

----Question time briefing January 2020----

GENERAL DRONES ISSUES

KEY POINTS

Whole-of-government framework to manage drones

- My Department is leading work on the development of a whole-of-government framework to manage and integrate drones and electronic vertical take off and landing (eVTOL) vehicles into our airspace.
- The framework will address matters such as security, safety, privacy and environmental impacts of drone operations.
- This will balance the impacts and risks associated with drones while enabling growth and evolution in the aviation technology industry.

Drone safety and security

- Joint Government and industry exercises have been conducted to ensure that our approach to drone incursions at airports is robust and effective.
- The Government has procured counter-drone and drone surveillance capabilities to enable a response to threats posed by drones.
- Laws are already in place that make flying a drone at a major airport unlawful, without permission from the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).
- CASA has fined people for unlawful drone operations, including near major airports. Penalties can include fines up to \$25,200 (\$126,000 for a body corporate) and/or up to 2 years prison.

Drone Noise

- My Department is conducting a review of noise regulations to consider applicable noise laws for drones.

Drone Registration

- To strengthen the safe use of drones, CASA is introducing requirements for certain drones to be registered from 2020. Drone operators who don't already hold a remote pilot licence will need to complete a simple online test on safe drone operations.

BACKGROUND

Whole-of-government framework to manage drones

- On 21 February 2019, the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, tasked you and the portfolio to work with other relevant Commonwealth and State government agencies to develop a framework for the management of drones.
- The Department is collaboratively developing policy options that will form the basis of an issues paper for consultation with industry and the broader community. Moving forward, it will enable the clarification of government roles and responsibilities and the development of an action plan.

Drone safety and security

- The Department of Home Affairs is coordinating work with government agencies and law enforcement authorities to settle arrangements for the use of counter-drone mechanisms.
- The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications is coordinating long-term planning with relevant government agencies and regulators, to develop a more enduring framework to support the use of counter-drone capability.
- CASA, Airservices Australia and the Department of Defence have worked together to roll-out permanent, passive drone detection systems at all 29 civil-controlled aerodromes in Australia.. s37

s37

- Current laws regarding the use of recreational drones and those operating under the excluded category do not permit drone operations over 400 feet above ground level unless an authorisation is obtained from CASA.
- Recreational and excluded category operators are also not permitted to operate within 3 nautical miles (roughly 5km) of a controlled aerodrome, and must not operate when manned aircraft or helicopters are operating at non-controlled aerodromes or helicopter landing sites. CASA has developed an app to assist drone operators understand where drones can be flown safely.

Drone noise

- The Department is considering the application of approvals under Section 17 of the Air Navigation (Aircraft Noise) Regulations to a range of commercial and recreational drone operations within Australia. The Department has conducted a review of the Noise Regulations to determine the appropriate scope of drone noise regulation in the future. An Issues Paper was released for public and industry comment on 27 September 2019 with submissions closing on 22 November 2019. A report is being finalised for end of February 2020.
- Wing Aviation has obtained an extension of their approval for drone delivery flights in Harrison, Crace, Palmerston and Franklin in the ACT, until 31 January 2021, under the current noise regulations. Wing has also received an extension of their approval for drone delivery flights in the suburbs of Crestmead and Marsden in Logan west of Brisbane, until 31 July 2020.

Drone registration

- Legislation was passed in November 2019 that requires all drones operated commercially to be registered from April 2020, and all drones weighing above 250 grams operated recreationally to be registered from mid-2022, with some exceptions. Registration will be valid for one year. Drone operators will also need to either hold a remote pilot licence or obtain an accreditation by completing a simple online test. Accreditation will be valid for 3 years.
- CASA intends to conduct consultation on the fees for drone registration in 2020.

Contact Officer: (Infrastructure)	s47F, Drones Policy, Aviation and Airports Division	Work Phone: s47F	Mobile Phone: s47F
Contact Officer: (CASA)	s47F Branch Manager Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems	Work Phone: s47F	Mobile Phone: s47F
Cleared by:	s47F Acting General Manager Airspace Policy and International Programs Branch, Aviation & Airports Division	Work Phone: s47F	Mobile Phone: s47F
Date Updated	15 June 2020		

----Brisbane FAA Meeting January 2020----

Drones Policy – Summary

- In December 2018, the Prime Minister tasked the Department to develop a long-term national approach to manage drones.
- The Government recognises that the key challenge is to facilitate the innovation in the drone sector to enable the economic and social benefits, while also ensuring that we mitigate any risks and impacts.
- At the core of Government considerations regarding the use of drones is the safe operation and integration of drone operations into existing air traffic environments.
- However, outside of aviation safety and airspace management, the use of drones also impacts upon a wide-range of issues, such as security - including cyber security and counter terrorism, privacy, noise, infrastructure planning and environmental issues.
- The added complication is the spread of responsibility across different Federal agencies, and state and territory jurisdictions. However, we've established forums to work through these issues.
- We're also conscious of the need for the Government's policy to reflect the upcoming horizons of technological development.
 - The next 5 years with the rapid testing and trialing of UTM and the initial commencement of commercial drone operations.
 - The medium term of 5 – 15 years, with UTM implementation, Urban air mobility operations, and increased automation for all operations.
 - Long term of 15 – 30 years where we will likely see full automation of drones and UAM, and possible a convergence of Air Traffic Management and UTM into a largely autonomous single airspace management system.
- I'll hand over to Dale to talk more about some of the detail and some of the challenges we're facing.