



Australian Government

Joint Agency Coordination Centre

MH370 Operational Search Update

11 November 2015

This operational report has been developed to provide regular updates on the progress of the search effort for MH370. Our work will continue to be thorough and methodical, so sometimes weekly progress may seem slow. Please be assured that work is continuing and is aimed at finding MH370 as quickly as possible.

Key developments this week

- Following its unscheduled return to Fremantle, *Fugro Discovery* was resupplied before departing for the search area on 9 November. The ship is expected to arrive back in the search area around 14 November.
- *Fugro Equator* arrived in Fremantle on 8 November for a scheduled resupply visit. The vessel departed on 9 November, and is expected to arrive back in the search area around 14 November.

Update on Medical Evacuation

Fugro Discovery had arrived back in the search area on 3 November, but on 4 November a crew member became ill with suspected appendicitis. The doctor on *Fugro Discovery* attended the crew member and in consultation with onshore medical support, as well as the doctor on board *Fugro Equator*, the decision was taken to return to port so that further medical treatment could be provided.

After recovering the deep tow search system from the ocean, the vessel made best speed for Fremantle, arriving in the evening of 9 November whereupon the crew member was transferred to hospital for further treatment.

The remoteness of the search area has been an ongoing challenge in the search for MH370. At the time the crew member became unwell, *Fugro Discovery* was more than 2,000 kilometres (1,200 miles) from Fremantle – well beyond the range of any land-based helicopter. The only viable option was to return to port. Other options such as transferring the crew member to *Fugro Equator* or an air-lifting operation once closer to land were considered, but the risks were judged as being too great.

This incident is a timely reminder of the difficult conditions in which crew members work. The vessels spend 42 days at sea between port calls in weather conditions which can be physically arduous and fatiguing for the crew. Some of the work performed can be hazardous, particularly handling the heavy deep tow search system on a ship's wet deck moving in a seaway.

The risk of a serious illness or injury on board a search vessel is a real possibility and for this reason the vessels have a doctor on board along with appropriate medical equipment and supplies. The risk of a medical emergency is partly mitigated with regular health checks for the crew and a comprehensive system of safe working procedures, however incidents can and will occur.

Underwater search

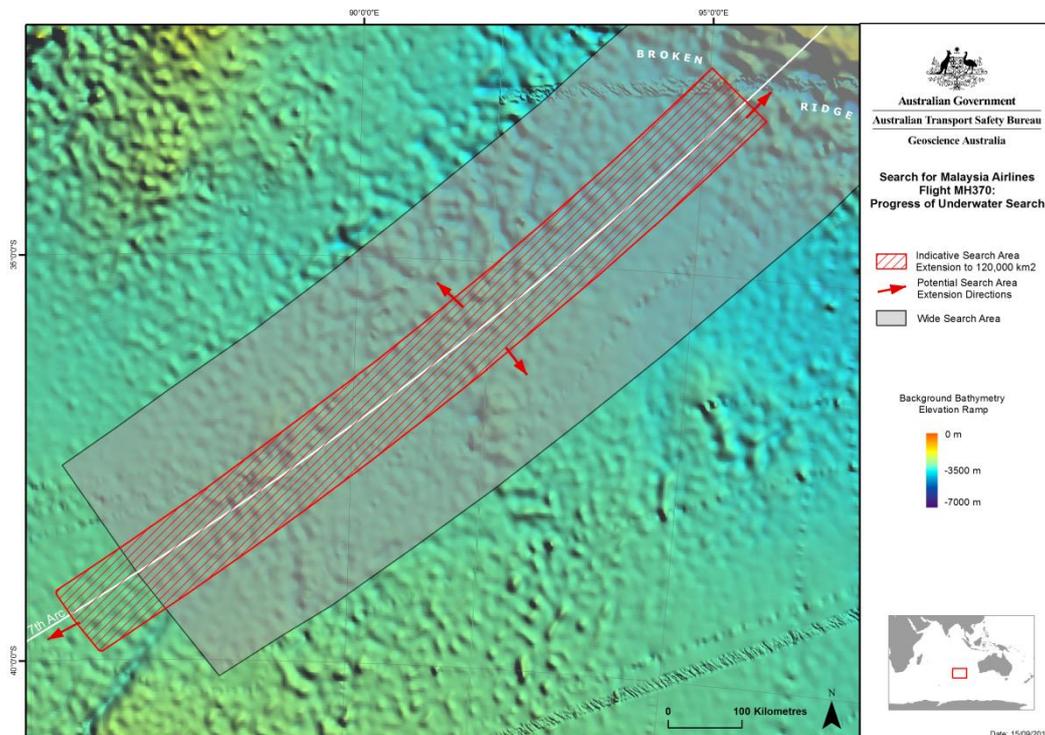
As announced in April, the search area has been expanded beyond an original 60,000 square kilometre search area to enable up to 120,000 square kilometres to be searched if required.

