



**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:** [Luke Fitzgerald](#)  
**To:** [LA Committee - EDT](#)  
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**Attachments:** [Govt submission.docx](#)

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Please find attached my submission to the drone enquiry.

Regards

Louise Fitzgerald



Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

### **Inquiry into Drone Delivery Systems in the ACT**

I wish to register my objection to the location of the drone headquarters in Mitchell, ACT. This is due to the adverse impact upon existing residents who will be subject to an incessant high-pitched, unprecedented, aggravating noise as a result of living under, or directly adjacent to, a drone flight path.

I also express disappointment in the approach to community consultation on this issue. Whilst there has been ongoing representation in the media regarding “consultation sessions”, these sessions have transpired to be no more than a one way “information session” at which residents have been told how the drone business is set to operate. At a session where I expressed my wonder and concern about the level of noise the drones would introduce around my home, I was advised by WING of the following arrangements:

- the drones will be multiple in number, and are loud, with a *“hard to describe”* high pitched noise, which would *“definitely be heard inside your house especially if any doors or windows are open”*;
- the propellers on the drones have been reviewed and a proposal to fly at slightly slower speeds (than Bonython) *“should help”* to reduce the noise somewhat;
- the hovering noise *“at no less than a 7-metre drop is also loud, but doesn’t last long”*;
- they are probably not going to fly on Sundays, and will only fly in daylight hours, but *“we’re really not sure what daylight hours are as yet”* (eg pertaining to daylight saving).

When discussing my concern of my home location near Mitchell, I was advised that *“a number”* of drones could potentially be in flight at one time, adding to the noise over certain homes. WING advised that they hope to disperse the drone paths over the suburbs, however with multiple drones in flight, there will be a persistent high-pitched noise over common flight path areas for residents.

As such, I fail to see how this response engenders a consultative approach as it does not acknowledge the noise concern for residents. The WING response has actually heightened my concerns and highlighted the lack of an effective consultative process leading to a Government decision. Having spoken with WING, the noise impact of multiple drone activity upon residents under, or adjacent to a flight path, is my primary objection.

My concerns over an incessant high-pitched noise from a flight path above my home are compounded because I have a husband and son who are night workers, relying on a daytime sleep pattern to get by. In the broader residential setting the noise level of these drones (*which can definitely be heard inside the home*, as advised by WING) is set to present a particularly adverse imposition to shift workers, babies and smaller children, and the aged.

Similarly, there are concerns regarding the effect of this loud, incessant and high-pitched noise upon the health and wellbeing of the general population, including those with mental health conditions in our community. It is possible that any individual may genuinely struggle to deal with the constant high pitch intrusion above and around their home. I am sure we can all relate to that odd random noise that absolutely gets on your nerves. It seems the drone noise, described as “high pitched” at best, is set to be invasive and not conducive to peace, calm or relaxation. As such, this presents a risk to health and wellbeing for all.

My emphasis on noise is because this proposal introduces a unique perturbing noise not otherwise experienced in the community. I noted the Chief Minister’s media comments of late 2018 in which he expressed concern about setting a precedent of limiting drone activity due to the flow on effect of limiting other noises, such as lawnmowers. This is an unreasonable comparison as lawnmowers do not have a high-pitched annoying noise, do not generally operate all day for all or most days of the week; and will not be found in groups flying above your house. Indeed, the concern of setting a precedent for other community noise is not realistic as there is no other community noise which is so pervasive and annoying.

In support of this, I note that the Chamber of Commerce submission recommends that any economic benefits envisaged be weighed up against the community impact. I also note that whilst the *Alpha Beta Advisers* submission addresses benefits for business, consumer and society, it appears silent on the issue of drone noise.

I invite you to listen to the noise of a single drone through the information made available at <https://the-riotact.com/new-no-drones-group-has-gungahlin-trial-in-sights/286007>

Gungahlin residents are yet to be exposed to this noise, as it seems that the consultation process does not include demonstrations of these person sized drones. Suffice to say, there has been reasonable adverse action to the noise from the Bonython trial, and WING have not been convincing in a commitment to acceptable noise reduction.

Given the Government’s high regard to human rights in the ACT and the unique, loud, high-pitched type of irritating noise sought to be imposed, I urge you to consider the effect of this noise pollution on residents and their right to peace and calm inside their home and yard.

Aside from concerns with the unique nature and volume of the noise sought to be imposed I, like many other community members remain concerned with unanswered questions around privacy, storage of data, environmental impact, and critically, an apparent lack of regulation and responsibility for residential drone activity (especially noise) in the ACT. It is of great concern that an unregulated noise can occur in the suburbs and seems at odds with the high regulatory approach otherwise taken by Government for many social activities in the ACT.

That said, there are notable merits relating to economic progress, services to the aged or infirm, and the lesser compelling case of fast food delivery; however I believe there is a moral obligation to balance this against the invasive noise to be inflicted upon residents, especially those under and adjacent to a busy flight path. At the very least, I implore you to consider the mutual benefits for WING and ACT residents if the drone headquarters are located with a greater distance or “buffer zone” from suburbs. This may help absorb the concentration of drones as they are dispatched in flight and dispersed. Accordingly, I submit that Mitchell, or any area so close to residential density is not the appropriate location for this operation.

In closing, I advise that Gungahlin residents have not yet had the opportunity to hear a drone in their area, and it therefore follows that informed community feedback is yet to come, regarding the effect of this loud and irritating noise on people’s right to peace in their home.

Louise Fitzgerald

22 February 2019