



Australian Government  
Civil Aviation Safety Authority

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# Preliminary Airspace Review Proserpine/Whitsunday Coast Airport, QLD

July 2018

C I V I L   A V I A T I O N   S A F E T Y   A U T H O R I T Y

*safe skies for all*

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1.0	Incorporates stakeholder feedback	July 2018

# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0.1 The *Airspace Act 2007* (Act)<sup>1</sup> provides the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) with the authority to administer and regulate Australian-administered airspace and obligates CASA to conduct regular reviews of the existing classifications of Australian-administered airspace. The Office of Airspace Regulation (OAR) conducted a review of the airspace arrangements and classifications within a 20 Nautical Mile (NM) radius, up to 8,500 feet above mean sea level, of Proserpine/Whitsunday Coast Airport (Proserpine) to determine if the airspace remains “fit for purpose”. This review did not consider airspace within these dimensions which form part of Hamilton Island controlled airspace during tower activation hours.

1.0.2 This review applies CASA’s regulatory philosophy which considers the primacy of air safety, but also considers all other relevant factors, including cost.

1.0.3 Assessment of the airspace movements, occurrences and stakeholder feedback were considered and concluded that risk was As Low as Reasonably Practicable (ALARP). Comments received from the aerodrome operator as well as projections outlined in the Whitsunday Coast Airport Master Plan and Feasibility Study<sup>2</sup> indicates growth is orientated around larger capacity passenger transport aircraft.

1.0.4 The OAR has determined that the current airspace architecture is fit for purpose with respect to current operations, as well as being suitable to accommodate the projected growth at Proserpine.

## Recommendations:

The following recommendations have been made:

- Recommendation: CASA should continue to monitor Proserpine for any safety occurrences related its instrument flight procedures.
- Recommendation: CASA should continue to monitor Proserpine to ensure the airspace remains appropriate to accommodate growth.
- Recommendation: The airspace with 20 NM of Proserpine should remain unchanged.

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<sup>1</sup> A full list of acronyms and abbreviations used within this report can be found at Annex A.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whitsunday.qld.gov.au/DocumentCenter/View/1536>

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## 2 INTRODUCTION

1.0.1 Under Section 11 and 12 of the *Airspace Act 2007 (Act)*, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) has responsibility for the administration and regulation of Australian-administered airspace. In carrying out these responsibilities CASA must give primacy to aviation safety and must:

- foster efficient use of Australian-administered airspace;
- foster equitable access to that airspace for all users of that airspace;
- take into account national security; and
- take into account protection of the environment.

1.0.2 CASA has not yet conducted an Airspace Review around Proserpine/Whitsunday Coast Airport (Proserpine). Given that the OAR is responsible for conducting routine reviews of Australia's airspace, it was deemed necessary that this location be reviewed.

### 2.1 Purpose

2.1.1 The purpose of the Preliminary Airspace Review is to assess the airspace architecture and aircraft activity within the vicinity Proserpine. The assessment considered airspace extending on a radius of 20 NM from Proserpine and from surface to 8,500 feet (ft) above mean sea level (AMSL). The review was able to determine if the airspace complies with the requirements of the Act for safe operations, efficiency and equitable access. The review provides findings and recommendations about matters that impact aviation safety, efficiency or equitable access for airspace users.

### 2.2 Process

2.2.1 The review process included:

- analysis of aircraft movement data;
- analysis of the mix of aircraft operations in the area;
- assessment of current aircraft movement levels and mix of aircraft operations to determine the suitability of existing airspace;
- assessment of the appropriateness of the current airspace classifications and architecture;
- assessment of any issues related to aircraft operators seeking equitable access;
- assessments of the appropriateness of the Air Traffic Services (ATS) provided in each class of airspace;
- identification of any threats or risks to the safety of aircraft operations; and
- consultation with airspace users.

### 2.3 Scope

2.3.1 The scope of this review is limited to the airspace within 20 NM of Proserpine and below 8,500 ft AMSL. The review did not assess operational matters or infrastructure issues.

## 3 BACKGROUND

### 3.1 Overview of Australian airspace classifications

3.1.1 Australian airspace classifications accord with Annex 11 of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and include Class A, C, D, E, and G depending on the level of service required to safely and effectively manage aviation activity. Class B and Class F airspace is not currently used in Australia. Each class of airspace determines the type and nature of aviation operations permitted in that airspace.

