VATSIM AUSTRALIA PACIFIC

VATPAC

LOA - Release of Restricted Airspace to RAAFv

Version 1.0 - 25 Aug 2019

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Document Control

LOA - Release of Restricted Airspace to RAAFv Version 1.0 – 28 Aug 2019		
Date	**Version**	**Description**
28/08/2019	1.0	Initial document.

Change Process

VATPAC Members: Submit change proposals to operations@vatpac.org or in the "Airspace - Australia" forum

RAAF Virtual Members: Submit change proposals to hqaf@raafvirtual.org

Scope

Documents the agreement between the VATPAC Board and the RAAF Virtual Executive Team for AEWAC operations within VATPAC administered airspace and the allocation of air to ground frequencies to improve the frequency management within VATPAC airspace.

Document Review

This document will be reviewed annually for any updates required

Definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
VSOA	VATSIM Special Operations Administration
AEWAC	Airborne Early Warning and Control
RA	Restricted Area
LOA	Letter of Agreement

1 Purpose

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Release of Activated Restricted Airspace

1.1.1.1 The use of activated restricted airspace within VATPAC airspace by RAAF Virtual (RAAFv) is an ongoing requirement of RAAFv for training and operations. The release of this airspace is not currently formalised and has relied on case by case decisions made by the VATPAC Director of Operations without any agreed practices for the interaction between civil aircraft, VATPAC controllers and RAAFv AEWAC pilots.

1.1.2 RAAFv Operational Frequencies

1.1.2.1 RAAFv uses several frequencies for pilot to pilot communications. This practice dates to when FSInn provided the ability for pilots to activate a voice room whose frequency can be selected by other pilots to allow voice communication.

1.1.2.2 Recently approved VATSIM voice clients now support this ability. In the interests of managing the frequencies allocated within the VATPAC administered airspace, VATPAC seeks to agree with RAAFv the allocation of frequencies reserved for RAAFv use.

1.2 Scope of agreement

1.2.1.1 This *Letter of Agreement (LOA)* between VATPAC and RAAFvirtual.org (Hereafter known as RAAFv) details the management of releasing activated Restricted Airspace (RA's) to RAAFv AEWACS Pilot's and the allocation of air to air/ground frequencies for RAAFv use.

1.2.1.2 This *LOA* is supplementary to those applicable VATSIM and Regional documents and does not replace or override the VATSIM CoC, Global Ratings Policy or any applicable document.

2 Release of Restricted Airspace

2.1 Restricted Airspace

2.1.1.1 Restricted Airspace is the airspace lateral and vertical boundaries defined in the current Designated Airspace Handbook (DAH) for "Military Flying" Restricted Areas.

2.1.1.2 Unless separately agreed between RAAFv and VATPAC, the Conditional Status defined for each Restricted Area (RA) in the DAH will be used as well as the defined Vertical Levels.

2.1.2 Non-Aerodrome Restricted Airspace

2.1.2.1 For the purposes of releasing control authority of restricted airspace, the following definitions apply:

a) **Activated**: Restricted airspace is considered activated by the release of a VATPAC NOTAM defining the restricted area, conditional status, vertical limits, controlling authority and period of activation.

b) **Active**: An activated restricted area is active when a VSOA AEWAC pilot is within the restricted area lateral and vertical boundaries.

c) **Inactive**: An activated restricted area is inactive when there are no VSOA AEWAC pilots within the restricted area lateral and vertical boundaries.

2.1.3   Military Aerodrome Restricted Airspace

2.1.3.1   Most military aerodromes have restricted airspace associated with them for approach controllers. These areas are shown in the VATPAC controller clients when the "geography" display is selected.

2.1.3.2   They are considered permanently activated and become active when a VATPAC approved controller logs into the associated control position.

2.2   AEWAC Pilots

2.2.1.1   AEWAC Pilots are defined as members of a VSOA who have met the minimum requirement training package within that VSOA and are a member in good standing.

