



Australian Government
Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Civil/Military SAR Cooperation in Australia

ICAO EUR/APAC SAR Workshop 2-4 October 2024, Baku

Presenter: Scott Constable (Remote)

- Principal Advisor Aviation Policy, AMSA
- ICAO Member - ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue
 - Australian representative to ICAO Asia/Pacific SAR Work Group



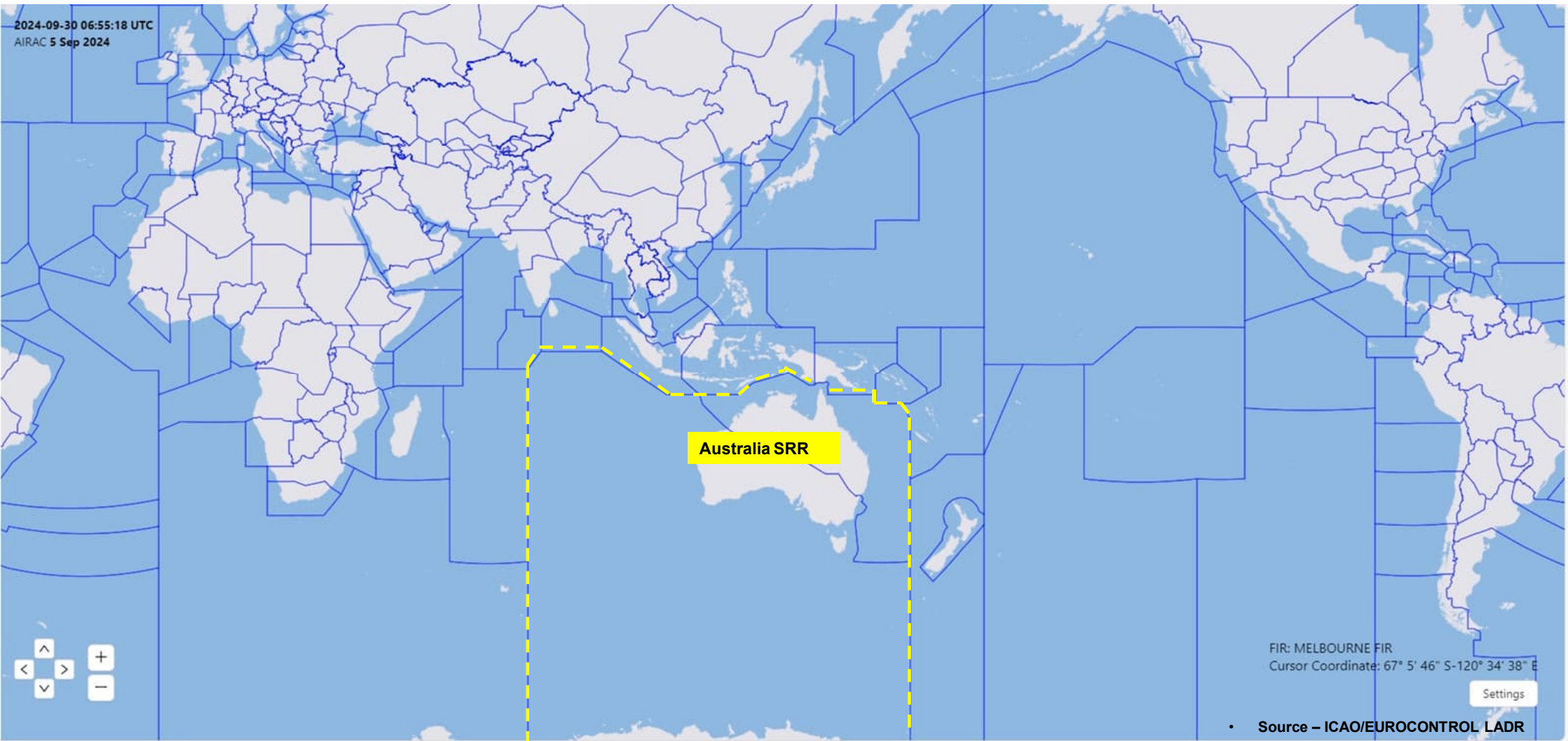
This Presentation

- Australian National SAR plan arrangements
- Aviation Civil/Military cooperation in Australia
- Example SAR case
- Multi-national civil and military SAR response considerations
- Questions