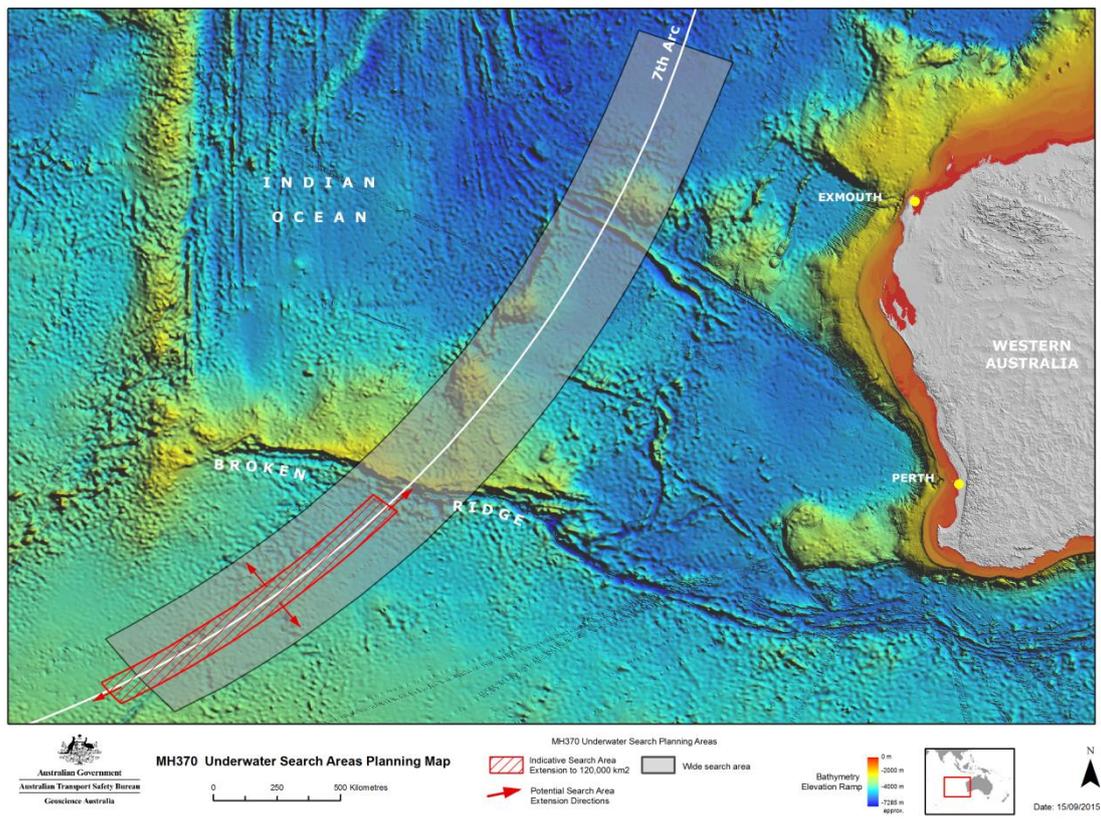
Weather continues to impact on search operations but conditions are expected to be improved over the coming months. The safety of the search crews, as always, remains a priority, and the vessels and equipment utilised will vary to reflect operational needs.

More than 70,000 square kilometres of the seafloor have been searched so far.

The Search Strategy Working Group continues to review evidence associated with MH370 which may result in further refinement of, or prioritisation within, the search area.

In the event the aircraft is found and accessible, Australia, Malaysia and the People's Republic of China have agreed to plans for recovery activities including securing all the evidence necessary for the accident investigation.





Weather

Weather is forecast to be favourable when the vessels arrive in the search area around 14 November 2015.

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