3.1.2 Class G airspace is predominantly used by visual flight rules (VFR) aircraft that do not require surveillance, separation or navigation assistance. VFR aircraft generally fly in good weather and during daylight hours so that they can navigate using visual references on the

ground. Aircraft operating in Class A airspace are primarily larger passenger aircraft operating under instrument flight rules (IFR) that are provided with separation from all other aircraft. Aircraft operating in Class C, D and E airspace are provided with a control and surveillance service and comprise a mix of VFR and IFR operations. Annex B provides details of the classes of airspace used in Australia.

### 3.2 Proserpine/Whitsunday Coast Airport

3.2.1 Proserpine is a certified aerodrome operated by the Whitsunday Regional Council. The airport has one asphalt runway (RWY 11/29) and no Aerodrome Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) service. It should be noted that an ARFF service is scheduled to be commissioned at Proserpine by June 2020. The aerodrome is equipped with a VHF Omni-directional Radio Range (VOR) and Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) navigation aids.

3.2.2 No precision instrument approaches are available at Proserpine, however VOR and Area Navigation (RNAV) approaches are available to both runway ends, as well as a DME arrival.

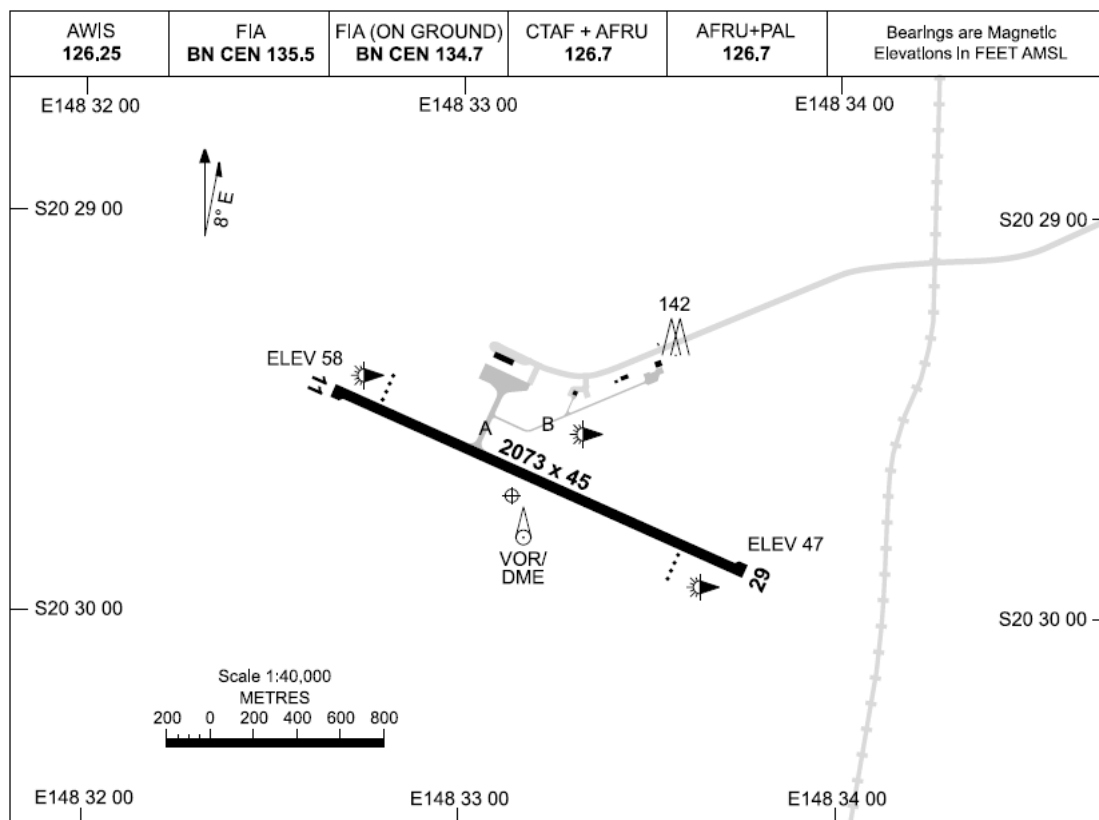


Figure 1: Whitsunday Coast Airport. Source: Airservices Australia (Airservices).

3.2.3 The airport is serviced by three large airlines including Jetstar Airways, Virgin Australia and Tiger Air, and facilitates direct flights by these operators to Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. Additionally, a contingent of general aviation (GA) aircraft operate out of Proserpine servicing the surrounding areas. The aerodrome has not been controlled since its Tower closed in 1991, however Class C airspace covers the aerodrome above 4,500 ft AMSL.

