



**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

**Submission Number: 147**

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**Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism**

Submission: Inquiry into Drone delivery system in the ACT

20-2-2019

**Personal details:**

**Please note:** I would like my personal details to remain anonymous please.

Name	[REDACTED]
Postal Address	[REDACTED]
Phone	[REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]

**Optional**

How long have you lived in the area?	I have lived in Bonython for 24 years
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To the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism,

Thank you for allowing residents to give feedback about the Drone delivery trial in Bonython.

I would like to comment on the following terms of reference:

- a) The decision to base the trials of the technology in the ACT and surrounding region
- b) The economic impact of drone delivery technology being tested in the ACT including the: investment that has been brought into the Territory
- d) The extent of any environmental impact as a result of trialling drone delivery technology on
- f) Any other relevant matter
- g) Information privacy

Comments on the terms of reference.

**a) The decision to base the trials of the technology in the ACT and surrounding region**

- ◆ I have seen footage of drones being used in situations that could cause risk of injury to humans. For example: surveying flood damage, roofs, earthquake damage, and power lines. I think the use of drones in extreme and dangerous circumstances is a good idea.
- ◆ When I received the notification of the drone trial in my letter box I felt a sense of betrayal that we – residents – had not been asked what we thought and felt about the trial. My first thought was “Oh no, there goes our lovely peaceful neighbourhood”. I was also surprised that such a trial was to take place in our ‘Garden city’, considering much is made of the natural environment, nature parks and wildlife.
- ◆ In *Canberra’s living infrastructure information paper*, Feb 2018, it states that, “The anticipated beneficial outcomes include: enhancing liveability and social inclusion; enabling urban renewal and active living; increasing property values; and improving natural resource management and urban biodiversity. The introduction of the drone trial put the beneficial outcomes of having an infrastructure plan at risk. If drones are allowed to operate in our city the benefits of having a ‘Living infrastructure’ would dwindle away.
- ◆ Also from the ACT Government, ‘Our Canberra page’ titled, ‘Canberra named a top 10 city to visit in 2018 by Lonely Planet’, it states, “*With endless family-friendly and adventurous activities, opportunities to connect with nature...*” The introduction of the drone trial also put the claim of having ‘family friendly and adventurous activities’ in jeopardy due to the lack of privacy and distressing level of noise created by the drones.

**c) The economic impact of drone delivery technology being tested in the ACT including the:**

**(i) investment that has been brought into the territory**

I understand the need for the Territory to attract investment and business opportunities so our economy can thrive and benefit those of us who live and work here. However I am not prepared to sacrifice my quality of life in order to attract such investments. Canberran’s quality of life also includes the amenity of peaceful suburbs, privacy, abundant wildlife and safety. Canberra is a fabulous city and many people are amazed at how much they enjoy the slower pace and ‘country city’ feel, with its nature parks and abundant wildlife, as well as modern amenities and a growing ‘cafe culture’. This would be severely compromised if drones were allowed to operate in our suburbs and over nature reserves.

**d) The extent of any environmental impact as a result of trialling drone delivery technology on:**

**(i) residents within the trial area**

I initially was prepared to accept the trial as necessary and potentially useful. However having experienced drones up close, I am opposed to their use in suburban or recreational areas, due to the following experiences and concerns.

**Noise**

- ◆ On first hearing a drone I was initially frightened. I was inside my house at the time. I had no idea what the noise was and I experienced feelings of distress and fear as I tried to locate what was causing the noise. My full attention was focussed on trying to work out what the noise was, and if it was a threat. I went outside and located the drone above a neighbours' house.
- ◆ I was astounded and dismayed at the noise produced by the drone. The noise was of such a frequency that I could not stay outside while it was nearby. Once inside my house I tried to block my ears to keep out the noise. Unfortunately this did not work and I felt very distressed. I experienced a 'flight or fight' or 'stress' response: increased heart rate, increased respiration rate, and anxiety.
- ◆ Our house has double glazing and the noise from the drone carried right inside the house. We had to shut the doors and windows to try and reduce the noise level. It was difficult to continue having a conversation without raising my voice to be heard and I had to strain to hear others talking.
- ◆ Because of the noise we were unable to garden, entertain or relax in my home and yard. I became extremely angry about the erosion of our ability to be able to experience relaxation and peace, enjoy the fine weather and entertain.

**Danger**

- ◆ Driver distraction: As I was leaving home one morning a drone came into my field of view. As it was not behaving like a bird and was accompanied by an extremely ear piercing noise, I found myself slowing down to locate the drone. I was asking myself, "Where is it?", "Is it close?", "Will it hit me?", "Will I hit it?" I found it extremely distracting and thought it was a huge risk to us as drivers. I also consider this to be a risk to cyclists, motorcyclists, and pedestrians.

**Privacy**

- ◆ I also found I felt threatened by the drone. I felt I was being spied upon. I was reluctant to be outside because I may have been on camera. I also felt that I had lost the privacy of my own home and that my security was now at risk because of the possibility of being seen on the camera.

