



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Mr Michael Petterson MLA

## Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into drone delivery systems in the ACT

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**From:** [Mike Stelzig](#)  
**To:** [LA Committee - EDT](#)  
**Subject:** Submission: Inquiry into drone delivery systems in the ACT  
**Date:** Tuesday, 29 January 2019 4:02:36 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Dear Committee Secretary

### **Submission: Inquiry into drone delivery systems in the ACT**

I understand from a Canberra Times story published on 29 January 2019 that: *“Wing [a drone operator] has been undertaking extensive community consultation with the Gungahlin community in the past three months...”* I live in Ngunnawal but have heard nothing about a drone company operating or wanting to operate in the Gungahlin area. Ngunnawal is part of Gungahlin. I have not been consulted.

I’d therefore make a submission to this inquiry.

While operating drones may be a federal issue (licensing etc.), Australia has a poor track record of implementing new ideas and technologies. As has been the case with numerous other technologies, which required decades of fine-tuning before becoming viable, drones appear to be another hotly-debated technology where the ACT Government refers such matters to the Federal Government. While some people may be amused by the thought of ordering a coffee or burrito and having it delivered by a drone, at this stage, it appears to be no more than a gag and it is not a safe, economic or an environmentally friendly technology.

I ask the following:

1. Who is responsible should an accident happen (e.g. a drone malfunctions and falls out of the sky or the pay load dislodges and falls on someone)?
2. At what times will these drones operate?
3. If this is a viable business option (unless Wing obtain a monopoly), drones from multiple operators will be flying constantly. What technology will ensure that drones do not collide?
4. If drones must not land closer than 30m to a person, where will they land on a typical small Canberra property?
5. How will landing drones affect traffic and pedestrian movements? Is it that a pedestrian much watch out for drones? What safety technology is available to ensure playing children don’t engage with and get hurt by a drone?
6. Are there noise implications, for example, how will this affect birds, insects, household pets or even humans?
7. What are the environmental impacts (e.g. the packaging required to deliver a coffee does not appear to be environmentally friendly)?
8. How can we ensure privacy and that drones are not fitted with cameras and other surveillance equipment?

From what I understand, there could be potential for delivering urgently needed medication to remote or difficult to-get-to locations. Other than that, it would appear absurd to deliver coffees and snacks by a drone. I have not been able to ascertain the cost for using this service but a \$4.50 coffee would certainly no longer cost \$4.50. At a carrying capacity of 1.2kg, this technology is limited.

If this technology were to go ahead, the above questions must be answered. My main concern is **safety**. My understanding is that these unmanned drones will be flown automatically with little supervision and guided by GPS. GPS is not always accurate and this could lead to accidents (<https://store.dji.com/guides/drone-crash/>). Batteries can fail and the payload could be dislodged and fall. Anyone ever hit by a soccer ball in the face may understand that a 1.2kg object falling from the sky can be deadly. I believe that a cricket player died from a cricket ball hitting him in the neck. At 10 metres per second, a 1.2kg heavy object falling from the sky can be deadly.

Below are just a few news stories where drones have caused accidents:

- British toddler Oscar Webb has his right eye sliced in half

([https://www.electronicproducts.com/Aerospace/Aircraft/5\\_of\\_the\\_worst\\_drone\\_related\\_accidents.aspx](https://www.electronicproducts.com/Aerospace/Aircraft/5_of_the_worst_drone_related_accidents.aspx))

- Drone crashes after operator failed to spot extra building site crane ([https://www.theregister.co.uk/2018/01/16/drone\\_crane\\_crash/](https://www.theregister.co.uk/2018/01/16/drone_crane_crash/))
- Hawk attacks drone (<https://www.cnet.com/news/this-hawk-has-no-love-for-your-drone>)
- Heathrow plane in near miss with drone (<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-30369701>)
- Australian triathlete injured after drone crash (<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-26921504>)
- Drone flying feet above chopper (<https://komonews.com/news/local/helicopter-crew-spots-drone-flying-feet-above-komo-chopper>).

The news articles above provide scenarios that could have been avoided (except for the bird attacking a drone). There must clear, mandatory and enforceable legislation in place regarding drones including compulsory training, oversight by an ACT authority and easily accessible insurance schemes for victims should an accident happen. Operators of drones must be skilled and comply with strict aviation rules as well as implement safety systems to avoid above tragedies. To refer to the Federal Government is not sufficient. May I suggest that similar drone laws are adopted throughout all states and territories?

I don't have all the answers for you but at this stage safety, privacy and the environment far outweigh any potential benefits of drones unless they are used in more altruistic emergency scenarios, such as the delivery of urgent medication in difficult to reach areas.

Happy to discuss.

Kind regards

Mike Stelzig



Image of Oscar Webb less one eye