2.2.1.2   AEWAC pilots will only connect to the VATSIM network using an approved pilot client.

2.2.1.3   An AEWAC pilot can be identified from their flight plan – aircraft type E737 and VSOA in the remarks

2.3   Military Aircraft (VSOA)

2.3.1.1   Any aircraft flight plan that contains VSOA in the remarks area is a military aircraft.

2.4   Controlling Authority and Handoff

2.4.1   AEWAC Pilots

2.4.1.1   When activated by NOTAM and when an AEWAC is present in the RA boundary, the controlling authority for active RAs is released to the AEWAC pilot.

2.4.1.2   The authority released is solely for AEWAC control of military aircraft.

2.4.1.3   The AEWAC pilot will only connect to the VATSIM Network using an approved pilot client.

2.4.1.4   The AEWAC pilot cannot provide ATC services to any VATSIM pilot irrespective of holding a controller rating as they are not logged in as an ATC controller.

2.4.2   VATPAC Controllers

2.4.2.1   VATPAC controllers will release the controlling authority to the AEWAC pilot for any active RA within their airspace boundary. The VATPAC controller remains responsible for providing ATC services for any non-military aircraft within their airspace boundary.

2.4.2.2   The VATPAC controller will coordinate the transit of any non-military aircraft through the active RA with the AEWAC pilot.

2.4.3   Boundary Handoffs Inbound to RA

2.4.3.1   Military aircraft inbound to an active RA will be handed off by the VATPAC Controller to the controlling AEWAC pilot no later than 10nm before the RA's lateral boundary.

2.4.3.2   No coordination is required. The handoff only requires advising the military aircraft to contact the AEWAC callsign on the designated frequency and that ATC services are terminated.

2.4.3.3   **ATC Off-line:** Military aircraft will initiate contact with the AEWAC pilot no later than 10nm before the active RA boundary.

2.4.4   Boundary Handoffs Outbound from RA

2.4.4.1   Military aircraft leaving an active RA will be handed off by the AEWAC pilot to the VATPAC Controller no later than 10nm before the RA's lateral boundary.

2.4.4.2   No coordination is required. The handoff only requires advising the military aircraft to contact the VATPAC Controller on the designated frequency.

2.4.4.3   On first contact with the VATPAC Controller the military aircraft will advise level and intentions.

2.4.4.4   **ATC Off-line:** The AEWAC pilot will authorise a frequency change to Unicom 10nm from the RA boundary.

2.4.5   Non-Military Aircraft Handoffs

2.4.5.1   Non-military aircraft will not be handed off to the AEWAC pilot. The VATPAC Controller will coordinate any transit of an active RA with the AWEAC pilot.

2.4.5.2   Non-military aircraft will remain on the VATPAC Controller frequency and will continue to receive ATC services whilst in the VATPAC Controller's airspace.

2.4.5.3   **ATC Off-line:** Non-military aircraft requiring transit of an active RA will contact the AEWAC pilot (voice or text) to receive approval to enter the RA. No ATC services will be provided.

2.5   *Responsibilities*

2.5.1   VATPAC

2.5.1.1   To ensure awareness of this agreement VATPAC will;

   a) publish this agreement on their web site on the Operations Documents page,

   b) issue a NOTAM referencing this agreement, summarising the potential areas of confusion due to lack of awareness and the limitations of the AEWAC control authority,

   c) advise the VATSIM Supervisors of this agreement, and

   d) develop a method of showing those RA's that are currently active on the front page of the VATPAC web site.

2.5.1.2   When any NOTAM is issued to advise of Restricted Airspace activation periods, the NOTAM must contain;

   a) a diagram of the RA airspace that is being activated,

   b) a list of airway segments unavailable as a result of the activation, and

   c) a refence to this agreement, and

   d) an explanation of the control authority released.

