Model Guideline: Remotely Piloted Aircraft

This model organisational guideline is suitable for adoption by local governments and can be modified to suit individual local governments’ requirements.

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| **Organisational Guideline**  |
| Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) |
| Corporate Plan reference:  | <insert corporate plan reference/s> |
| Endorsed by Chief Executive Officer on:  | <date>  |
| Manager responsible for policy:  | <insert responsible person> |

**Purpose**

The purpose of this guideline is to:

* assist when making decisions about the use and operation of remotely piloted aircraft (RPA).
* ensure the use and operation of RPA’s are consistent with Council’s RPA Organisational Policy.

**Policy scope**

This guideline applies to the use and operation of excluded RPA by council employees and contractors for any council operations.

**Roles and responsibilities**

Council directors/managers are responsible for ensuring the RPA Organisational Policy principles and these guidelines are applied by staff when using and operating RPA’s. Directors/managers should ensure procedures are developed to supplement these guidelines where relevant.

All council employees are responsible for applying the RPA Organisational Policy and these guidelines when using and operating RPA in council.

**RPA Operations**

As outlined in the RPA Organisational Policy, RPA technology may be used for the purposes of improving services, reducing risks to council officers, protecting the environment, enhancing community safety and potentially reducing operational costs.

RPA will only be utilised where it can be established the use and operation is consistent with council’s strategic objectives, legislative obligations, vision, missions and policies.

The following stages outlined in the policy provide details for all council employees on the use and operations of RPA.

**Business Case Analysis**

The purpose, appropriateness, cost, risks, expected return on investment, desired outcome and alignment to council’s visions and strategic objectives should be considered prior to purchase/use of RPA. The extent of details provided in this section will be contingent on the size of the RPA, the desired use and length of time for the use and operation.

For example, if a micro RPA (less than 100 grams) is to be purchased for aerial photography then the detail provided need only be brief. However, if a small RPA (2 less than 25kgs) for vector and pest control is required for a council endorsed inspection program then further details would be required in order to ensure the RPA technology was the best option for this activity.

**Analysis of situation/operation**

This section should provide details on why an RPA is required, what it will be used for, why the officer considers this the best use of the technology, expected benefits, general projections about the potential for the technology and limitations that exist currently.

**Solution options**

Identify solutions to the problem and explore all the potential options. This provides the opportunity to ensure that the options considered are appropriate, cost effective, fit for purpose and align with council objectives.

[Provide an overview of each of the options which have been identified and evaluated]

e.g. Option 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  **Price:** | [Estimated Price] |
| **Scope:** | [Scope to be delivered with this option] |
| **% of Project Deliverables:** | [% or Project Deliverables with this option] |
| **Delivery date:** | [Estimated Delivery Date] |

[List each of the advantages and disadvantages with this option.]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**Cost benefit and risk analysis**

The detail provided in this section is dependent on the project/task size. This section again provides the opportunity to ensure the use of RPA is appropriate, cost effective and fit for purpose. Illustrate the case with data from similar activities and case studies, if possible.

Cost benefit

* Define or breakdown the plan / decision / process into its elements by a flowchart or list of inputs, outputs, activities and events.
* Calculate, research or estimate the cost and benefit associated with each element. Include if possible direct, indirect, financial and social costs and benefits.
* Compare the sum of the costs with the sum of the benefits.

Where possible, the cost benefit analysis should include the projected financial benefit to the council and a projection of when that payoff is expected.

Risk analysis

Rank the elements to reflect their impact on the potential success / failure on the whole process. If the variation in the potential impact of the ranked elements is significant, then:

* Assign weighting values to each element.
* Estimate the likelihood of success or failure of each element.
* Multiply the likelihood of success or failure for each element by its weighting value.
* Compare the risk with the costs and benefits

Further information on conducting a risk analysis can be found in council’s risk management policy.

**Recommendation**

The recommendation for implementation is a brief restatement of compelling results of the cost-benefit analysis and a final statement that you consider that a RPA is required. Articulate the circumstances under which it should be undertaken, including key individuals and actions. Include a recommendation for scheduled review of the continued use of a RPA.

**Compliance with all relevant laws**

Council operators of excluded RPA must ensure that their activities are compliant with all applicable state and federal laws, such as those in privacy and security legislation.

***CASA Regulations***

CASA regulation defines those RPA that do not require a CASA certified pilot to operate. An excluded RPA can be operated without certain licences and permissions in accordance with the CASA regulations Standard Operating Procedures.

It is essential that operators and pilots of excluded RPA understand that, despite any privileges available under the regulations, it is a strict liability offence to:

* operate an unmanned aircraft in a way that creates a hazard to another aircraft, another person, or property.

Operators and pilots should be aware that both the *Civil Aviation Act 1988* (Cth)and the *Aviation Transport Security Act 2004* (Cth)and regulations include criminal offences for interference with the safe conduct of air transport or reckless flying, including up to two years imprisonment.

The operation of an RPA that is not identified as an excluded RPA under the CASA regulations can only be operated by a CASA certified pilot.

Full details on the operation and compliance with excluded RPA and RPA can be found on the CASA website at [www.casa.gov.au/drones](http://www.casa.gov.au/drones)

***Information Privacy***

The collection of data must be in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) and council’s privacy policy.

The *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) governs how local governments, collect, use, disclose and store personal information. While in most circumstances RPA will not collect personal information, there may be some instances where personal information is collected during the course of RPA operation. Council must take reasonable steps to notify the public in circumstances where RPA are in operation across the region.

