

A Guide to Flying Bass Strait

If any Cessna 182 Association members are considering flying to Hobart for the planned March fly-in and have not had experience or don't perhaps have confidence about flying across Bass Strait to Tasmania, this short guide may be useful. I've written it on the assumption of flying under the VFR, but it may also be helpful to those who can fly under IFR. When I flew across Bass Strait quite a number of times under the VFR back a few years ago, I found it helpful to have a detailed running sheet of waypoints and the sequence of VHF frequencies all tabulated out that I could mark off my progress and times and to be careful not to skip any steps that can lead to anxiety.

These running notes and a set of sample VHF calls to and from ATC for your Bass Strait "Skeds" (scheduled reports) and related clearance requests are attached. Note carefully the FIR boundaries you cross progressively as you fly across Bass Strait, as the Mel Ctr frequencies change.

When you have finalised your route plan, submit a VFR Flight Plan to NAIPS via OzRunways or AvPlan at least 30 minutes before departure. All passengers should wear a life jacket.

My usual route was from Kyneton (YKTN) down to the west of the Melbourne controlled airspace steps at 7,500 feet to a waypoint that I called Bolwarrah (37° 30.6' S; 144° 5.2' E). This is a little lake named Lake Bolwarrah just north of the Western Highway leading from Melbourne to Ballarat. This kept me under the 8,500 foot MEL Class C step and well clear of the 4,500 Class C step to the east which is quite close to terrain in places. I then flew at 7,500 feet over Lethbridge Airport (YLED) and tracked direct from there to the coast between Torquay and Apollo Bay across Bass Strait to King Island Airport, (YKII). I then tracked to Smithton (YSMI), then to Burnie/Wynyard (YWYY) all at 7,500 feet (unless skirting weather – more about that later), dropping to 5,500 feet along the north Tassie coast. This track gives you the about the shortest real time over water as you fly down the length of King Island and then across to Hunter Island and Robbins Island just prior to reaching Smithton. There is no Avgas at Smithton but there is at Wynyard. If you don't need fuel, Smithton will work well if you need a comfort stop and to rest the shaky legs after the overwater stint.

I found that the best route from Wynyard on the north coast of Tasmania to Cambridge near Hobart was to use the following VFR waypoints: Deloraine (DEL), Jacobs Sugarloaf (JSL) thence to Craigbourne Reservoir (CBV) and Campania (CPA). I planned to fly this at 5,500 feet, until descending into Cambridge. JSL is under the Launceston Airport (YMLT) Class C and D southern steps. You could hug the hills to the southwest of YMLT or go low and slide underneath the Class D, but I found it best to seek a VFR transit clearance from YLMT Tower from about Cressy to JSL and until clear of the CTR as you track south to CBV. Sample VHF calls to Launy TWR are detailed later.

CBV and CPA are both VFR entry points into the YMHB CTR. From CBV there is a designated VFR route called Victor Northeast which takes you to Sorell which has you close both to Cambridge Airport (YCBG) and Hobart Airport (YMHB). Whilst this is technically a VFR transit route, it could be used as an approach path. Victor Northeast is shown on the Hobart VTC as a line of purple dots. You need a clearance from YMHB Tower to fly the VFR route and to enter the Hobart Class D CTR.

YCBG has Avgas via Par Avion and parking is available. You need to read thoroughly the ERSA entries for YCBG and for YMHB to be aware of the local flight procedures as YMBH Tower does the control for YCBG although they can't see the airfield from their tower. This means that some calls are to TWR and some are on the YCGB CTAF.

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Flight Plan

YKTN – Bolwarrah – YLED – YKII – YSMI – YWYY – DEL – JSL – CBV – CPA – YCBG

ALT	TRK	LOCATION	CTAF/FREQ	NDB/VOR	NOTES
A075	214	Kyneton CTAF	119.0		
	167	Bolwarrah	126.8		
		Melbourne Centre	126.8		
A075	174	Lethbridge CTAF	127.65		
		Melbourne Centre	126.8		
		Melbourne Centre	120.0		10 Nm before coast
		Melbourne Centre	123.9		35 Nm from King Island
A075	124	King Island CTAF	126.85	332	
		Melbourne Centre	122.6		30 Nm from YSMI
A075	097	Smithton CTAF	119.1		
		Melbourne Centre	122.6		
A055	115	Wynyard CTAF	126.9	302	
		Melbourne Centre	122.6		
		Melbourne Centre	120.7		28 Nm from Deloraine
		Melbourne Centre	126.5		6 Nm from Deloraine
A055	119	Deloraine			S41 32.0, E146 40.0
		Melbourne Centre	126.5		
		Launceston TWR	118.7	242/112.6	For Class C entry
		Melbourne Centre	126.5		
A055	156	Jacobs Sugarloaf			S41 56.5, E147 18.0
		Melbourne Centre	126.5		
		Melbourne Centre	125.55		At 5 Nm from CBV
A025	162	Craigbourne Res			S42 33.0, E147 25.0
		Melbourne Centre	125.55		
A025	151	Campania			S42 40.0, E147 18.0
		Melbourne Centre	125.55		
		Cambridge	118.1	VOR 112.7	Hobart TWR
			121.7		Hobart SMS/Ground

