

Media release

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Airservices enhances surveillance with new ADS-B ground stations

Airservices has commissioned two new Automatic Dependant Surveillance Broadcast (ADS-B) ground stations, further enhancing air traffic surveillance coverage for aircraft flying in Australian airspace.

A decade in the planning, ADS-B is the future for air traffic surveillance in Australia and will provide an increase in safety to non-radar airspace while improving operational efficiency for the industry.

ADS-B is a satellite-based technology enabling aircraft to be accurately tracked by air traffic controllers and other pilots without the need for conventional radar.

The two new ADS-B ground stations, at Point Lookout, near Coffs Harbour, and Mount Hardgrave on North Stradbroke Island, near Brisbane, will provide a backup to the radar surveillance in the region and enhance the high level coverage for air traffic from Lord Howe Island to Sydney and Brisbane.

The technology also delivers benefits for the travelling public by providing their flights with improved access to preferred routes and flight levels, more efficient diversions around restricted areas and weather and increased accuracy of navigation.

With just over a month to go before the first ADS-B mandate, on 12 December 2013, more than 90 per cent of major Australian airliner aircraft have already been fitted with the technology. Airservices is also seeing over 94 per cent of flights at or above 29,000 feet in the Australian flight information region operating with ADS-B capability.

The next key milestone for the transition to ADS-B will occur on 6 February 2014 when CASA regulations will require all new Instrument Flight Rule (IFR) aircraft registrations in Australia to be ADS-B capable, if they are undertaking an IFR flight, as well as all new transponder installations in older IFR aircraft needing to be ADS-B capable.

Two years later, on 6 January 2016, all IFR aircraft operating within 500nm to the north and east of Perth, Western Australia, are required to be fitted with ADS-B.

By 6 January 2017, all Australian registered IFR aircraft flying within Australia's airspace, are required to operate using ADS-B.

Australia now 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.

For media inquiries contact Airservices Media on (02) 6257 2828 or by emailing media@airservicesaustralia.com