

Beattie reveals unmanned plane plan

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A NEW research centre is to develop unmanned planes (UAVs) for surveillance in emergencies such as bushfires.

Queensland Premier Peter Beattie today said the state Government would give \$3.53 million to the Queensland University of Technology towards the creation of a \$12 million Australian research centre for aerospace at Brisbane airport.

"Queensland University of Technology and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation are working with the Queensland Government and several other organisations to establish Queensland as a worldwide centre for UAV system development," Mr Beattie said from Philadelphia.

"Boeing Australia strongly endorses this project and will participate in the initiative."

Mr Beattie, who was in the United States on a trade mission, said development of UAVs was a research and development opportunity that was not being pursued by any other Australian state.

State Development and Innovation minister Tony McGrady, travelling with Mr Beattie, said the research would focus on the development and commercialisation of UAVs in Queensland.

Civilian applications included coastal surveillance, power line inspection, precision farming and remote sensing, he said.

"The \$3.53 million will be used to construct a purpose-built facility, including laboratories and test equipment, research space for 40 research and development staff, and a hangar for assembly, testing and other uses," Mr McGrady said.

"It will also support an outdoor operational laboratory for ground-based operations and low-level hovering operations, and acquisition and equipping of a mobile operations centre for sustained remote-area UAV flight testing."

Mr Beattie said the UAVs would be tested at Kingaroy airport, northwest of Brisbane.

Source: <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,10117,15662615-29277,00.html>