### 3.3 Surrounding Aerodromes

3.3.1 Within the airspace dimensions for this review, two other aerodromes facilitating various operations are located. These include Whitsunday Airport (Shute Harbour) and Lakeside Airpark. In addition to these, Shute Bay facilitates seaplane operations which service the surrounding islands. Movement data was not available for either of these airports.

3.3.2 Whitsunday Airport (YSHR) is an uncertified, non-controlled, aerodrome approximately 17 NM north-east from Proserpine. The airport is privately owned and provides services to the adjacent airpark and is also available to commercial operators. The

airport has one runway (RWY 14/32) available for daylight operations only and has Fly Neighbourly Arrangements<sup>3</sup> in place to manage noise abatement. Class D airspace commences at 2,500 ft AMSL above the airport, final for runway 32 has Class D airspace above it, commencing at 1,000 ft AMSL. Class C airspace overlays the whole airport from 4,500 ft AMSL.

3.3.3 Lakeside Airpark (YLAK) is an uncertified, non-controlled aerodrome located approximately 12 NM south of Proserpine. Lakeside Airpark is operated during daylight hours only and is equipped with one runway (RWY 04/22). The airport is privately owned and operated by owners who occupy the adjacent residential area. Class C airspace commences at 4,500 ft AMSL above Lakeside Airpark.

3.3.4 There are three privately-owned, uncharted recreational airfields to the southeast of Proserpine. One, which is known as "Heathrow" at Lethebrook, approximately 6 NM to the southeast on the extended centreline of Proserpine's runway 11. It has two grass runways, 600m and 250m long. The second airfield is approximately 5 NM to the northeast of Lakeside Airpark, alongside and parallel to the road between Laguna Quays and Midge Point. It has one grass runway about 700m long. The third airfield is associated with the Laguna Quays resort. The airfield has an unfinished sealed 3000m runway, which is currently not in use. It is understood that the airfield may become operational in the future.

### 3.4 Details of Proserpine airspace

3.4.1 The airspace within 20 NM of Proserpine is dominated by Class G airspace with Class C airspace above from 4,500 ft AMSL up to Flight Level 180 (Class A airspace). Class D airspace associated with Hamilton Island is to the east of Proserpine. All controlled airspace (CTA) within 20 NM is administered by Airservices.

3.4.2 Non-controlled airspace (Class G) exists below 4,500 ft AMSL around Proserpine. Proserpine does not have a discrete Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) assigned and is Aerodrome Frequency Response Unit (AFRU) equipped. No Prohibited, Restricted or Danger (PRD) areas are contained within 20 NM of Proserpine. Figure 2 (below) is an extract of the Townsville visual navigation chart (VNC) illustrating the airspace in the vicinity of Proserpine.

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<sup>3</sup> Whitsunday Airport– Visiting Pilot's Guide: <https://www.whitsundayairport.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017-Pilot-Guide-1.pdf>



