

Remote Pilot Aircraft Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) Operators such as La Trobe University and pilots of all Remotely Piloted Aircrafts ('RPAs'), otherwise popularly referred to as 'drones' naturally operate within the national aviation system and must as a result ensure the safe and compliant nature of flights in adherence with the [Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1988](#).

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all members of the University community that operate an RPA owned by or on loan to La Trobe University, including:

- a. Staff
- b. Students
- c. Contractors
- d. Visitors to the University (including volunteers).

(3) Third party RPA operators and pilots are excluded from this Policy except to the extent to which is provided for in this paragraph. Third party RPA operators remain responsible for compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and insurance arrangements, with engagement and operational terms formalised under contract with the University.

(4) To ensure full visibility and to facilitate notifications, LTU personnel who engage a third party to operate a RPA must complete the [Third Party Operations Record Keeping Form](#) and forward to Infrastructure and Operations via ioservicedesk@latrobe.edu.au no later than 10 business days prior to the proposed flight operation.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(5) The University is committed to the safety and wellbeing of its staff, students and the broader community, the safety of which in the context of RPA operations relies upon strict compliance with the [Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1988](#) (Part 101).

University Inventory and Policy Position

(6) The University has a number of 'very small RPAs' weighing between 100g-2kgs, primarily used for education, research and marketing purposes. It may also approve use of third party drones on loan to the University for operation on University land / airspace. For more information on RPA flight approvals, see section 4 Part A.

(7) RPAs outside this weight category should be discussed with the Policy Owner, the Risk Management Office and Insurance Office prior to purchase. Applications for use must be made in accordance with the prescriptions set out below. Additional information or requirements may be imposed based on the size and risk category of the RPA and proposed flight operation.

‘Very Small Excluded RPAs’(Authorisation and Licensing Exemption)

(8) For La Trobe to afford itself the general licensing exemptions available to excluded RPAs such as those held by the University (see above), it must ensure flight operations are managed in strict compliance with the ‘Standard Operating Conditions’ (SOC).

(9) For details on the SOC please refer to the Procedures below.

‘Very Small Excluded RPAs’(Commercial use - hire or reward)

(10) In circumstances where RPA use is for hire or reward (including but not limited to marketing, education or research) a notification must be made to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) of the University’s intention to conduct a flight, including the location (i.e. region) no later than five business days before the first operation. With subsequent changes to be notified within a period of 21 days.

(11) Before approving a proposed RPA flight, La Trobe must be satisfied flight operations conform to the relevant SOCs and would not otherwise infringe upon restricted or prohibited airspace or pose an unreasonable risk to public safety or air transport. Refer to section 4 for details on how to apply for a RPA flight operation.

‘Very Small Excluded RPAs’(Non-compliance with Standard Operating Conditions)

(12) Operations that do not conform with the SOC contravene the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations and may be subject to civil and criminal penalties.

(13) The operation of a very small RPA in a way that does not comply with the SOCs trigger additional licensing and authorisation requirements, requiring La Trobe to hold a Remotely Piloted Aircraft Operator’s Certificate (ReOC) and the pilot, a Remote Pilot Licence (RePL).

(14) Any possible breaches of the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations or other applicable laws or regulations must be reported in accordance with the [Compliance Breach Management Policy](#).

Restrictions on Use

(15) Autonomous flights are strictly prohibited except as otherwise approved by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA). These include flights during which an unmanned aircraft (i.e. RPA) is operating without pilot intervention in the management of the flight.

(16) Approval is also required to be obtained from CASA in order to operate a RPA beyond visual line of sight, and/or fly more than one RPA simultaneously.

Other Laws and Regulations (Aviation, Safety and Privacy)

(17) RPA Operators must also ensure compliance other applicable Commonwealth, State, local (and where applicable international) laws, irrespective of whether or not CASA licensing, authorisation and operating requirements have been satisfied.

(18) For example, certain local Councils place restrictions on where RPAs may be operated. Prohibitions are now in place across public land (parks and other recreational areas) and over sea. All reasonable enquiries must be made and all necessary information provided as part of an RPA flight application, to ensure adherence with the same.

(19) While the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations does not specifically cover privacy obligations, the right to privacy, and protections afforded against surveillance under State or Territory laws (i.e. observation and visual records) must remain a paramount consideration when designing a RPA flight operation.

(20) Safe operating protocols must also be employed at all times, including with respect to battery safety, noting the size and chemical make-up of RPA batteries differs considerably and can have serious safety consequences if not handled correctly.

(21) CASA website www.droneflyer.com.au explains the key safety rules for recreational drone flights.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Seeking Approval on Proposed RPA Flight

(22) Applications for the use of an RPA by La Trobe must be made in the prescribed form ([Internal \(RPA\) Flight Operations Application Form](#)) to Infrastructure and Operations via ioservicedesk@latrobe.edu.au no later than 10 business days prior to the proposed flight operation.