2.5.2   RAAF Virtual

2.5.2.1   To ensure awareness of this agreement RAAF Virtual will;

   a) update their AEWAC pilot training to ensure it complies with this agreement,

   b) provide examples in their AEWAC pilot training on how to resolve potential confusion arising from civilian pilots who plan a flight through an active RA without being aware of the RA status or this agreement,

   c) ensure the limitations of the control authority provided in this agreement to AEWAC pilots is included in the AEWAC pilot training and assessment,

   d) provide evidence that the AEWAC pilot training promotes compliance with the VATSIM Code of Conduct,

   e) display this LOA on their website to promote awareness and comply with VSOA policy, and

   f) send this LOA to the VSOA BOG member and his/her delegate as per VSOA policy.

2.6 *Examples of Potential Situations*

2.6.1 Rationale

2.6.1.1 These examples are provided to assist in ensuring a positive outcome for military and civilian pilots. Compliance with the VATSIM Code of Conduct at all times is the guiding principle.

2.6.1.2 The aim is for an environment which is fun and, at the same time, educational and a realistic simulation of procedures followed by pilots and air traffic controllers everyday around the world.

2.6.2 Civilian Pilot Unaware of the active RA

2.6.2.1 A civilian pilot accidently plans a flight through an active RA;

a) VATPAC Enroute Controller Active

  i. The VATPAC Controller will provide an alternate route/level avoiding the active RA to the civilian pilot and provide a link to the NOTAM that activated the RA.

  ii. If not operationally acceptable to the pilot, the VATPAC controller will advise the AEWAC pilot of the flight plan path and the AEWAC pilot will manage the military aircraft to ensure safe passage of the civilian aircraft through the active RA.

b) VATPAC Enroute Controller Not Active

  i. The AEWAC pilot will suggest an alternative route/level avoiding the active RA to the civilian pilot and provide a link to the NOTAM that activated the RA.

  ii. If not operationally acceptable to the pilot, the AEWAC pilot will manage the military aircraft to ensure safe passage of the civilian aircraft through the active RA.

2.6.3 VATPAC Controller is Unaware of this LOA

2.6.3.1 A VATPAC controller is unaware of the agreement to release RA airspace to AEWAC pilots and questions the authority of the AEWAC pilot;

  a) The AEWAC pilot will refer the VATPAC controller to this agreement in the Operations Document section of the VATPAC website

  b) The AEWAC pilot will explain, if necessary, the limitations of the control authority provided by this agreement.

  c) The VATPAC Controller will comply with this agreement.

2.6.4 AEWAC Pilot is Unaware of this LOA

2.6.4.1 An AEWAC pilot in an active RA is unaware that the controlling authority released to them in an active RA is limited to the direction of military aircraft and they are not to provide ATC services to any aircraft;

  a) The VATPAC Controller or the civilian pilot will refer the AEWAC pilot to this agreement in the Operations Document section of the VATPAC website

b) The VATPAC Controller or the civilian pilot will explain, if necessary, the limitations of the control authority provided by this agreement.

c) The AEWAC Pilot will comply with this agreement.

2.6.5　The VATSIM Supervisor is Unaware of this LOA

2.6.5.1　The VATPAC Controller, AEWAC Pilot or the civilian pilot will refer the supervisor to this agreement in the Operations Document section of the VATPAC website.

3　Reserved Frequencies

3.1.1　RAAFv Operational Frequencies

3.1.1.1　Within VATPAC's airspace the following frequencies are reserved for RAAFv use.

Frequency	Voice Room
129.250	rw1.vatpac.org/128.250
129.550	rw1.vatpac.org/129.550
129.750	rw1.vatpac.org/129.750
130.550	rw1.vatpac.org/130.550
131.000	rw1.vatpac.org/131.000
131.500	rw1.vatpac.org/131.500
131.750	rw1.vatpac.org/131.750
132.750	rw1.vatpac.org/132.750
133.750	rw1.vatpac.org/133.750

3.1.1.2　These frequencies will be updated as agreed between VATPAC and RAAF Virtual should they require change due to clashes with Civilian assigned frequencies.