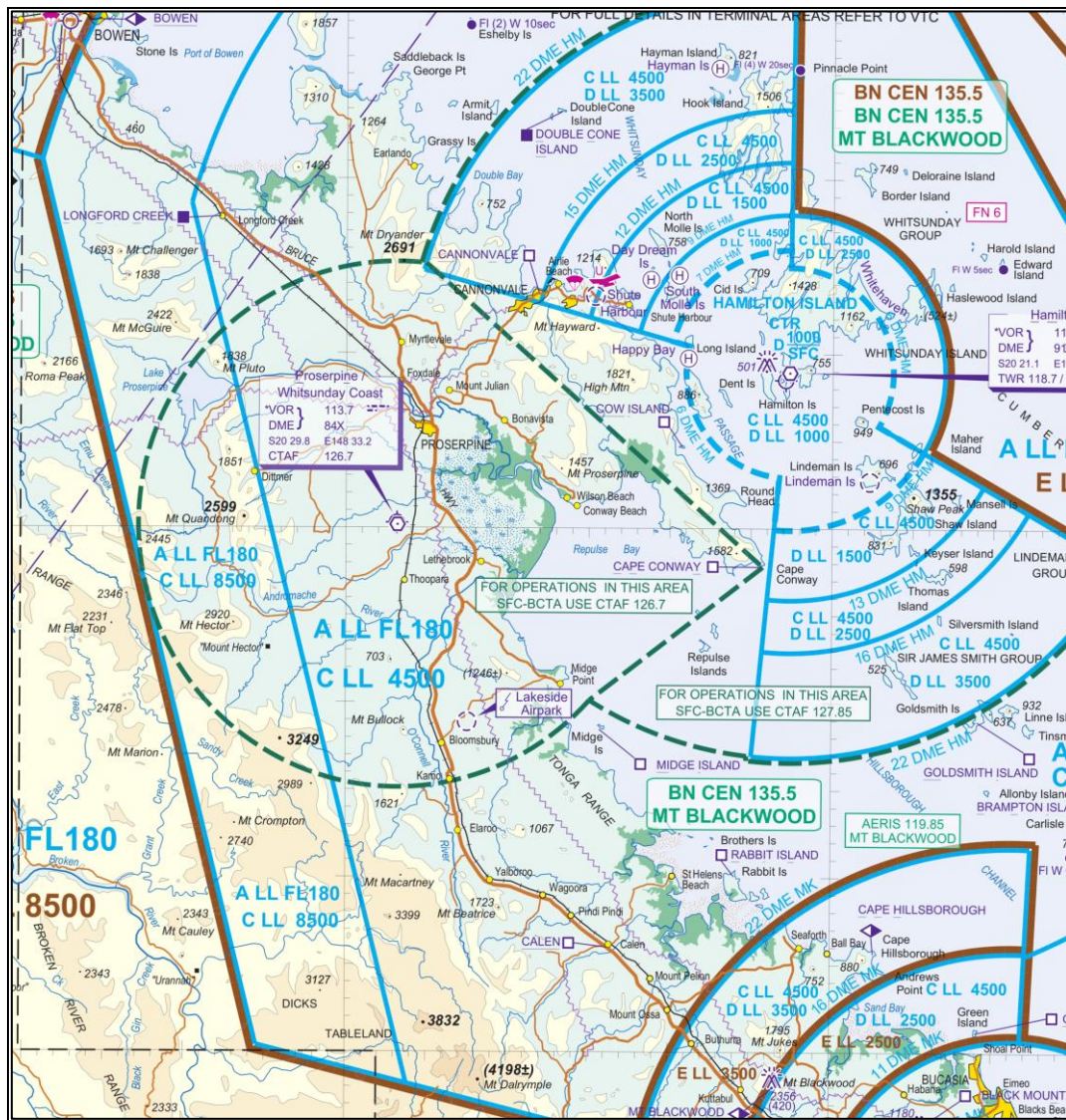


Figure 2: Extract of Townsville VNC (Source: Aiservices. Effective date 09 Nov 2017).

3.4.3 Although there are no PRD areas around Proserpine, there is one designated Parachute Drop Zone (approximately 1 NM south-east of Airlie Beach) and one area for Ultralight aircraft operations (approximately 1 NM north of Shute Harbour) within the airspace.

### 3.5 Air Navigation Service Providers in the Proserpine area

3.5.1 Proserpine and its surrounding airports are all non-controlled, with Class C overhead from 4,500 ft AMSL up to Flight Level 180, at which point it becomes Class A airspace. This Class C and Class A airspace also overlies Hamilton Island, with Class D steps underneath providing controlled airspace into Hamilton Island airport. Most of the Hamilton Island Class D airspace is over water and is in a north-west and south-east orientation.

3.5.2 Aiservices provides radar control services from the Brisbane Air Traffic Services Centre for the Class C and Class A airspace over Proserpine through the Reef Sector. The Class D airspace associated with Hamilton Island is controlled by the Tower from Hamilton Island. Surveillance coverage information provided by Aiservices indicates reliable surveillance over Proserpine down to 3,000 ft AMSL.

3.5.3 An examination of the Instrument Flight Procedures (IFP) into Proserpine was also undertaken with the aim of identifying any potential issues. It was found they were sufficiently segregated from those associated with Hamilton Island and were not the source of any potential conflict. During the consultation process, no operators gave any indication that any form of conflict between IFPs at both locations existed.



3.5.4 One issue, however, was raised by an operator regarding the conduct of IFPs into Proserpine with respect to the surrounding high terrain and control airspace altitudes. It was identified that the requirement to re-enter controlled airspace in the event of a missed approach. Given the reduced level of surveillance coverage (down to approximately 3,000 ft AMSL), high surrounding terrain, and relative proximity to Hamilton Island, a clear solution to this complexity is not apparent.

### 3.6 Aviation Operations

3.6.1 While some GA activity does take place at Proserpine, most of the aircraft movements are comprised of passenger transport services provided by Jetstar Airways, Tiger Air and Virgin Australia. These flights offer services from Proserpine direct to Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.

3.6.2 According to the aerodrome operator, most of the GA activity is attributed to business associated with a helicopter maintenance facility at Proserpine. This observation is supported by CASA's own data which identifies one Air Operations Certificate (AOC) holder and one Aviation Maintenance Organisation (AMO) certificate holder at Proserpine.