Image: courtesy Australian Department of Defence.
Copyright Commonwealth of Australia

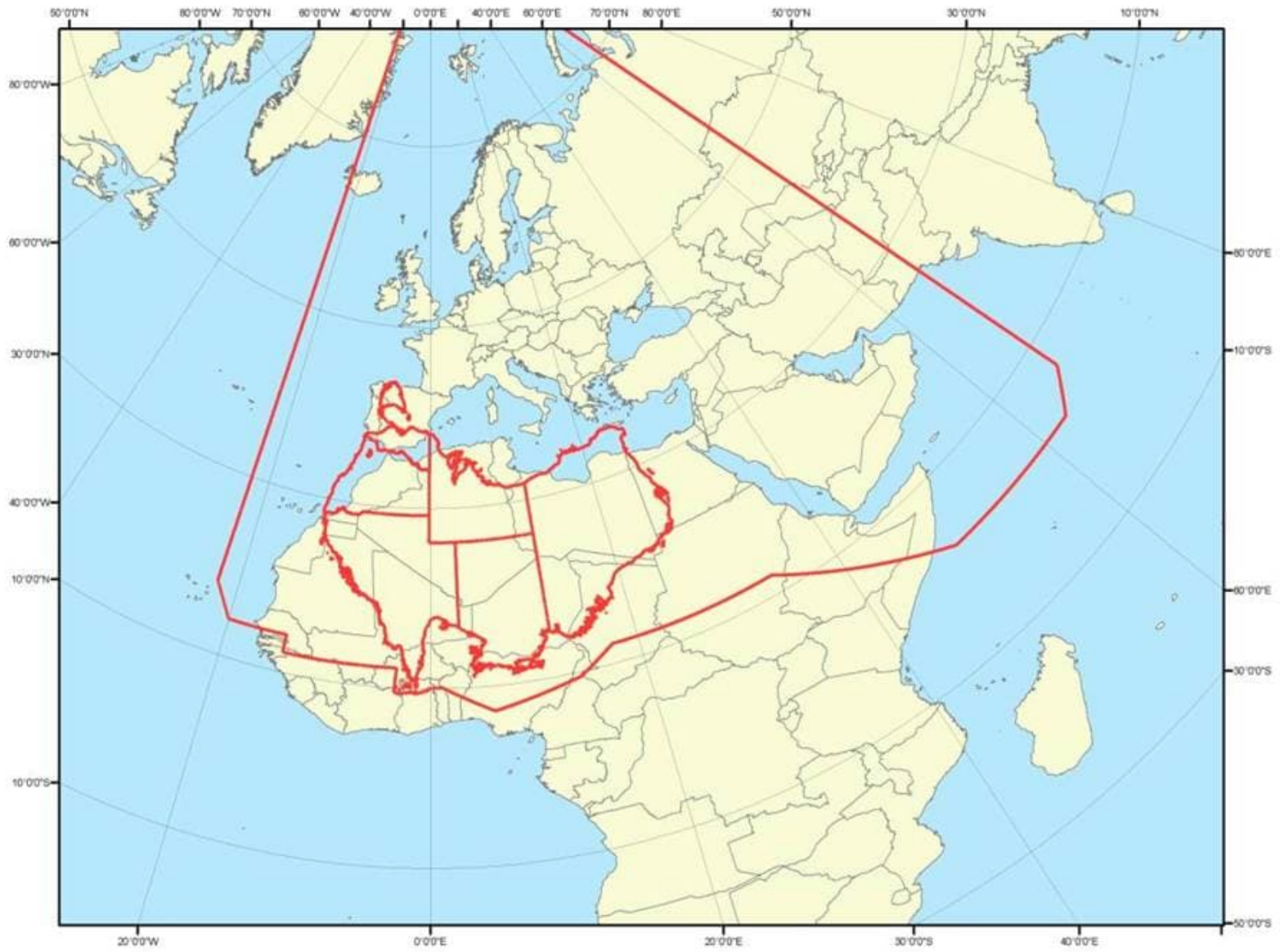
Flight Information Regions





Australia SRR

• Source – ICAO/EUROCONTROL LADR



Australian National SAR Plan

- Australia is a federation of States and territories
- National SAR Plan - cooperative arrangement between Federal and State/Territory Governments



Australian National SAR Plan stakeholders

- **Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)** – national civil aeronautical and maritime search and rescue (SAR) service provider
 - Responsible for Australia's ICAO and IMO SAR obligations
 - JRCC Australia
 - Civil SAR aircraft arrangements and SAR equipment
 - Cospas-Sarsat Australian Mission Control Centre (AUMCC)
- **Australian Defence Force (ADF)**
 - national military SAR service provider
- **State/Territory/Federal Police**
 - SAR service provider within individual State/Territory limits

Australian National SAR Plan supporting agencies

- **Air Traffic Services (ATS)** –
 - **Airservices Australia** – civil ATS
 - **Australian Defence Force** – military ATS
- **Bureau of Meteorology** – SAR weather service
- **State/Territory emergency services** – government and volunteer
- **Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB)** – aviation and maritime accident investigator
- **Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)** – civil aviation regulator and facilitation of temporary Restricted/Danger areas for SAR operations
- **Telemedical Advice Service** – external contractor
- **Maritime Border Command** – assistance with aviation and marine surveillance craft for SAR
- **National Emergency Management Agency** – national level disaster response
- **Commercial organisations** – provision of SAR aircraft, vessels, equipment, communications, interpreters, etc

Australian National SAR responsibilities

Three SAR Authorities

- **JRCC Australia (AMSA)**

- International civil aircraft, manned space vehicles and aircraft on the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and Recreational Aviation Australia (RA-Aus) Registers
- Persons on or from a vessel at sea
- Persons on oil and gas facilities at sea associated with exploration, production, storage and offloading of product.

- **Police**

- Persons and vehicles on land
