



Australian Government

Joint Agency Coordination Centre

MH370 Operational Search Update

27 July 2016

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

- *Fugro Discovery* continues operations in the search area.
- *Fugro Equator* is en route to Fremantle for resupply.
- *Dong Hai Jiu 101* is currently on weather standby and will conduct underwater search operations as weather and sea conditions allow.
- More than 110,000 square kilometres of the seafloor have been searched so far.
- Ministers from Malaysia, Australia and the People's Republic of China met in Malaysia to discuss the status of the search and future arrangements should the aircraft not be located in the search area. Further details are below.
- There was significant media coverage of data obtained from the MH370 Captain's home flight simulator. Further information is included below.

Ministerial Tripartite Meeting, 22 July 2016

Ministers from Malaysia, Australia and the People's Republic of China met in Malaysia last week to discuss a range of matters relating to the search. The key decision from the meeting was that should the aircraft not be located in the current search area, and in the absence of credible new evidence leading to the identification of a specific location of the aircraft, the search would be suspended upon completion of the 120,000 square kilometre search area.

Ministers went to great lengths to explain that this does not mean the termination of the search; should credible new information emerge which can be used to identify the specific location of the aircraft, consideration will be given to determining next steps.

The full communique from the Ministerial Tripartite Meeting is available via the following link: <http://jacc.gov.au/media/communiques/2016/com004.aspx>.

In the event the aircraft is found and accessible, the existing agreement between Australia, Malaysia and the People's Republic of China for recovery activities, including securing all the evidence necessary for the accident investigation, remains in place.

Media reports about MH370 Captain's flight simulator

On Friday 22 July 2016, there were several media reports regarding so called FBI investigation into the MH370 Captain's home flight simulator. Media coverage suggested the Captain had plotted a course to the southern Indian Ocean and that the disappearance of MH370 was a deliberate planned murder/suicide.

This type of scenario is not new and has been reported in the media previously.

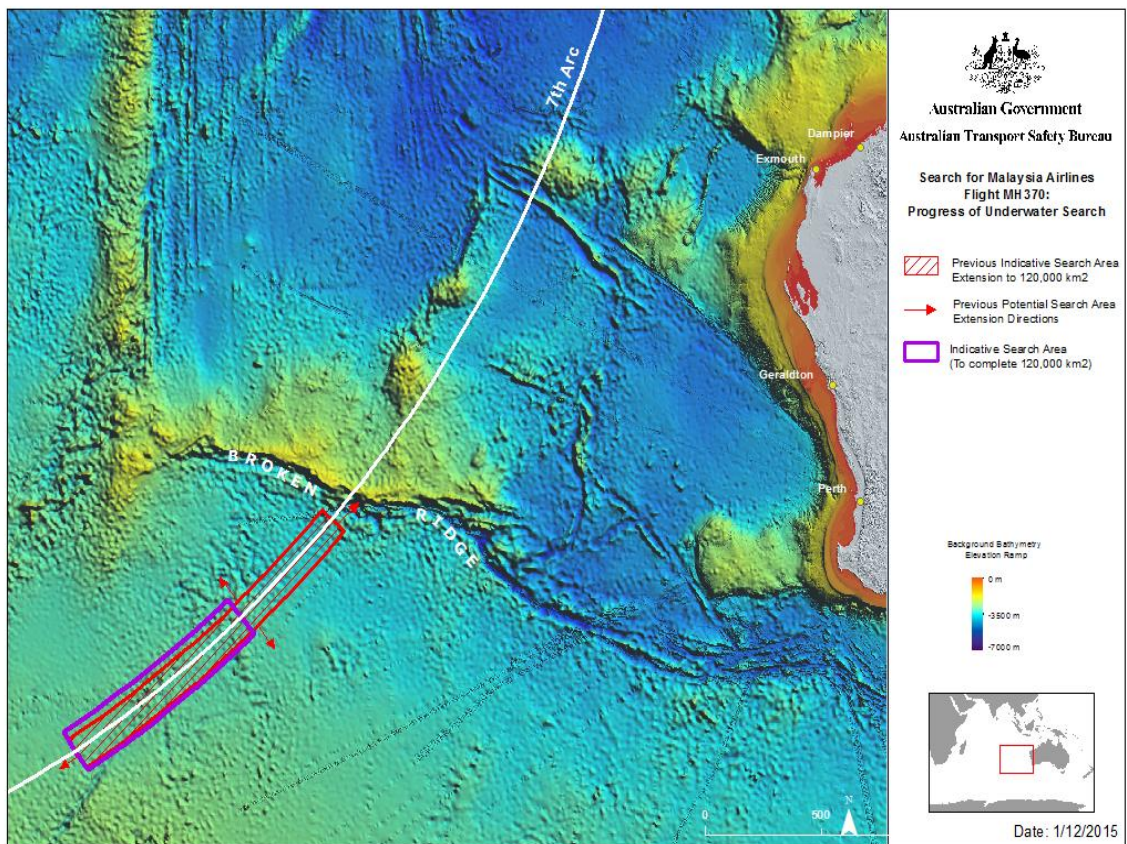
The Malaysian ICAO Annex 13 Safety Investigation Team has considered the information and it will be dealt with in its final report.

To determine the search area, the ATSB has worked closely with international experts in satellite communications, aircraft systems, data modelling and accident investigation to form the Search Strategy Working Group. This includes specialists from the following organisations:

- Air Accidents Investigation Branch (UK);
- Boeing (USA);
- Defence Science and Technology Organisation (Australia);
- Department of Civil Aviation (Malaysia);
- Inmarsat (UK);
- National Transportation Safety Board (USA);
- Thales (UK).

The simulator information shows only the possibility of planning. It does not reveal what happened on the night of the aircraft's disappearance, nor where the aircraft is located.

For the purposes of defining the underwater search area, the relevant facts and analysis most closely match a scenario in which there was no pilot intervening in the latter stages of the flight. While the flight simulator data provides a piece of information, the best available evidence of the aircraft's location is based on what we know from the last satellite communications with the aircraft. The last satellite communication with the aircraft showed it was most likely in a high rate of descent in the area of what is known as the 7th arc.



Weather

Weather conditions are forecast to be poor over the coming days and search operations are likely to be impacted.

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