
**Proposed restricted areas – Alexandra,
Central Otago**
– airspace user consultation

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Introduction

Skybase is a Part 102 certificated operator of unmanned aircraft, testing unmanned aircraft from Alexandra aerodrome. To support further technological development of unmanned aircraft to provide a wide-range of aerial applications, Skybase has applied for the designation of a restricted area to segregate beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) trial flights from other aircraft.

Alexandra has been chosen as a testing base because of the prevailing meteorological conditions with more sunshine days and generally lower average winds than other locations.

The following community information notice about Skybase operations was published online in June

(https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M4wAYtx_yR920pNvdtj513gjdch5IT3Y/view?usp=sharing):

“As a result, Skybase has chosen NZLX to be the base for its unmanned aircraft testing operations, which has the potential to bring in other such aviation activities, to the benefit of the region. Already, Skybase has spent significant resources on establishing this opportunity, and many of the community are already aware of the testing that has been conducted and the plan for the future.

This notice is about keeping everyone informed, especially airspace users.

When talking about unmanned aircraft, people tend to use the word “drones”- which can be somewhat of a loaded term. Bit by bit, we are changing this, as Skybase has “tools and not toys” and we are here to “improve lives, not take lives”. Skybase supports Drones for Good, a program that is showing the beneficial nature of drone usage in agriculture, civil industry, communities and for things such as policing, fire prevention, civil defence and humanitarian purposes. Skybase is currently rehearsing to deliver vaccines to children in Vanuatu, using Beyond Line of Sight (BLOS) technology.

However, to ensure that these services are provided in a safe and efficient manner, they must be first tested in a suitable environment- hence the attraction to Alexandra.

Skybase is working closely with the New Zealand Civil Aviation Authority, Airways New Zealand and many other agencies throughout the country. We have recently applied for a Restricted Area to be created to the North-East of the airfield, that is designed to avoid any impact to airspace users...

The key points to note are:

- *The activities are approved for Skybase by the Civil Aviation Authority of NZ, under Part 102, and the UAOC #92541.*

- *The activities are in accordance with the NZ Privacy Act 1993 (see notes)*
- *There will be no imposition to any current airspace user, and manned aircraft always have right of way (see notes).*
- *Agricultural activities will not be affected (see notes).*
- *This has the opportunity to bring jobs and revenue to the region. The project is already being noticed on a global scale.*

NOTES

1. Unmanned aircraft always give way to manned aircraft, including in Restricted Areas. However, aircraft not participating in the testing must not be in the Restricted Area, when activated by NOTAM. Unmanned aircraft operators may not be 'looking' for other aircraft (manned or unmanned) while operating in the Restricted Area. This could delay reaction times, leading to a hazardous situation for both aircraft.

2. The airspace has been designed to not impact any current airspace users. All approach and departure paths are clear (visual or instrument) and the airspace can also be activated in 'sections' should agricultural spraying operations require access during a period of Restricted Area activation. As a result, we are not anticipating this to create any inconvenience to airspace users.

3. Skybase operates in accordance with the Privacy Act, 1993. Skybase is not conducting operations that may be considered encroaching upon privacy. Should you be concerned, please get in touch with Skybase on the details below.

4. Noise will be almost imperceptible and the aircraft will be flying generally where they cannot be seen easily with the naked eye. It is very unlikely that you will notice Skybase aircraft.

Proposed restricted area

The requested airspace would consist of five contiguous restricted areas, starting from a point 0.75 NM east of the threshold of Runway 32 at Alexandra aerodrome. The proposed restricted areas are all from the surface stepping up to five different upper limits as follows:

- 1500 ft AMSL
- 2600 ft AMSL
- 3000 ft AMSL
- 4000 ft AMSL
- 7000 ft AMSL

Refer to Appendix A for a diagram of the proposed airspace.

The proposed restricted areas would only be active when advised by NOTAM during the periods that a trial is taking place. All areas may be activated simultaneously or individually, depending on the test requirements.

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

These may include, but is not limited to, application of internal vertical and lateral buffers, and meteorological minima.

Possible effect to IFR aircraft

The proposed restricted areas are designed to be clear of all instrument procedures. The Part 173 certificated instrument procedure design organisation, Aeropath, has assessed the airspace and confirmed that aircraft flying the instrument procedures would not be affected.

Possible effect to VFR aircraft

CAA's initial assessment has identified the following VFR operations that would be directly affected:

- Glider and tugs circuit at Alexandra aerodrome
- Standard overhead join procedure at Alexandra aerodrome
- Low flying zone NZL970, Galloway, is almost entirely within one of the proposed restricted areas

As per the advice from Skybase above, agricultural aerial operations would be able to continue as necessary.

However, it is unknown as to if, or how many, uncharted aerodrome or heliports within the proposed areas.

Summary

Skybase would activate the proposed restricted areas, as required, to meet established testing programmes. For restricted areas activated by NOTAM, the administering authority is required to give at least 24 hours prior notice to the NOTAM Office (71.153(c)(2)).

The administering authority is required to manage entry of aircraft into the restricted area, the operation of aircraft within the restricted area, and the exit of aircraft from the restricted area (71.153(c)(1)). Management would also include a process to manage intrusion into the restricted area by unauthorised aircraft.

Permanent designation of the proposed restricted area, activated by NOTAM, will enable it to be depicted on the appropriate charts.

A full picture of the likely impact to aircraft is not available at this time and is reliant on feedback from users.

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.

CAA will hold an airspace consultation meeting with users at Alexandra on one evening during the week 17 to 21 September 2018 – venue and date to be advised.

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 aerodrome only)

- Alexandra aerodrome (Central Otago District Council)
- Cromwell aerodrome (Peter and Stephen Morton)
- Cromwell Racecourse aerodrome (Central Otago District Council)
- Roxburgh aerodrome (Central Otago District Council)

Operators, organisation and user groups

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

- Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
- Airways Corporation of New Zealand
- Balloon Aviation Association
- Central Otago Flying Club
- Flying New Zealand
- Dunedin/Taieri airspace user group
- Gliding New Zealand
- Heli Otago
- Mainland Air
- New Zealand Agricultural Aviation 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
- New Zealand Parachute Organisation
- North Otago Aero Club
- Otago Aero Club
- Otago Airspread Ltd
- Queenstown/Milford User Group
- Recreational Aircraft Association of New Zealand
- Royal New Zealand Air Force
- Southern Wings/Southland Aero Club
- Sport Aircraft Association New Zealand
- Sport Aviation Corp
- Wanaka airspace user group

Notification that this document has been posted online will be sent to CAA email notification subscribers to Airspace Notifications – Briefing Areas 7, 9 and 10.

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 – Alexandra, Central Otago

Closing date for submissions is **Wednesday 26 September 2018**.

Further information

For further information contact:

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Appendix A – proposed restricted areas