- Persons and vessels on inland waterways and in waters within the limits of the ports of the relevant State or Territory
- Unregistered aircraft including ultralights, paragliders, hang-gliders, and gyrocopters.

- **Australian Defence Force (ADF)**

- ADF and foreign military personnel, aircraft, ships and submarines.

Australian National SAR responsibilities

- **Best placed principle**

- The first SAR Authority to become aware of a SAR incident is obliged to respond until overall coordination can be transferred to the 'Best Placed' SAR Authority in accordance with the provisions of the *Inter-Governmental Agreement on National Search and Rescue Arrangements 2017* and the principles set out in the National SAR Manual.
- All three SAR authorities support the overall SAR coordination authority.

- **Distress Beacon Alerts**

- AMSA contracts the operation of the Cospas-Sarsat Australian Mission Control Centre (AUMCC) to commercial provider
- JRCC Australia receives all Cospas-Sarsat beacon alerts for the Australian SRR
- JRCC Australia coordinates SAR response or transfers coordination to the relevant Police or ADF SAR coordinator per above responsibilities.



Image: courtesy Australian Department of Defence.
Copyright Commonwealth of Australia

AMSA (civil) / ADF (military) SAR cooperation

- AMSA and the ADF have an excellent cooperative relationship for SAR.
- Well established arrangements in place for JRCC Australia to request ADF aircraft or vessels to assist in civil SAR response. Protocol:
 - Civil assets must first be used where available OR a specific capability is required that is not available from civil resources or that is able to respond faster;
 - Military assets in the distress area may be requested to divert;
 - Requests from State/Territory Police SAR authorities for military assets must go through JRCC Australia.
- Reciprocal arrangements for ADF to request AMSA and JRCC Australia to assist in military SAR response including:
 - Search planning and briefing of SAR assets, and maritime drift modelling
 - Tasking of civil SAR assets
 - Deployment of civil SAR equipment (e.g. SAR Datum Buoys, liferafts, etc)
- ADF has contracted civil SAR helicopters (example photo left) for ADF SAR purposes. ADF readily release these helicopters to support civil SAR. This often requires temporary suspension of military flight training activities.

