

**AERONAUTICAL  
INFORMATION  
CIRCULAR (AIC)****H06/21****Effective: 202102162300 UTC**

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# **RISK OF UNINTENDED DESCENT BELOW CONTROLLED AIRSPACE WHILE CONDUCTING VISUAL APPROACHES AT WILLIAMTOWN (YWLM)**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This AIC cancels and replaces AIC H40/20 with a change to the cancellation date.
- 1.2 The unique nature of Williamtown terminal airspace has resulted in a number of incidents where IFR aircraft inadvertently descend outside controlled airspace (CTA) during the conduct of a visual approach. This affects aircraft of all types and categories, including multi-crew RPT jets with advanced EFIS displays.
- 1.3 The responsibility to remain within controlled airspace during the conduct of a visual approach rests with the pilot – see *AIP ENR 1.1 - Minimum Altitude Requirements*. Uncoordinated descent outside controlled airspace presents a risk to the safety of flight, particularly to the south of Williamtown, where high density, non-controlled sport and general aviation activities take place.
- 1.4 This AIC promotes awareness of the issue and provides information to aid pilots in recognising and avoiding inadvertent descent below CTA.

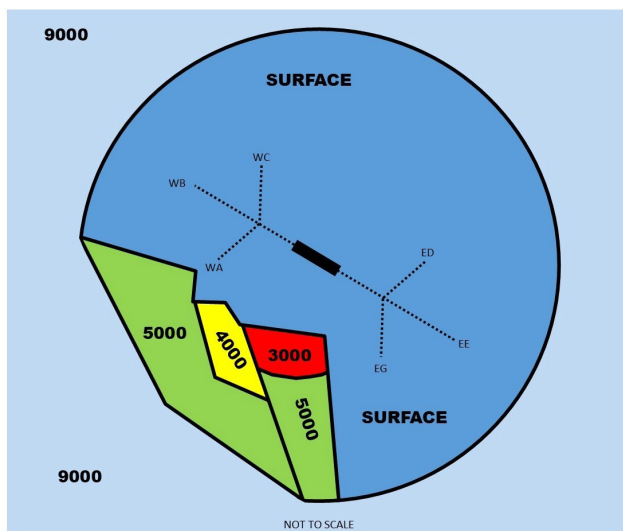
## **2. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS**

- 2.1 The design of Williamtown CTA is unusual for a Class C aerodrome, with a relatively small radius and non-concentric airspace steps resulting in a steeper than usual descent profile.
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- 2.2 Williamtown CTA consists of a series of restricted areas (R578ABCDEFGF) and the Williamtown CTR. These areas coincide and overlap with civil Class C and E airspace.
- 2.3 Depiction of Williamtown airspace in charting and electronic displays can be confusing due to the simultaneous presentation of military and civil airspace. Most common charting types place emphasis on the lateral dimensions of the military airspace but the vertical dimensions of the civil airspace, showing vertical dimensions of the military airspace in a separate section of the chart.
- 2.4 Williamtown terminal airspace also changes in dimension and classification during CTAF hours, when some (but not all) of the CTA reverts to Class E airspace; and also when R583B is active.
- 2.5 There are no published STAR for Williamtown, requiring manual entry of descent points and limits and preventing the issue of descent instructions such as “at (point) descend to (level)”.
- 2.6 Aircraft transiting the Sydney terminal area for Williamtown may arrive off their planned track, due to ATC traffic manipulation in the Sydney terminal area.

### **3. HOTSPOTS**

- 3.1 The two most common areas where inadvertent descent below CTA steps may occur are:
    - 3.1.1 Arrivals from the north and north west between the WLM 321R and 359R (including W174/TIMBO/TW, W606/TRINA, and W182/NICLA)
    - 3.1.2 Arrivals from the south and south west between the WLM 185R and 270R (including V140/TOOKI and H185/MARTO).
  - 3.2 The following diagram (not to scale) shows the lowest available altitude compliant with visual approach minimum altitude requirements within Williamtown CTA.
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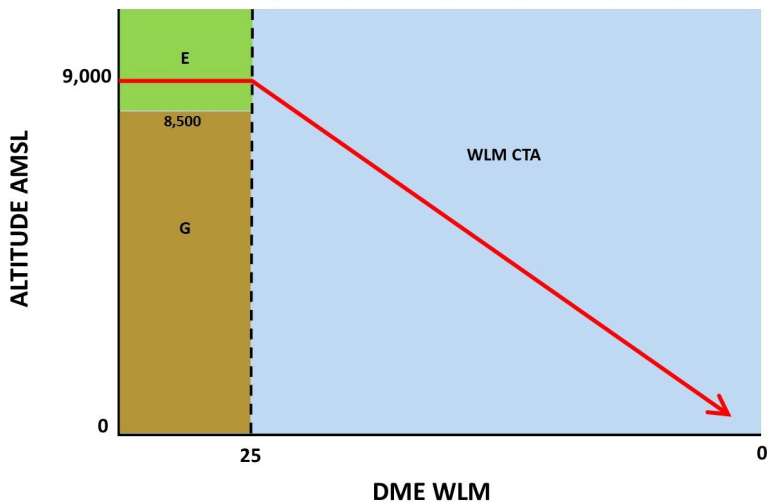