### 3.7 Movements

3.7.1 Over the period of the study (2010 – 2017), the total number of aircraft movements, as well as air transport movements increased steadily peaking in 2017, with both showing slight declines for 2016. Air Transport Movements peaked with 3,460, while totalled movements amounted to 5,682.

3.7.2 Over the same period, passenger movement numbers also increased, with an increased rate commencing in 2013. The significant growth in passenger numbers can be attributed (at least in part) to the addition of more regular services by large operators. Figure 3 below illustrates the growth in aircraft and passenger movements at Proserpine.

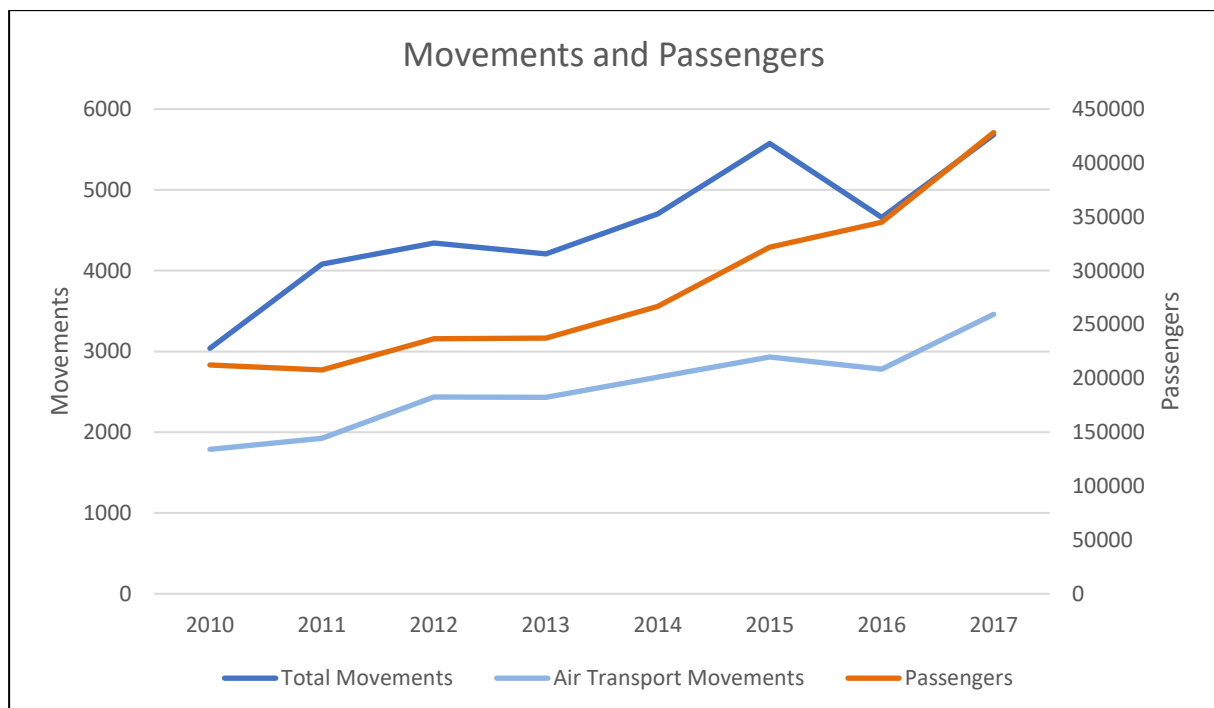


Figure 3: Proserpine movements and passengers 2010-2017.

3.7.3 It is clear from Figure 3 that despite a reduction in aircraft movements in 2016, air transport movements, total movements and passenger numbers have been steadily increasing. Given the relatively low amount of GA activity at Proserpine, it is expected that the rate of growth in air transport movements will be greater than the total movements. Given the number of large capacity aircraft movements, it is expected that passenger numbers continue to increase.

3.7.4 The Australian Airspace Policy Statement 2015 (AAPS) identifies trigger criteria with respect to total aircraft movements, passenger transport movements and passenger

numbers for an airport. When these criteria are met, CASA should undertake a review ensuring the airspace remains fit for purpose. While the trigger criteria for passenger movement numbers has been exceeded at Proserpine (greater than 350,000 passengers), the triggers for both total aircraft and total passenger aircraft movements is well below that stipulated for Class D service (80,000 and 15,000 respectively). This Review has been conducted to ensure the airspace is still fit for purpose and that the risk to passenger transport operations is as low as reasonably practicable.

