

**State Development & Innovation
The Hon. Tony McGrady MP**

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Queensland to be world centre for unmanned aerial vehicles

Unmanned aerial vehicles are the next big thing in aviation and Queensland is going to be a world centre for their development, Minister for State Development and Innovation Tony McGrady told the Estimates Committee today.

"In Queensland, unmanned aerial vehicles can monitor kilometres of fences, pipelines or powerlines. Why spend weeks in a four wheel drive searching for a fault when an unmanned aerial vehicle can lead you straight to the problem?" Mr McGrady said.

The Queensland Government is providing funding of \$3.53 million to the Queensland University of Technology and the CSIRO to help establish the Australian Research Centre for Aerospace Automation (ARCAA).

This research facility will be based at the Da Vinci Precinct at Brisbane Airport and will carry out research into the use of unmanned aerial vehicles - or UAVs - in commercial applications.

The testing for these unmanned aerial vehicles will occur in Kingaroy.

The Commonwealth Government and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority have identified a test and training area to the north-west of Kingaroy.

It is an area 30 nautical miles wide by 300 nautical miles long and to an altitude of 50,000 feet for UAV operations.

The Kingaroy Shire Council will also build a 'common user' facility at Kingaroy Airport to be shared by up to 70 Australian and international companies.

The Australian Defence Force has two UAV projects in their forward plans -- the first project involves unmanned aerial vehicles to be operated by an army unit at Enoggera.

Mr McGrady said this project provided immediate exciting opportunities for Queensland.

"Whichever international aerospace contractor wins, they will need to put in a systems integration laboratory.

"The laboratory would act as a focal point for research and development on various UAV programs for the Australian Government and other countries in the region.

"It would also lead to global contracts for local companies that provide materials and engines for UAV air frames," he said.

The second project involves the defence force trialling two unmanned aerial vehicles off the North-West of Australia.

Two bases in South-East Queensland - RAAF Base Amberley and the Oakey Army Base - are likely candidates to be involved.

The Queensland Government is also in discussions with two interstate firms about the relocation of their UAV operations to Queensland.

Source: <http://statements.cabinet.qld.gov.au/cgi-bin/display-statement.pl?id=7516&db=media>