- ◆ Pine Island: On a lovely Saturday I took myself for a walk around Stranger Pond towards Pine Island. I was enjoying the peace and quiet and I became aware of the high pitched noise of a drone. Suddenly it appeared above the trees and passed overhead. I had to stop and block my ears in an attempt to gain relief from the noise. It was extremely distressing being subjected to the noise. The birds on Stranger Pond all took off as the drone approached.
- ◆ After a few weeks of the trial, I noticed that I was feeling quite anxious and angry when I heard the initial noise of an approaching drone. I became super attuned to it because it was such an unpleasant, invasive noise. I felt extremely angry that I was being subjected to such a distressing noise and that it was affecting my rest, relaxation and socialisation.

### **(ii) native wildlife**

- ◆ Early on in the trial I was outside and heard a drone approaching. As it flew near to my neighbour's house I saw two magpie larks swooping the drone. I was concerned that they may have been injured by the rotors and that the constant invasion of their territory at nesting time would cause them to abandon their nest.
- ◆ As the weeks progressed I noticed there were not as many birds as usual. I did not notice the usual magpies, currawongs, parrots, wattle birds, coels, small birds, indian minor birds or black birds. I began to wonder if I had imagined a reduction in the bird numbers, however, within about a week of the trial ending I noticed that magpies, parrots, cockatoos, wattle birds, black birds and coels were back!

### **(iii) domestic animals**

- ◆ Every time a drone flew nearby, our neighbours dogs began barking and only quietened down some time after the drone was well out of my hearing range.

### **f) any other relevant matter**

#### **Regulation**

- ◆ The CASA website states: "You must not fly your drone in a way that creates a hazard to another aircraft, person or property, so follow our rules every time you fly", and, "You must not fly your drone within 30 metres of people, unless the other person is part of controlling or navigating the drone". Flying drones near people is hazardous and I wonder why regulations that are meant to protect us are not enforced for commercial use of drones?
- ◆ I attempted to follow the links on the CASA web site to obtain information about potential exemptions to the above regulation but after many attempts and following references to yet another regulation, I was not able to find answers.

My questions are:

1. What regulations apply to the commercial operation of drones in built up areas, flying over people's homes and in urban parks and nature reserves?
2. What protection do Canberran's have in regard to the invasion of privacy, noise and danger the drones pose?

## Privacy

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, states:

- ◆ Article 12, "No one shall be subject to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks".

I found the presence of the Wing drone (and any other drone in my vicinity) to be a violation of my right to privacy. I did not feel safe, the privacy of my home was threatened and I felt spied upon.

- ◆ Article 24, "Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays". I believe the flying of drones near my house and in my suburb has removed my right to rest and leisure due to the noise, risk of injury and being filmed.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, fact sheet states:

- ◆ Article 3, "The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers".

I do not think the best interests of children have been considered in allowing the drone trial or contemplating introducing them on a permanent basis. This is because drones pose a risk of injury, they subject children to unacceptable noise levels outside and inside their homes and they compromise children's privacy.

- ◆ Article 16, "Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes". Children's privacy is threatened by drones flying near them or their homes. The noise will prevent them from being outside and may cause extreme distress.
- ◆ Article 19. "Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally..."

I believe the safety of children is put at risk as a consequence of injury from a drone, and from the emotional distress experienced as a result of the noise the drone makes. Children may become frightened of the noise and the drone, and may suffer PTSD like symptoms. For example, my child became

terrified of aeroplanes flying over our house during an Air force exercise in Darwin. The effect of the noise seemed to build up after repeated exposure to such an unpleasant loud noise. I am concerned that not being able to escape the noise of a drone could cause trauma to children.

- ♦ Article 31. "Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.

Children may not be able to play outside due to the invasion of their privacy and the extreme noise produced by the drones. For example: if taking part in sport, bicycle riding, skate board riding, outings with family or friends in parks or homes, they are subjected to risk of injury, noise and being filmed.

### **g) Information Privacy**

I have concerns about the privacy of my information and what may be gathered by a drone. My questions are:

- ♦ Who is directing the drone and what happens to the camera footage?
- ♦ What regulations are in place to prevent footage taken by a drone being sold onto another party or used to cause me harm or bombard me with unsolicited advertising?
- ♦ What regulations are in place to prevent attacks upon my honour and reputation by a malicious entity that may acquire film footage of my home or me?

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

### References

ACT Government, *Canberra's living infrastructure information paper*, Feb 2018, <[https://www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/1170965/Canberra-Living-Infrastructure-Information-paper-2018.pdf](https://www.environment.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1170965/Canberra-Living-Infrastructure-Information-paper-2018.pdf)> <viewed 20 Feb 2019>

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UNICEF, *Fact sheet: a summary of the rights under the convention on the Rights of the Child*, [https://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights\\_overview.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf), <viewed 20 Feb 2019>

United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/> <viewed 20-Feb 2019>