3.7.5 As part of their Master Plan, Proserpine identified three possible passenger growth scenarios for the airport<sup>4</sup>. These included a low, organic and high growth scenario. In forecasting each of these scenarios, a wide range of factors including the Australian dollar, tourism demand, the price of fuel and independent economic factors such as mining activity could affect the growth of traffic at Proserpine.

3.7.6 Based purely on the historical data illustrated in Figure 3, it is suggested that the 'High Growth Scenario' identified in the Master Plan is the most likely to eventuate. It must be emphasised that this assumption is based on historical figures and does not consider all other economic factors that can influence passenger and aircraft movement growth.

3.7.7 The 'High Growth Scenario' suggests that passenger numbers will grow steadily reaching 532,000 passengers by 2020 and 761,000 by 2035. The Master Plan forecasts a lower rate of growth in movements than compared with passengers. This would indicate that the primary area of movement growth is focused around large passenger transport aircraft. Based on this Master Plan, no major changes to the nature of operations in the airspace around Proserpine are anticipated.

## 4 AVIATION SAFETY OCCURRENCES

### 4.1 Aviation Safety Incident Reports

4.1.1 Any accident or incident involving Australian registered aircraft or foreign registered aircraft in Australian airspace must be reported to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB). Every Aviation Safety Incident Report (ASIR) is entered into the ATSB database and is available to the OAR. Defence incidents are also included within these reports. Information from the ATSB confidential reporting system (REPCON) is also available.

4.1.2 To accurately and consistently organise and describe all occurrences, the ATSB utilises the Safety Investigation Information Management System (SIIMS) taxonomy. This system utilises a hierarchy of three levels of descriptors against each occurrence. These descriptors provide a benchmark against which comparisons of occurrences can be made, as well as allowing efficient and accurate analysis of occurrences.

4.1.3 Records indicate that there were 95 unique occurrences within 20 NM of Proserpine from 01 January 2010 to 31 December 2017. Of these, only 8 were categorised as being airspace related. Most of the occurrences (48) were environmental, including wildlife and weather-related occurrences. The table below illustrates the number of airspace occurrences per year.

Occurrence Level 2 Type	Year							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
AIRCRAFT SEPARATION	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
ANSP OPERATIONAL ERROR	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
OTHER	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Total Aircraft Movements</b>	<b>3038</b>	<b>4081</b>	<b>4343</b>	<b>4206</b>	<b>4703</b>	<b>5576</b>	<b>4660</b>	<b>4700</b>

Table 1: Airspace occurrences at Proserpine 01 January 2010 - 31 December 2017.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.whitsunday.qld.gov.au/DocumentCenter/View/1536>

4.1.4 Table 1 shows that the numbers of airspace related occurrences are low, and no distinct trend is apparent. One aircraft separation occurrence which occurred in 2013 was categorised as a Serious Incident, while the remaining 7 occurrences were Incidents. The ATSB's summary of each airspace occurrence is detailed below:

- *Incident (2010)*: The aircraft could not land at the destination or at the departure aerodrome due to bad weather. The aircraft diverted to Proserpine. The pilot requested that the controller contact a responsible ground person at Proserpine to be in attendance to ensure the lights were on. The controller informed the pilot that no ground person would be available but passed on the Pilot Activated Lighting frequency in ERSA, but this had previously been changed by NOTAM. Once at Proserpine the pilot could not turn on the lights and landed on an unlit runway.
- *Serious Incident (2013)*. A Cessna 210 passed in close proximity to a Robinson R44 helicopter on final approach. The pilot of the Cessna 210 later advised that they had been operating on the incorrect frequency.
- *Incident (2013)*. During final approach, the crew of the Cessna 210 observed a helicopter turning onto final approach in front. The crew of the Cessna 210 conducted a go-around to ensure separation from the helicopter was maintained. The Cessna 210 was unable to establish communication with the helicopter on the CTAF.
- *Incident (2015)*. During aerial survey operations, the operators of a remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) observed two parachutists land close to where the RPA was operating.
- *Incident (2015)*. During final approach, the crew of the Gippsland GA8 sighted a single engine aircraft pass them and land. The GA8 crew conducted a missed approach. No radio calls were heard from the single engine aircraft on the CTAF.
- *Incident (2016)*. The procedural separation standard was incorrectly applied between the descending Cessna 414 and the Cessna 208, resulting in a loss of separation.
- *Incident (2017)*. The aircraft descended below the lowest safe altitude.

