



Minister for the Environment and Heritage
Minister for Planning and Land Management
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister assisting the Chief Minister on
Advanced Technology and Space Industries
Manager of Government Business
Member for Brindabella

18/35853

Mr Tom Duncan
Clerk
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 29 November 2018 regarding petition No. 23-18 lodged by Mrs Joy Burch MLA on behalf of certain residents of the ACT calling on the Assembly to cease the Wing Australia (Wing) drone delivery trial in Bonython ACT and any future drone delivery trials in the ACT.

The ACT Government has responded to many of the concerns identified in the petition previously. There has also been debate within the Assembly, and in November 2018 the Assembly resolved to hold an inquiry into drone delivery systems in the ACT.

Regarding the trial in Bonython, Wing are trialling an entirely new business model that utilises drones to deliver small parcels to residential dwellings. This trial provides an opportunity for the ACT and national regulators (including the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)) to learn about the challenges and opportunities presented by emerging delivery drone technology, including community concerns about noise, privacy and safety.

CASA is the entity responsible for regulating the safe operation of drones throughout Australia. CASA has provided Wing approval for the trial in Bonython under relevant Commonwealth Government aviation safety regulation.

The ACT Government's role in the trial has been to facilitate a temporarily licence for the use of a site in Greenway for the take-off and storage of drones. This licence was issued 20 February 2018 and expires 15 February 2019. Wing have paid a commercial rate for this service. Wing have indicated that their service will conclude on, or prior to, 15 February 2019 and no extension to the current licence will be sought.

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The ACT Government provides this licence as a form of business support that would see increased business investment in the ACT as well as provide a range of other opportunities including:

- fostering innovation and new business models in the ACT that contribute to the technology innovation ecosystem in the ACT;
- promoting further business investment in Canberra;
- engaging with technologies that can reduce: transport carbon dioxide emissions, road infrastructure use and traffic congestion; and increase the access to services and independence of some members of the community and region; and
- building on the reputational advantages that come from being a city that engages productively with innovation and research.

Wing announced in November 2018 that it will be establishing an ongoing commercial drone delivery service from a commercial premises from Mitchell from 2019. Wing are able to purchase or lease premises suitable for its needs, like any other business. Regulatory bodies such as CASA will need to provide approval under Commonwealth Government regulations prior to Wing commencing operations from this new location. The ACT Government welcomes this business investment in Canberra.

In recognition that the service operates in a suburban area the ACT Government licence limits the operating hours of the trial to 7am to 8pm Monday to Saturday and 8am to 8pm on Sunday. This is similar to restrictions placed on other activities that create noise in suburban areas like lawn mowing. I understand feedback from residents regarding noise has also led Wing to change their hours of operation, slow down their drones and trial new quieter drones to respond to community concerns.

The ACT Government licence for the trial is also subject to Wing complying with the Australian *Privacy Act 1988*. The Privacy Principles under the Act impose strict conditions on both the security and permitted use of personal information.

Wing have undertaken a range of community engagement activities prior to and during the Bonython trial. How Wing wishes to present the outcomes of their technology trial and its engagements with community is their business decision. The ACT Government has not and does not, intend on undertaking community engagement on behalf of Wing. It is not usual for the ACT Government to undertake community engagement on behalf of a private company.

Wing have maintained a commitment to community engagement ahead of commencing operations in Mitchell presenting to local community councils and engaging community members at a range of locations in the Gungahlin area.

I trust that this information is of assistance to the Assembly and thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely



Mick Gentleman MLA

Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Advanced Technology and Space Industries

18/11/19