

## Beattie chases spies in the sky

DARRELL GILES political editor  
19jun05

THE State Government will launch a multimillion-dollar bid to have Queensland named the base for Australia's new squadron of unmanned spy planes.

The Federal Government has ordered 20 of the US-made Global Hawk aircraft, worth \$1 billion, to be deployed within four years.

The pilotless planes will be used for maritime patrols, land surveillance, intelligence-gathering and to help emergency services respond to bushfires.



Premier Peter Beattie, in the US on a trade mission, will announce the plans today.

These involve Brisbane becoming the centre for development of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and Kingaroy airfield to be used for test flights.

Mr Beattie said \$3.53 million would be given to Queensland University of Technology for a \$12 million research centre at Brisbane airport.

"We will provide funding to help make Brisbane the Australian centre for research and development of unmanned aerial vehicles," Mr Beattie told *The Sunday Mail*.

UAVs have a bigger wingspan than a Boeing 737 and can fly for about 40 hours non-stop and cover 14,000km without needing to be refuelled.

Mr Beattie said QUT and the CSIRO would work with his Government to establish Queensland as a worldwide centre for UAV development.

"UAVs comprise a significant . . . opportunity that is not being pursued by any other state," he said.

"We have already made Queensland a major aviation hub through creating more than 5000 new jobs in the industry since 1998.

"We believe these two projects will help to continue that jobs growth."

Mr Beattie said Boeing Australia had supported the initiative and recommended Kingaroy as a flight test centre.

"An area of 30 nautical miles wide, 300 nautical miles long and up to a 50,000 feet ceiling to the

northwest of Kingaroy will be designated a UAV test and training area," he said.

State Development and Innovation Minister Tony McGrady, in the US with the Premier, said the Australian Research Centre for Aerospace Automation, to be built at the Da Vinci Precinct at Brisbane airport, would attract world-class researchers.

*Source:*

*[http://www.thesundaymail.news.com.au/common/story\\_page/0,5936,15656278%5E2765,00.html](http://www.thesundaymail.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5936,15656278%5E2765,00.html)*