## 4.2 Aircraft Involved

4.2.1 Out of a total of 8 separate airspace related occurrences, a total of 13 individual aircraft from a variety of operating sectors were involved. These included:

- Piper PA-31
- 2 x Cessna 210
- Robinson R44
- RPA
- Beechcraft BE36
- Gippsland GA8
- Cessna 208
- Cessna 414
- Airbus A320
- Unknown aircraft

4.2.2 CASA has developed a sector mapping system which aims to consistently identify and group different operational sectors of the aviation industry. Aircraft involved in the occurrences came from several sectors including small and large aeroplane air transport operations, RPA, helicopter and self-administered organisations. No sector was disproportionately represented among the occurrences.

## 4.3 ASIR Summary

4.3.1 Although these occurrences all took place within Proserpine airspace and consequently were coded as 'airspace' related by the ATSB, it is clear from their summaries that the airspace environment and design itself did not contribute to these occurrences. This conclusion is based on the fact that many of the incidents were communication procedure, Air Traffic Control and weather related. Based on this, it is apparent no justification for airspace change based on these occurrences exists.

## 5 DETAILED FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS

5.0.1 Several stakeholders involved in operations at Proserpine were contacted and invited to provide feedback. Stakeholders that provided feedback are listed in Annex C. Comments provided by stakeholders are detailed in Annex D.

## 6 KEY ISSUES AND FINDING

- **Issue:** An operator identified some degree of complexity with respect to instrument approaches and leaving and re-entering controlled airspace.
- **Finding:** An analysis of IFPs into Proserpine found that the missed approach procedure for the RNAV-Z RWY11 approach required the aircraft to re-enter CTA on climb to 5,100 ft AMSL. The base of CTA is 4,500 ft AMSL. While this does add to pilot and ATC workload, the topography surrounding Proserpine as well the airspace requirements of Hamilton Island mean that very limited alternatives to this arrangement are available.
- **Recommendation:** CASA should continue to monitor Proserpine for any safety occurrences related its IFPs.
- **Finding:** For the period of the report, passenger numbers increased year on year, with passenger and total movement numbers increasing with slight declines in 2016 only. This data supports the high growth scenario identified in the Master Plan, with an increase in the number of regular large capacity aircraft services.
- **Recommendation:** CASA should continue to monitor Proserpine to ensure the airspace remains appropriate to accommodate growth.
- **Recommendation:** The airspace with 20 NM of Proserpine should remain unchanged.

## ANNEX A – AUSTRALIAN AIRSPACE STRUCTURE

Class	Description	Summary of Services/Procedures/Rules
<b>Class A</b>	All airspace above Flight Level (FL) 180 (east coast) or FL 245	Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) only. All aircraft require a clearance from Air Traffic Control (ATC) and are separated by ATC. Continuous two-way radio and transponder required. No speed limitation.
<b>Class B</b>		Not currently used in Australia.
<b>Class C</b>	In control zones (CTRs) of defined dimensions and control area steps generally associated with controlled aerodromes	All aircraft require a clearance from ATC to enter airspace. All aircraft require continuous two-way radio and transponder. IFR separated from IFR, VFR and Special VFR (SVFR) by ATC with no speed limitation for IFR operations. VFR receives traffic information on other VFR but is not separated from each other by ATC. SVFR are separated from SVFR when visibility is less than visual meteorological conditions (VMC). VFR and SVFR speed limited to 250 knots (KT) indicated air speed (IAS) below 10,000 feet (ft) Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL)*.
<b>Class D</b>	Towered locations such as Bankstown, Parafield, Archerfield, Parafield and Alice Springs.	All aircraft require a clearance from ATC to enter airspace. For VFR flights this may be in an abbreviated form. As in Class C airspace all aircraft are separated on take-off and landing. All aircraft require continuous two-way radio and are speed limited to 200 knots IAS at or below 2,500 ft within 4 NM of the primary Class D aerodrome and 250 knots IAS in the remaining Class D airspace**. IFR are separated from IFR, SVFR, and are provided with traffic information on all VFR. VFR receives traffic on all other aircraft but are not separated by ATC. SVFR are separated from SVFR when VIS is less than VMC.
<b>Class E</b>	Controlled airspace not covered in classifications above	All aircraft require continuous two-way radio and transponder. All aircraft are speed limited to 250 knots IAS below 10,000 ft AMSL*, IFR require a clearance from ATC to enter airspace and are separated from IFR by ATC, and provided with traffic information as far as practicable on VFR. VFR does not require a clearance from ATC to enter airspace and are provided with a Flight Information Service (FIS). On request and ATC workload permitting, a Surveillance Information Service (SIS) is available within surveillance coverage.
<b>Class F</b>		Not currently used in Australia.
<b>Class G</b>	Non-controlled	Clearance from ATC to enter airspace not required. All aircraft are speed limited to 250 knots IAS below 10,000 ft AMSL*. IFR require continuous two-way radio and receive a FIS, including traffic information on other IFR. VFR receive a FIS. On request and ATC workload permitting, a SIS is available within surveillance coverage. VHF radio required above 5,000 ft AMSL and at aerodromes where carriage and use of radio is required.