Community notification may include, but not limited to:

* public notification on council’s website
* public notice in the local paper
* media releases
* letterbox drop to residents.

**Training**

While there are no formal training requirements for excluded RPA, all council officers operating an excluded RPA will obtain training before operating an excluded RPA to ensure they understand the safety rules applying to use of the RPA and its specific weight category.

Information on training on the use of excluded RPA can be accessed via the CASA website at [www.casa.gov.au/drones/training](http://www.casa.gov.au/drones/training)

Council officers required to operate non-excluded RPA are required to hold a remote pilot license and RPA operator’s certificate from CASA. Training for these licenses is provided by CASA.

**Liability and insurance**

<Insert insurance provider>, council’s public liability insurer provides coverage for council employees using RPA in line with CASA requirements. Coverage does not extend to contractors who need to hold their own insurance policy.

Where council contracts out the operation of an RPA, all RPA contractors must provide an indemnity to council that is supported by adequate and appropriate insurance coverage held by the contractor. Additionally, contractors must agree to comply with all relevant Commonwealth and state laws, including council policies and local laws.

**Ongoing operational requirements**

**Monitoring**

Council employees must maintain records of use each time a RPA is operated. A log of all hours of flight operation is required by the relevant operational areas. Each operational area is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of this register.

This information will be recorded as evidence to support council’s compliance with CASA regulations and privacy legislation.

Further monitoring of all data and information collected will be recorded to ensure the continued use and operation of RPA continues to meet council’s strategic objectives and vision.

**Reporting**

Reporting of data and information collected during the use of RPA will form part of council’s normal operating procedures for reporting on programs and operational activities. It is expected that this reporting will occur in line with our standard reporting requirements e.g. quarterly reporting, annual reporting.

**Record keeping and data capture**

All information and data must be captured in council’s record management system. It is vital for authenticity and integrity that all information and data collected by RPA’s are recorded and readily accessible. Aside from legal obligations to record and maintain all information, where RPA data and information is required for future use requirements, reporting or providing evidence on the integrity, accuracy and accessibility of the information is vital.

**Asset Management**

Operational areas are required to record all RPA in their asset management register. Operational areas are responsible for the management, maintenance, repair and replacement of their RPA which will also be funded through the relevant operational area budget. A complete register of all council owned RPA will be made available on council’s intranet.

Any RPA that are required to be funded through the corporate budget will require prior approval by the chief executive officer.

**Roles and responsibilities**

* <Insert head of responsible department>is responsible the regular review of this policy and the supporting organisational guideline.
* <Insert head of responsible department> where required, are responsible for the development, monitoring and application of departmental operational manuals regarding the operation of RPA in their departments and reporting any incidents to CASA.
* <Insert head(s) of responsible branch> are responsible for:
	+ ensuring RPA operations in their respective areas comply with CASA guidelines, this organisational policy and associated guideline and where applicable their departmental operational manuals regarding the use, management and operations of RPA
	+ maintaining registers of all RPA in their asset registers
	+ updating the Council’s asset register located on the intranet
	+ ensuring all RPA flight details are logged and recorded in council’s record management system
	+ monitoring, maintenance and repairs of all RPA
	+ budget allocations for the purchase, maintenance and replacement of all RPA
	+ ensuring all employees operating RPA’s are suitably trained by a qualified CASA approved trainer.
* Council officers operating RPA are responsible for:
	+ ensuring the use of RPA complies with CASA operating guidelines, all relevant laws, this organisational policy and any related guidelines, manuals or council policies
	+ reporting any incidents related to the use of RPA.
* <Insert responsible person/team> will monitor all incidents reported by staff and ensure safety documentation continues to address all safe operating requirements*.*
* <Insert oversight role title>will provide support for council staff developing RPA operations by an RPA integrated team framework*.*

**Measurement of success**

The following measures of success will require the establishment of baseline data:

* activities undertaken in accordance with CASA requirements
* compliance with all relevant laws and council policies
* monitoring the level of reported incidents to CASA as required by operating guidelines
* assessment of workplace health and safety reporting incidents associated with RPA activities.
* Number of RPA operated by Council and flights associated with each aircraft.
* Departmental RPA guidelines and work method statements developed.
* This policy will be reviewed after two years of the date of its adoption by the chief executive officer to ensure it remains consistent with the strategic and resource priorities of council.

**Definitions**

**CASA:** means the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) which is an independent statutory authority. Under section 8 of the, *Civil Aviation Act 1988,* CASA is a body corporate separate from the Commonwealth.

**Council**: means the <insert council name>

**Excluded RPA:** Unmanned aircraft that may, under certain conditions, be operated without an explicit authorisation from CASA (refer to regulation 101.327).

**RPA:** means a remotely piloted aircraft, other than a balloon or a kite.

**Personal information:** means information or an opinion, including information or an opinion forming part of a database, whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion as defined under the *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

**Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV):** means a powered, aerial vehicle that does not carry a human operator, uses aerodynamic forces to provide vehicle lift, can fly autonomously or be piloted remotely.

**Related policies and legislation**

**Legislation**

*Anti-Discrimination Act 1991(Qld)*

*Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*

*Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)*

**Standards**

*Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings) Standards 2010 (Cth)*

*Queensland Disability Standards*

**Internal Documents**

<insert relevant Council documents relating to activity>

Version control:

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| Version | Reason/ Trigger | Change (Y/N) | Endorsed/ Reviewed by | Date |
| 1.0 | Created new | N | ???? | ???? |

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