

Australia, Malaysia, Indonesia to trial new jet tracking system

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Co-pilot Brett McKenzie helps to look for objects during the search for missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, from a Royal New Zealand Airforce P-3K2-Orion aircraft, off Perth, on April 13, 2014

Australia on Sunday said it was trialling a "world first" system with Malaysia and Indonesia that increases the tracking of aircraft over remote oceans, allowing authorities to quickly react to abnormal situations such as the disappearance of MH370.

It raises the minimum tracking rate for planes flying over remote oceans to 15 minutes from current intervals of 30 to 40 minutes.

The technology "can increase realtime monitoring should an abnormal situation arise," Australian Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss said.

"In a world first, all three countries will trial a new method of tracking aircraft through the skies over remote oceanic areas," Truss told reporters.

"Now this initiative adapts existing technology used by more than 90 percent of long-haul passenger aircraft and would see [air traffic control](#) able to respond more rapidly should an aircraft experience difficulty or deviation from its flight plan."

The announcement came ahead almost a year after Malaysian Airlines MH370 went missing en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 239 people on board last March.

A massive air and underwater search failing to find any evidence of the plane.

While the system was "not a silver bullet", it would help to improve current methods of tracking ahead of other solutions being developed, Airservices Australia chairman Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston said.

If an aircraft deviates more than 200 feet from its assigned level or two nautical miles from its expected track, the system would automatically monitor the jet more closely, such as every five minutes or almost continuously, he added.



Australian Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss (C), seen during a press conference at the RAAF Base Pearce, on March 22, 2014

"This is a big step forward. It's not just changing things, it's going to make, I think, the monitoring of aircraft over these oceanic areas much more effective," the head of the air traffic control body said.

"We will have a datum close to where the aircraft ran into trouble, which is in marked contrast to MH370 where the last known position was in the Malacca Straits."

The trial, using automatic dependent surveillance contract (ADSC) technology, will commence at the [air traffic](#) services centre in the eastern city of Brisbane before being extended to Melbourne in the country's south and to Indonesia and Malaysia.

Long-haul jets that use the existing technology include wide-bodied

planes such as Boeing's 380, 777, 330, 340 and 350 models, Truss said.

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