



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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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Reginald John Butler, [REDACTED]
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My submission follows, addressing some of the terms of reference.

The decision to base the trials of the technology in the ACT and surrounding region – The basis for this decision, and the public consultation process, were flawed and the Assembly should take steps to ensure they are not repeated, either for the ‘trial’ to operate from Mitchell or for other ‘world first’ social experiments. My understanding is as follows. The ACT Government, including the responsible Minister, did not undertake any public consultation with the general public or with the residents of the suburbs to be affected. The ACT Government seems to have washed its hands of any responsibility for the conditions of the trial and of any its negative impacts. These points should have been addressed in deciding whether to allow invasive technology to be forced upon residents. Why Bonython was chosen as the trial site is unknown. The decision to let the drones operate from a site next to a dog club is unbelievable, given the negative affect the drone noise has on animals. The responsible Minister seems to have sided with the company involved at every opportunity when negative impacts have been raised with him. There is a question whether he has an undeclared conflict of interest, given his passionate support for the company and refusal to consider representations from affected residents.

The extent of regulatory oversight of drone technology at various levels of government – There has effectively been no regulatory oversight. The company involved seems to be ‘self-regulating’ and reporting on the success or otherwise of the trail. They do not seem prepared to take any concerns raised with them seriously. CASA has washed its hands of responsibility for regulatory oversight, except for giving legal exemptions from drone laws. No one seems interested in privacy concerns with video footage taken over private properties. No one is interested on the serious noise issues affecting residents.

The extent of any environmental impact as a result of trialing drone delivery technology on (i) residents within the trial area; (ii) native wildlife; (iii) domestic animals - The Chief Minister should be censured for his comments on radio belittling the concerns of residents negatively affected by the trial. There is a large body of evidence from residents in the trial area of the serious noise effects on health and wellbeing of residents and their pets, and on native birds, and the noticeable difference on days the drones weren’t operating. I am sure these will be covered in other submissions to the inquiry in detail. If drones are safe, why are they not allowed to fly on total fire ban days?

Ways to improve the use of drone delivery technology within the ACT; any other relevant matter – Commercial delivery using drones should be banned in residential areas in the ACT, whether the highly intrusive noise of these drones can be reduced by RE-design or not The risks and negative impacts on

residents, domestic animals and the environment are unacceptable.