**Lowest altitudes within CTA**

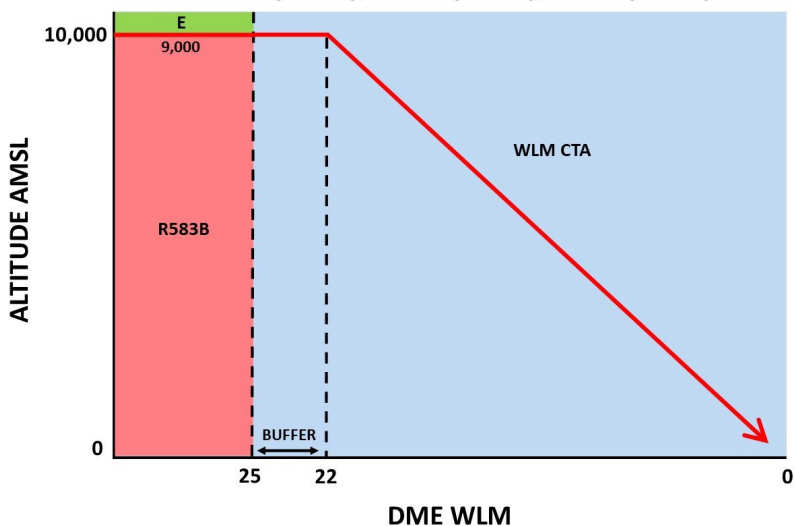
#### **4. TECHNIQUES TO REMAIN IN CTA**

- 4.1 From the north. Maintain 9,000 FT AMSL until 25 DME WLM. This requirement will change if R583B is active, potentially limiting descent to 10,000 FT AMSL until 22 DME WLM.
- 4.2 The following diagrams illustrate visual descent profiles for arrivals on common tracks from the north:

**VISUAL DESCENT: ARRIVALS VIA  
TIMBO (W174), TRINA (W606), NICLA (W182)**

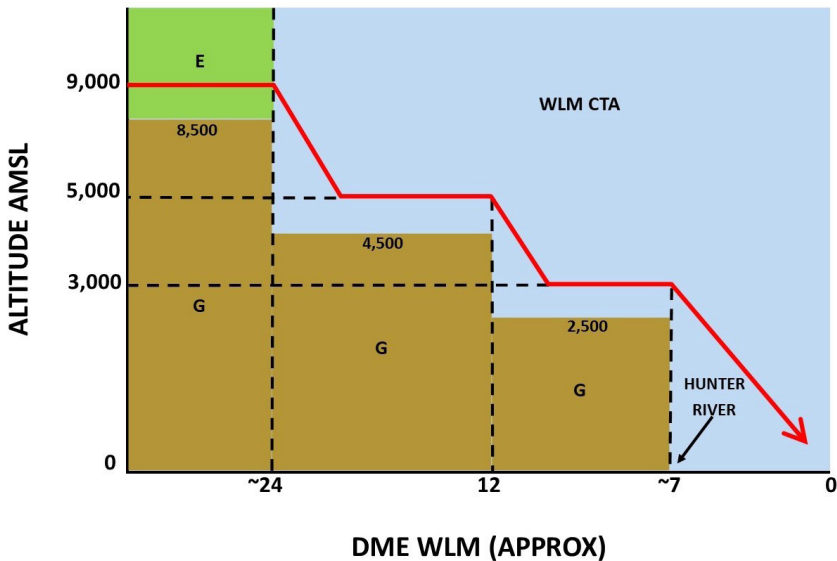


**VISUAL DESCENT WHEN R583B ACTIVE: ARRIVALS VIA  
TIMBO (W174), TRINA (W606), NICLA (W182)**



- 4.3 From the south. Limit descent to the minima displayed in the image at para 3.2 for each restricted area, and visually confirm aircraft position reference the Hunter River, which marks the southern limit of the WLM CTR.
- 4.4 The following diagram illustrates the visual descent available for arrivals from the south tracking via TOOKI/V140. Arrivals from further east or west will be subject to similar restrictions at varying DME distances depending on track:
- 4.5 From any direction. If in doubt as to the descent available to you, request guidance from ATC. If the anticipated descent profile is too steep, ATC can provide extra track miles for descent within CTA.

### VISUAL DESCENT: ARRIVALS VIA TOOKI (V140)



## 5. AIRSPACE DESIGN REVIEW

- 5.1 The design of Williamtown terminal airspace is currently being reviewed by Defence and CASA, to ensure the airspace will meet the future needs of military and civil aviation.

## 6. CANCELLATION

- 6.1 This AIC will remain current until 01 March 2022.

## 7. DISTRIBUTION

- 7.1 Aircservices Australia website only.