

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199200143**

**Boeing Co
B737
McDonnell Douglas Corporation
Hornet**

02 December 1992

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

Occurrence Number: 199200143 **Occurrence Type:** Incident
Location: Near WILLIAMTOWN NSW
State: NSW **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Wednesday 02 December 1992
Time: 1555 hours **Time Zone** ESuT
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Boeing Co
Aircraft Model: 737-376
Aircraft Registration: VH-TAH **Serial Number:** 23479

Type of Operation: Air Transport Domestic High Capacity Passenger Scheduled

Damage to Aircraft: Nil

Departure Point:

Departure Time:

Destination: Sydney NSW

Aircraft Manufacturer: McDonnell Douglas Corporation
Aircraft Model: F/A-18A
Aircraft Registration: **Serial Number:**

Type of Operation: Air Transport Domestic High Capacity Passenger Scheduled
Domestic High Capacity Passenger Scheduled

Damage to Aircraft: Nil

Departure Point: Williamtown NSW

Departure Time:

Destination: Williamtown NSW

Approved for Release: Wednesday, July 28, 1993

Circumstances

RAAF Williamtown were operating FA18 aircraft in Restricted Areas R457 and R527. In order to return these aircraft to Williamtown at the completion of their task, it was necessary to transit civil controlled airspace under the control of Sydney Sectors 1, 2 and Arrivals.

Williamtown air traffic control [ATC] co-ordinated with Sydney Sector 1 for the recovery of two FA18 aircraft and Sector 1 issued approval and advised of civil aircraft with which Williamtown ATC needed to provide radar separation with their aircraft. Sector 1 also agreed to perform the co-ordination tasks with Sector 2 and Sydney Arrivals, which was correctly carried out.

Williamtown ATC then proceeded to recover their aircraft in accordance with the clearance issued by Sector 1, but as the FA18s were approaching civil airspace, Sector 1 advised of additional traffic VH-TAH whose track and altitude placed the aircraft in potential conflict with Shogun 1/2 [FA18].

Sydney Sector 1 believed that he had only co-ordinated an expectancy of approval with Williamtown ATC but Williamtown believed that they had received a clearance to transit the airspace.

As a result Williamtown ATC radar vectored its aircraft clear of VH-TAH and no breakdown in separation occurred.

Significant Factors

1. The co-ordination procedures for this section of airspace were complex and time consuming which led to confusion as to if an actual clearance was issued.