\* Not applicable to military aircraft.

\*\*If traffic conditions permit, ATC may approve a pilot's request to exceed the 200 kt speed limit to a maximum limit of 250 kt unless the pilot informs ATC a higher minimum speed is required.

## ANNEX B – ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym / Abbreviation	Explanation
AAPS	Australian Airspace Policy Statement 2015
Act	<i>Airspace Act 2007</i>
AFRU	Aerodrome Frequency Response Unit
AMO	Aviation Maintenance Organisation
AMSL	Above Mean Sea Level
AOC	Air Operators Certificate
ARFF	Aerodrome Rescue and Fire Fighting
ASIR	Aviation Safety Incident Report
ATS	Air Traffic Service
ATSB	Australian Transport Safety Bureau
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CTA	controlled airspace
CTAF	Common Traffic Advisory Frequency
DME	Distance Measuring Equipment
ft	feet
GA	General Aviation
IAS	Indicated Air Speed
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IFP	Instrument Flight Procedures
IFR	Instrument Flight Rules
KT	Knots
LL	Lowest Level
LSALT	Lowest Safe Altitude
NM	Nautical Miles
OAR	Office of Airspace Regulation
PRD	Prohibited, Restricted and Danger Area
radar	Radio Detection and Ranging
REPCON	ATSB's confidential reporting system
RPA	remotely piloted aircraft
RNAV	Area Navigation
RWY	Runway
SIIMS	Safety Investigation Information Management System
SVFR	Special Visual Flight Rules
VFR	Visual Flight Rules
VMC	Visual Meteorological Conditions
VNC	Visual Navigation Chart



VOR	Very High Frequency Omni-directional Radio Range
Proserpine	Proserpine/Whitsunday Coast Airport

## ANNEX C – STAKEHOLDER LIST

Organisation
Australian Airports Association
Airservices Australia
Jetstar Airways
North Queensland Regional Airspace and Procedures Advisory Committee
Recreational Aviation Australia
Royal Flying Doctor Service
Proserpine/Whitsunday Coast Airport
Tiger Air
Virgin Australia
Whitsunday Airport

## ANNEX D – STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

### Airport Operations:

General aviation activity is low with little transiting traffic in the vicinity of Proserpine. The main general aviation activity is a helicopter maintenance facility at the aerodrome. Passenger transport services are operated daily by Virgin Australia, Tiger Air and Jetstar Airways to Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. The airport has shown steady growth over the last six years and approaching the 500,000 passenger mark. As a regional airport Proserpine services larger capacity aircraft: 737-800s and A320 so the movements are relatively low for this number of passengers.

Response: The assessment of traffic volume and passenger numbers is consistent with data analysed by CASA. CASA records identify two operators based at Proserpine, which supports the assertion regarding low GA activity.

### Instrument Flight Procedures:

The Class C airspace has varying lower levels in the vicinity of Proserpine. The lowest safe altitude (LSALT) in the Proserpine area is a relatively high 5,200 ft AMSL, due to high terrain to the west and south west of the airport. Cloud bases can quite regularly be below LSALT in this area, as they form over the hills. Instrument approaches can be joined inside and outside of controlled airspace. Missed approaches re-enter controlled airspace. Jet aircraft commencing the RNAV approach for RWY 11 or diverting around weather in the area, can exit CTA at approximately 7 NM west of Proserpine, due to the fact that the Lowest Level of Class C airspace increases from 4,500 ft to 8,500 ft AMSL.

Response: CASA acknowledges the issued associated with having to re-enter CTA in the event of a missed approach (RWY11 RNAV approach). Unfortunately, this issue arises due a number of associated issues including the airspace associated with Hamilton Island, the surrounding topography and available level of surveillance coverage. CASA will continue to monitor the Proserpine airspace with the aim of identifying the emergence of safety occurrences associated with this issue.

### Aviation Community:

One member from the wider aviation community provided feedback on the report. This included the provision of additional detail on aerodromes surrounding Proserpine as well as the ways in which these are identified. This feedback also provided possible reasons surrounding the reduction in GA activity at Proserpine.

### Response:

Applicable changes were incorporated into the report.