
Proposed restricted area - Hokianga Harbour

– airspace user consultation

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Introduction

Northland-based company, Incredible Skies Ltd, has applied for the designation of a restricted area to conduct trials of remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) in the following operations:

- (a) Beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) flying for development and research purposes, and
- (b) trial deliveries of medical supplies to remote locations.

In support of their application, Incredible Skies Ltd advised:

Rural communities face ongoing challenges where crisis support, and access and cost for healthcare is difficult. While remote consultations are active in some locations with GPs and nurses able to consult with patients online, there remains some difficulty in getting prescriptions and supplies to rural communities in a timely manner and within reasonable costs.

In Mitimiti for example, where there are around 120 residents and a small school with around 30 children, it is a three-hour return trip by car on windy gravel roads to Kaitaia, and a similar timeframe to travel to Rawene where a scheduled car ferry crossing is necessary.

Regular flooding in Panguru during the winter makes it impossible to get in or out of the area for anywhere between half a day to three days at a time. In the past 12 months, locals report that their roads were closed on 28 occasions.

There is no public transport and the costs associated with driving to a chemist are insurmountable for some residents. In addition, the area is not well served by a range of emergency and crisis support services. The timeframes to reach isolated communities in crisis represent risks to human life.

While UAV delivery of prescriptions and medical supplies is proposed, there is nowhere in New Zealand to test the ongoing capacity and capability of BVLOS flying in a controlled environment, that provides a variety of terrains and conditions that can test UAV's under challenging conditions.

Incredible Skies Ltd has selected this location because:

"The area comprises a variable terrain including a harbour, inlets, large sand dunes, coastal, exotic forest, native forest, hill terrain, farmland and variable coastal weather conditions. This provides a range of conditions in which to test UAV flights and performance, and will assist to explore the boundaries of current research and development."

Proposed restricted area

The proposed restricted area would be activated by NOTAM when a trial is to take place, from the surface to 3000 ft AMSL. Refer to Figure 1 in Appendix A.

Conditions on operations within the temporary restricted area may be imposed to ensure that activity is fully contained and clear of aircraft operating outside.

These may include application of vertical and lateral buffers, and meteorological minima.

In addition to the activation by NOTAM, Incredible Skies intend to set up a contact database where either direct phone calls or emails would be sent to local airspace users who have subscribed to this service.

Trial information would also be published on the Incredible Skies website – www.incredibleskies.nz/.

Possible effect to IFR aircraft

There is no effect to IFR aircraft as the proposed restricted area is clear of and below IFR paths and procedures, including Kaitaia.

Possible effect to VFR aircraft

There are no published aerodromes within the restricted area. At Rawene Hospital, there is an unpublished heliport used for medical evacuations. Incredible Skies Ltd and Northern Emergency Services Trust have an agreement to allow medical flights to continue.

Incredible Skies Ltd has consulted with land owners within the proposed restricted area and have agreements to manage schedules for aerial spraying/topdressing operations that may need to take place.

The one VFR flight path identified as being affected by the proposed restricted area is the direct track between Kaitaia and Dargaville which would require a minimal track change to remain clear.

The other identified aviation activity within the proposed restricted area would be scenic overflights. It is not known how often this takes place and how many would possibly be affected.

Consultation

Prior to designating airspace, Civil Aviation Rule 71.9 requires the Director to consult with affected persons, organisations and representative groups within the aviation industry before making a designation or classification of airspace.

The Director invites feedback in regard to the proposed airspace change.

At this stage it is not intended that CAA will hold an airspace consultation meeting unless this is specifically requested by users.

This document will be sent directly to the organisations listed below. It would be appreciated if you would kindly forward the document to your members for consideration and comment.

Aerodrome operators (charted aerodromes only)

- Dargaville aerodrome – Northern Wairoa Aero Club (Inc)
- Dargaville Hospital heliport – Northland District Health Board
- Kaikohe aerodrome – Far North Holdings Ltd
- Kaipara Flats aerodrome – Rodney Aero Club Inc
- Kaitaia aerodrome – Far North Holdings Ltd
- Kaitaia Hospital heliport – Northland District Health Board
- Kerikeri/Bay of Islands aerodrome – Far North Holdings Ltd
- Ruawai aerodrome – Otamatea Aero Club, Ruawai (Inc)
- Springhill aerodrome – Instra Aviation Ltd
- Whangarei aerodrome – Whangarei District Airport

Operators, Organisations and User Groups

The following major operators, organisations and users have been identified:

- Air New Zealand Group – includes Mount Cook, Air Nelson, Eagle Airways
- Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
- Airways Corporation of New Zealand
- Balloon Aviation Association
- Flying New Zealand
- Gliding New Zealand
- New Zealand Agricultural Aviation Association
- New Zealand Airline Pilots Association
- New Zealand Aviation Federation
- New Zealand Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association
- New Zealand Helicopter Association
- New Zealand Parachute Federation
- New Zealand Parachute Industry Association
- Northern Emergency Services Trust
- Recreational Aircraft Association of New Zealand
- Royal New Zealand Air Force

- Sport Aircraft Association New Zealand
- Sport Aviation Corp
- Whangarei User Group – Mike Chubb

Notification that this document has been posted online will be sent to CAA email notification subscribers to Airspace Notifications – Briefing Areas 1 and 2.

This document is also available on the CAA website at the following link:

<http://www.caa.govt.nz/airspace/airspace-review/>

Submissions

This document forms part of the consultation process. Submissions are sought from any interested person, organisation or representative group.

Submissions are accepted either electronically or via mail.

Please address submissions to:

Group Executive Officer
Aviation Infrastructure and Personnel
Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand
PO Box 3555
Wellington 6140

Fax: 04-569-2024

Email: dianne.parker@caa.govt.nz

Reference – Proposed restricted area – Hokianga Harbour

Closing date for submissions is **Tuesday 17 April 2018**.

Further information

For further information contact:

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Figure 1 – proposed restricted area