

Media release

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Important surveillance technology mandates fast approaching

Airservices is urging all aircraft operators, including helicopters, to allow enough time to be fitted with new satellite-based technologies ahead of the 4 February 2016 mandate.

The mandate, set by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), requires aircraft flying under instrument flight rules (IFR), and who intend to operate within 500 nautical miles north and east of Perth, to be fitted with Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast (ADS-B) equipment.

The mandate also requires all IFR aircraft be fitted with Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) navigation equipment. All aircraft, including those operating under visual flight rules (VFR), operating to Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth airports must be equipped with a Mode S transponder, as Mode A and Mode C transponders will no longer be sufficient.

A decade in the planning, ADS-B enables aircraft to be accurately tracked by air traffic controllers, and other pilots, twice every second without the need for conventional radar.

GNSS technology provides aircraft with more flexible and efficient air routes when compared to flying routes based on using conventional ground-based navigation aids.

Since 12 December 2013, CASA has required all aircraft flying at and above 29,000ft (FL290), and since 6 February 2014 all newly registered IFR aircraft to be ADS-B capable. All new transponder installations since 6 February also (including VFR aircraft operating in Class A, B, C, E or above 10,000ft in G) must be Mode S and ADS-B capable.

A final ADS-B mandate will occur on 2 January 2017, when all Australian registered IFR aircraft flying within Australia's airspace will be required to operate using ADS-B.

The aviation industry has strongly supported ADS-B with Australia's major airlines and operators, including a number of international and regional airlines, embracing the new technology by investing in the installation of equipment into their aircraft well ahead of the CASA published mandates. This has resulted in 99 per cent of flights flying at or above FL290 feet being fitted with the technology.

Australia has a network of 61 ADS-B ground stations across Australia which provides continent-wide air traffic control surveillance. Over the next three years Airservices will install a further 15 ADS-B ground stations to provide additional surveillance coverage at lower altitudes and extend higher level coverage offshore.

Airservices is committed to aviation safety. The Civil Air Navigation Services Organization has recently ranked Airservices safety performance as second in the world.

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