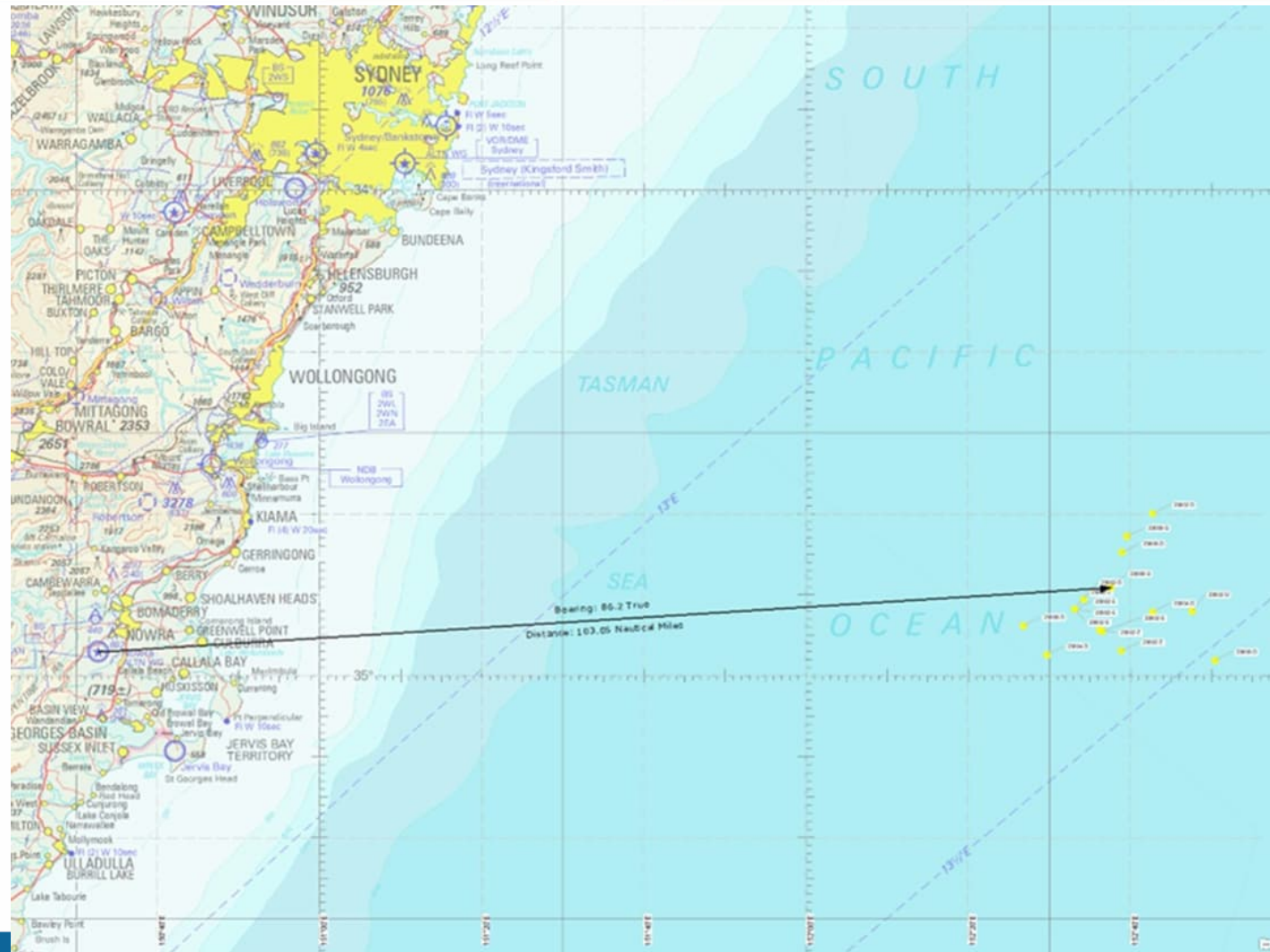
AMSA (civil) / ADF (military) SAR cooperation

