

**Premier and Minister for Trade  
The Honourable Peter Beattie**

Sunday, May 06, 2007

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT FUNDING OPENS UP SKIES FOR NEW AGE  
AIRCRAFT

BOSTON: A \$2 million State Government grant could help Queensland's burgeoning unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) industry overcome one of its biggest issues - the safe operation of the unmanned aircraft in civilian airspace.

Today's funding announcement that the Queensland Government would fund Queensland University of Technology (QUT) research into developing ICT technology to tackle the issue was a big boost for the young industry in Queensland.

Mr Beattie announced the \$1,997,430 Innovation Projects Fund grant at a QUT luncheon in Boston.

Mr Beattie said the funding had been awarded to QUT to develop a low-cost portable air traffic control system and onboard computer vision systems.

When all other partner funding is included, the total project involves overall investment of \$9.6 million.

"It is hoped the onboard vision systems will offer UAVs and piloted aircraft a detect sense and avoid capability that is at least equivalent to human pilot capabilities", Mr Beattie said.

UAVs are aircraft without an onboard pilot that can either be remote-controlled or flown autonomously based on a pre-programmed flight plan.

"UAVs can be used in traffic and road control, power line maintenance, fisheries and wildlife surveillance, monitoring reef health, a whole range of agricultural uses including stock monitoring, as well as aerial photography, fighting bush fires and crime, and in search and rescue missions", Mr Beattie said.

"But their widespread use has been restricted by obvious air safety concerns. What the QUT research means is that these aircraft could at long last reach their potential, opening up a huge market for their use."

Mr Beattie said Queensland was already a leader in the field with 30 per cent of Australia's industry now based in the Smart State. Work underway in Queensland includes research, design, flight testing and training in the use of UAVs.

"UAVs are the fastest growing segment in the international aerospace industry, and I see a day in the not-too-distant future when these craft routinely fly our skies", Mr Beattie said.

Mr Beattie said QUT's research would be a major milestone for the industry in Queensland and strengthened existing alliances between Queensland-based researchers at QUT and the CSIRO, Boeing Australia and Boeing's international R&D organisation, Phantom Works, based in St Louis in the USA.

"It will also lead to the creation of about 10 highly skilled jobs and attract about \$1.5 million in direct financial investment by Boeing Australia and Phantom Works into the State", he said.

Mr Beattie said it would also have economic benefits for Kingaroy, which was the only airspace in Queensland where UAVs were currently tested, and strengthen the State's aerospace manufacturing opportunities.

The Innovation Projects Fund is part of the Queensland Government's \$200 million Smart State Innovation Funding Program, which aims to build world-class research facilities, attract top-quality scientists to Queensland and stimulate cutting-edge research projects.

The Queensland Government has invested more than \$3 billion in innovation, science and research since 1998. I think this demonstrates our deep and ongoing commitment to maintaining Queensland's reputation as the Smart State, Mr Beattie said.

Mr Beattie is currently in Boston where he and Minister for State Development John Mickel are leading a Queensland biotechnology delegation to BIO 2007, the world's largest biotechnology conference and exhibition.

BIO 2007 runs from 6-9 May and attracts about 20,000 international delegates and the Queensland Government is continuing its significant investment in Queensland branding and positioning to facilitate leads, networking, new business and research collaboration opportunities.

Media Contacts: Premier's Office 3224 4500

Contact: Associate Professor Rodney Walker, School of Engineering Systems, QUT, tel 3138 1772, mobile 0417 791 311, email: ra.walker@qut.edu.au

5 May 2007

*Source:*

<http://www.cabinet.qld.gov.au/MMS/StatementDisplaySingle.aspx?id=51683>