Other Numbers:

Cambridge Airport: 03 62481 5390

Launceston ATIS: 134.75

Hobart ATIS: 128.45

Bass Strait Flights

YKII AWIS:	128.75 or 02 6462 1014	FIA: 135.7 Melbourne Radar
Mel Ctr:	120.0 for 32 Nm	YKII NDB: 332
Mel Ctr:	123.9 at 35 Nm YKII	YKII CTAF: 126.85
Mel Ctr:	122.6 at 30 Nm from YSMI	

ATC call: Approaching Victorian coast. Melbourne Centre on 120.0. Replace XYZ with your aircraft tail number. Other underlined items will vary also.

“Melbourne Centre, G’day, XYZ, Request Bass Strait over-water skeds”

After ATC go-ahead

“Centre, XYZ, Cessna 182 on 120.0, tracking Lethbridge to Smithton via King Island, 7,500, 2 POB, request 15 minute overwater skeds”

Read back ATC instructions, e.g., “15 minute skeds, next report at time 30 on 123.9, XYZ.”

Mel Ctr may give you a dedicated transponder code or they may leave you with 1200.

Don’t miss your designated Ops Normal call time! At the next reporting time on 123.9 (this frequency changes about 35 Nm from YKII):

“Melbourne Centre, XYZ, Ops Normal, 35 Nm from King Island, 7,500”

Next Mel Ctr Freq 122.6 at 30 Nm from YSMI

“Melbourne Centre, XYZ, Ops Normal, 50 Nm from Smithton, 7,500”

At Tasmanian coast:

“Melbourne Centre, XYZ, crossing Tassie coast, terminate skeds”

If you need to change altitude or track due to weather during the Bass Strait crossing, communicate this to ATC on the respective frequency. Even though you are flying under the VFR, it helps ATC if you treat this route as if you’re flying IFR as far as track and height changes go. For example, if there’s some ugly weather ahead and you think you can get around it by a change of track, make your request as follows:

“Mel Ctr, XYZ request up to 10 (or 20) miles left (or right – or both) of track due weather”

Or if a height change will get you over or under the bad weather:

“Mel Ctr, XYZ request non-standard 8,500 feet due weather”

Transit Request YMLT CTR

Typical call to YMLT TWR for transit clearance once abeam Cressy:

“Launy TWR, XYZ Cessna 182, VFR, abeam Cressy at 5,500, tracking 117° Deloraine to Jacobs Sugarloaf and then Craighourne Reservoir, request transit clearance through Class Charlie”

YMLT will probably assign a unique transponder code for the CTR transit. Change back to 1200 when leaving the CTR, after TWR advises “control service terminated”

Flights into Controlled Airspace

Cambridge Aerodrome – YCBG – Class D Elevation 67 ft

ATIS:	128.45 or 112.7	03 6248 5390
Hobart Twr Freq:	118.1	FIA: MEL CTR 126.5
Ground Freq (SMC):	121.7	AWIS: 03 6248 4395
Circuits:	1000 ft on QNH	VOR: 112.7
CTR boundaries:		GPS: S42 50.2; E147 30.6

Inbound: Before VFR Approach Point, T/Ponder to 3000 + ALT. Obtain YMHB ATIS on 128.45.

Inbound call: At 8 – 10 Nm. Hobart Tower on 118.1

“Hobart Tower, XYZ, Cessna 182, approaching Craigbourne Reservoir, 2500, Information Bravo, inbound for Cambridge via Campania, request airways clearance, Unfamiliar”

Enter Hobart CTR at 1500 ft

Preferred Cambridge Rwy: 30 or 32. TWR may vector you depending on other commercial traffic

Must report Downwind UNO. “XYZ, downwind RWY 32, full stop”

ATC circuit joining instructions, e.g.: “XYZ make visual approach, RWY 32, report final”

Read back summary of ATC instructions.

After landing, vacate runway, Transponder to SBY, lights and strobes Off, contact Hobart TWR 118.1.

“Hobart Tower, XYZ clear of RWYs, Cambridge”

Departures: Obtain ATIS on 128.45

Taxi advice: Hobart Ground on 121.7. Set T/Ponder to 3000 + ALT

“Hobart GND, XYZ, Cessna 182, Cambridge, Information Bravo, for Wynyard via Campania, RWY 32,”

Taxi as instructed to hold point. Make Ready Call to Hobart Tower on 118.1

“Hobart Tower, XYZ, Ready RWY 32, for Wynyard via Campania, Information Bravo”

Departure call (if req'd):

“Tower, XYZ, Departed Cambridge at Time 08, tracking 331 to Campania, 3,500; Jacobs Sugarloaf at time 42”

At CTR boundary, Transponder to SBY, Change Transponder to 1200 (for VFR), back to ALT.

Happy to provide any further advice if needed.