- For civil SAR operations, ADF will accommodate civil SAR aircraft operations in military airspace including release of that airspace.
- The ADF provides liaison officers into JRCC Australia to assist with coordination of military SAR assets.
- The ADF assist with freighting AMSA SAR equipment between Australia and Antarctica for the summer season.
- AMSA and ADF engage in SAR training activities.
- AMSA assistance to ADF on Cospas-Sarsat distress beacon matters
 - ADF beacon registration – ADF maintains own beacon register.
 - ADF beacon alerts are transferred from JRCC Australia to ADF SAR to coordinate.
 - AMSA provides technical/policy assistance for beacon coding and functionality and related new technology (RLS, AIS, second generation beacons, etc)
- AMSA and ADF also work together with other Australian government aviation agencies
 - Civil and Defence Coordination Group – civil and defence aviation agencies meet 6-monthly to discuss aviation safety related matters.
 - Interagency Aviation Safety Promotion Work Group – quarterly meetings to share and jointly promote aviation safety initiatives including aviation SAR matters



Recent SAR Case example – civil/military cooperation

- 2nd September 2024, 12.40PM AEST
- JRCC Australia received alerts from 3 EPIRBs and a PLB 100 NM east of Nowra, NSW (Tasman Sea).
- The alerts all originated from a 19 metre Volvo 60 racing yacht *Spirit of Mateship*
- Beacons not registered correctly therefore unknown POB initially.
- There was an indication there could have been up to 15 people on the vessel. JRCC therefore planned for worst case of potentially multiple persons in the water.



Recent SAR Case example – civil/military cooperation

- JRCC Australia tasked the following assets for SAR response
 - Civil – 2 NSW State Ambulance rescue A139s, *C SAV Rio Nevado* merchant vessel (car carrier), NSW State Police vessel *NEMESIS*
 - Military (ADF) – (civil contracted) SAR A139, C130, 2 Navy vessels *HMAS Arunta* and *HMAS Canberra*.
- At 3 PM AEST one of the NSW Ambulance A139s arrived on scene and reported:
 - the yacht was suffering severe steering and stability issues, had lost its rudder and was taking on water in extreme weather conditions
 - winching was unsafe to perform due to the severe weather and fuel considerations.
- There were only 2 persons involved which was not known to the JRCC initially.
- Due to the adverse weather conditions, a surface vessel rescue operation was planned for the next day.
- The ADF C130 remained on scene after last light to support and departed at 9PM AEST.
- *HMAS Arunta* arrived on scene at 6PM AEST and departed as *HMAS Canberra* arrived.

Recent SAR Case example – civil/military cooperation

- Up to 8m breaking waves and 45-65 knots of wind on scene.
- Police vessel *NEMESIS* arrived on scene at 3AM AEST.
- HMAS *Canberra* provided a lee.
- *NEMESIS* deployed their RHIB and successfully rescued the 2 yacht crew in daylight the following morning and took them to Sydney for medical assessment.



Multi-National SAR Response - Coordination of civil and military SAR units

- JRCC Australia SAR response for MH370 involved multiple civil and military SAR units from Australia and assisting international States.
- JRCC Australia planned and briefed search areas for both civil and military aircraft, merchant ships and military vessels.
- Coordination of SAR operations for military units of other States required JRCC Australia to communicate with their home States' command and control authorities.
- Importance for State civil and military hierarchies to cooperate and understand ICAO Annex 12 SAR provisions and the role and authority of RCCs.

Questions?



Image courtesy of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority