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Royal Australian Air Force - Joint Airspace Control Cell  
Australian Defence Force  
Russell Offices  
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: [adf.airspace@defence.gov.au](mailto:adf.airspace@defence.gov.au)

**RE: Proposed temporary airspace changes to support military exercises in Northern Australia**

INPEX welcomes the opportunity to participate in consultation by the Royal Australian Air Force – Joint Airspace Control Cell (JACC) on the scheduled military exercises in Northern Australia in July 2025. We support the Australian Defence Forces’ operations and ongoing joint-military exercises with our allies in the Indo-Pacific region and wish to provide input into the consultation with relevance to our operations within Northern Australia. In summary, the proposed temporary airspace changes to support military exercise activities will have minimal risk and no significant impact to our operations.

INPEX CORPORATION (INPEX) is an international energy company, listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange. We have been an active member of the Australian business community since 1986 and are the largest Japanese investor in the country. INPEX aims to provide a reliable supply of diverse energy sources including oil and natural gas, and renewable power.

In Australia, INPEX is the operator of the world-class Ichthys LNG development. The Ichthys field, located in license areas WA-50/51-L, is a gas-condensate field situated in the Browse Basin approximately 220 kilometres off the Western Australian coast and some 450 kilometres northwest of Broome. Ichthys LNG is comprised of offshore facilities in the Browse Basin, onshore processing facilities in Darwin and an 890-kilometre gas export pipeline linking the two.

Ichthys LNG plays a significant role in bridging two nations by providing lasting social and economic benefits to Australia while delivering long-term energy security to Japan. Currently, Ichthys LNG supplies approximately 8 per cent of Japan’s LNG requirements.

INPEX is committed to the ongoing safety of our personnel, contractors, and stakeholders, which is exemplified through our core value of *Anzen dai ichi* - Safety number one – a guiding principle for all our operations and organisational decisions.

We value the opportunity to provide input into this consultation given the important safety-related parameters of the scheduled defence exercises.

INPEX conducts extensive helicopter operations between Broome and the Browse Basin (250 nm to the north of Broome) in support of the Ichthys development. A five-day per week helicopter schedule is maintained throughout the year, with 20-30 flights per week flown between the Browse Basin with a fleet of Sikorsky S92 and Airbus H175 helicopters. Flights commence at 6am and generally proceed to the Basin via an intermediate fuel stop at Djarindjin airport on the Dampier Peninsula before continuing to INPEX's offshore assets. The round-trip journey takes approximately 4.5 hours, therefore requiring careful planning to maximise payloads over the exceptionally long distances, and to ensure passengers are able to connect with fixed wing jet services from Broome. Any delays or variations to planned flight routes including for example, military exercises can have significant impacts to our operations.

Upon review, the airspace promulgation shows "Configuration Alpha" of the exercise does not impact INPEX, as the activated airspace lies to the east of INPEX's helicopter operations.

"Configuration Bravo" does however, occupy some of the same airspace as INPEX's contracted helicopter operations. As such, when the airspace is activated inside the date window 14-24 July from 0830-1330 WST, INPEX-contracted helicopters will be required to stay clear of the airspace by limiting flight altitude and this would affect nine operational flying days.

The remaining area with potential impact to INPEX is the Temporary Danger Area (TDA "Vermillion"), which occupies from the surface to 10,000 feet and forms a wedge of airspace, the boundary of which lies approximately 5nm to the south of INPEX's offshore Central Processing Facility. When this danger area is activated, INPEX-contracted helicopters are permitted to transit the airspace (approximately 17nm of flight), but are required to monitor radio frequencies and maintain a lookout for fast jet traffic. In consultation with our helicopter contractor PHI, we assess this will pose minimal risk and can be operationally managed via radio communications for the short time of exposure.

We note and appreciate the Australian Defence Force has made a considerable effort to minimise the potential impact to INPEX helicopters when the airspace is activated. We note in the past airspace has been configured to allow flights to proceed with no impact. An example of this was redesigning the danger area - known as "Lance" during Talisman Sabre in 2023 - so it did not envelope our facilities.

INPEX is appreciative of these efforts and resourcing the Australian Defence Force has provided to ensuring open dialogue in progressing consultation of this nature and minimising impacts on both parties' operations. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with Defence to ensure transparency and safety regarding our operations during such exercises.

Please contact John Williams, Government Affairs and Regulatory Approvals Manager, on 0412 422 636 or at [john.w@inpex.com.au](mailto:john.w@inpex.com.au) for further information, or to arrange a briefing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bill Townsend', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bill Townsend  
Senior Vice President Corporate  
INPEX Australia