(23) Infrastructure and Operations will assess each application against CASA regulations, University Policy and other potential risks.

(24) Infrastructure and Operations (I&O) will remain responsible for ensuring the necessary regulatory notifications are made in the prescribed timeframe where a commercial use has been approved. All RPA flight applications and associated records are to be retained centrally by I&O for auditing purposes.

(25) To ensure full visibility and the appropriate management of RPA associated risks, all third party RPA operations approved under contract will need to be communicated to Infrastructure and Operations via ioservicedesk@latrobe.edu.au no later than 10 business days prior to the proposed flight operation. The third party RPA operator will however remain responsible for ensuring adequate insurance is held and maintain, and that the RPA flight operations comply all applicable laws and regulations (including regulatory or other notifications as required).

Part B - Flight Records

(26) The [Flight Operation Record Keeping Form](#) must be completed and submitted to Infrastructure & Operations via ioservicedesk@latrobe.edu.au within five business days of each flight for record keeping purposes.

- a. A record of flight time
- b. Time in service
- c. Maintenance performed
- d. Any defects and abnormalities that affected operations
- e. Any incidents or accidents
- f. Any other useful information

Part C - Responsibilities of Pilots and Event Managers

(27) Under this Policy, the RPA Pilot (and where applicable the Event Manager) remains responsible for:

- a. ensuring compliance with all applicable laws and regulations; and
- b. satisfying La Trobe that proposed flight operations will be managed in strict adherence to the Standard Operating Conditions.

(28) Failure to comply with this Policy, or applicable laws and regulations could result in not only disciplinary action (and possible termination of employment), but also enforcement action against the University and pilot, significant financial penalties and possible imprisonment.

(29) To operate a remotely piloted aircraft under 2kg (excluded category) outside the below conditions, a Remote Operator's Certificate (ReOC) and a Remote Pilot Licence (RePL) must be held.

(30) RPAs outside of the above weight category are to be considered on a case by case basis in consultation with the Policy Owner and the Risk Management Office Office.

Part D - Standard Operating Conditions

(31) The Standard Operating Conditions are prescribed by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and are a set of operational limitations that reduce the level of risk associated with operations.

(32) To view the SOC Applicable for RPA's less than 2kg, including operations for Hire or Rewards (ie commercial activities, please access the [Civil Aviation Safety Authority \(CASA\)](#) website.

(33) Operations within the 3nm radius of an uncontrolled aerodrome or helicopter landing site may be permitted in certain circumstances (see [Advisory Circular \(AC\) 101-10](#) for further details).

(34) To view the requirement to operate a RPA that weighs more than 2kg, please refer to the [Civil Aviation Safety Authority \(CASA\)](#) website.

(35) The CASA website www.droneflyer.com.au explains the key safety rules for recreational drone flyers.

(36) A free mobile app, "Can I Fly There?" is also available to download. The app helps recreational and sub-2kg drone operators fly safely by providing practical information about where they can and cant operate.

Part E - Complaints

(37) An individual may complain to the University's Privacy Officer about the use of an RPA on University property if the individual believes the act is an interference with the privacy of that individual.

(38) The Privacy Officer will investigate the complaint as promptly as possible. The Privacy Officer will then advise the Vice-President (Strategy and Development) or nominee of their findings and make recommendations to the Vice-President (Strategy and Development) or nominee about the complaint.

(39) The Vice-President (Strategy and Development) or nominee will make a decision on the complaint and advise the complainant in writing of the result of the investigation.

Section 5 - Definitions

(40) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. Restricted airspace (General Overview): Access to some areas of airspace may be restricted because they present a potential hazard to aircraft operations. For safety or security reasons, particular airspace may be designed as being prohibited, restricted or danger areas.
- b. 'Prohibited': RPAs cannot be operated in prohibited areas at any time, under any circumstance. Prohibited areas are usually of a temporary nature.
- c. 'Restricted': Restricted airspace has horizontal and vertical limitations and depending on the type of restriction or hazard involved may be active during certain times on a temporary or permanent basis. The term 'restricted' is used whenever RPA or other aircraft flight operations within the designated area are not absolutely prohibited but may be permitted only where permission has been obtained from the controlling authority and any specified conditions are complied with. Most restrictive areas are used by the Defence Force for exercises such as military flying training or live weapons firing. The restricted area may extend from the ground up to a

nominated height.

- d. 'Danger': The term 'danger' is used to designate airspace where certain activities in the area may be hazardous to the safety of an aircraft. For example this may be blasting areas, mining or quarrying sites or other special use areas such as those used for flight training or high traffic routes.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	4th December 2017
Review Date	11th June 2023
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	30th November 2017
Expiry Date	24th May 2021
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