



Drones in the sky – technological marvel or threat to privacy?

Do drones pose a new threat to our privacy, or are they just innovative technology with benefits for governments and industry? This question will be the focus of a roundtable investigating drones and privacy being held in Canberra this week.

Almost every week the media reports on innovative uses for drones (or unmanned aerial vehicles) – such as during bushfires, to monitor cattle remotely, or to deliver medical equipment in remote areas. At the same time, there is increasing concern about drones' potential to invade privacy and interfere with other aircraft.

The Social Policy and Legal Affairs Committee is concerned that as this emerging technology is being rapidly adopted, the regulatory framework might not be keeping up. Regulation must ensure that safety and privacy are not compromised by the expansion of drone use in Australia.

The roundtable will have three focussed sessions:

- Drone regulation;
- Drone applications; and
- Drones and privacy.

Participants include drone operators and importers, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, the Australian Federal Police, the Minerals Council of Australia, the Australian Privacy Commissioner, drone researchers and civil society groups.

'Unmanned aerial vehicles are no longer the realm of science fiction or the preserve of military operations. Google has used drones in mapping, and Amazon has announced that it will deliver books with drones. There are many emerging applications for drones, including in the areas of law enforcement and commerce, and recreational use is growing very quickly,' said Committee chair Mr George Christensen MP. 'Soon drones will be everywhere – how can we provide a safe environment for drones and ensure that individuals' privacy is protected? This is just one of the questions we are considering at the roundtable.'

The roundtable will be held in Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House Canberra, commencing at 9.15am. Members of the public are welcome to attend. A full program has been posted to the Committee website at this [link](#), and a live audio stream of the roundtable will be available on the APH website at www.aph.gov.au.

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