond will activate both RAs concurrently, but when the opportunity arises with low traffic volume, the outer portion may be released which will give even greater access to the Richmond area.

VFR routes are shown in blue and transited at 1500 AMSL. Pilots are required to contact Richmond TWR on 135.5 prior to the compulsory reporting points (CRP) for onwards clearance. Northbound aircraft will report at the CRP 1, Nepean Bridge for onwards clearance through CRP 2 Grose River thence CRP 3 Kurmond and finally CRP 4 Wiseman Ferry. Southbound traffic will fly the reverse. Richmond ATC will issue clearances accordingly and separate you from Military traffic.

Flexibility is the key

Remember that the CS of Richmond is RA 1 and you can request a clearance on any track. However, the VFR route is designed to provide some segregation from circuit traffic at Richmond so this may be the only track available. The CRPs give Richmond ATC defined points to assure separation and therefore safety of all traffic under its control.

Williamstown Reform

With parallels to the Richmond reform, Williamstown (WLM) ATC is opening up their control zone to allow even greater access for general aviation. In addition to the extant VFR routes a NOTAM currently describes the inland GA route as shown in blue below in Figure 2. The NOTAM description is below Figure 2.



Figure 2: Williamstown reform and VFR route

Where possible WLM ATC will facilitate General Aviation transits of WLM CTR and CS 1 Restricted Areas. Where direct tracking is not available, pilots may expect the option of a clearance via the general aviation lanes as per ERSA and charts, or additionally through a new route via overhead Williamstown.

The overhead route southbound is Soldiers Point to overhead Williamstown airfield (YWLM) thence to Hexham Bridge. The northbound route is the reverse. Pilots are to advise their preferred altitude, however, clearances via overhead YWLM below 2500ft AMSL are unlikely. ATC may facilitate transits from other reporting points, such as Nobbys Head (NBB) via overhead YWLM, if traffic permits.

Delays in transit clearances may be encountered during periods of high traffic workload. Aircraft in receipt of a transit clearance may have temporary clearance limits imposed to ensure separation assurance between transiting traffic and IFR arrivals and departures. ATC will only advise holding instructions if a clearance limit is reached.

These VFR routes will be seen in the Aeronautical Publication November 2011 edition. For any further information relating to these changes please send your email to oar@casa.gov.au.