Answers to questions on notice – Dr Oleksandra Molloy

1. **Pace and prioritisation. Perhaps I could ask you to take on notice what it would look like, in your view, if we were prioritising—so we can get the lay of the land—and what it might look like if we were to move to the level that you're advocating.**

   We can work with our AUKUS partners – UK and US – on identifying coordinated ways to prioritise, manufacture, and train the defence force in operating UAS/C-UAS.

2. **Procurement. Could I ask you to take on notice, if that whole system were to work better, what the sticky points are and what resolutions you would see, if it were really working properly—or if there are jurisdictions where it is working properly. Could you give us an idea of what that would look like.**

   UAS needs to be potentially treated different to other aircrafts. This can be considered as another method of delivery payload, or as precise ammunition. There should be certifications, licensing from the relevant defence authorities to ensure the system life cycle.

   This could be based on the principle of 24-6-6 (as per UK best practice) – upload, update, upgrade, where you can change something (i.e., tactics, frequencies, approaches, etc.) every 24 hours; upgrade something (i.e., antenna, frequency bands, sensor) every 6 weeks; and update something (i.e., full capability) every 6 months.

3. **Training of all ADF members to use these systems – in training. Include Integration – whether Air Force and Navy would require this. Could you take on notice how that is happening in terms of best practice in the world and what we might learn from.**

   Yes, this would require training for three-service, however training on different types of systems that are relevant for operation in their context. For example, Army may need to train operating FPV drones, while Navy – logistics drones, remotely operated.

4. **I know that one of your recommendations is the establishment of a centre of excellence for UAS and CUAS capabilities, to do this continuous innovation—perhaps a centre for excellence and some connectivity to industry. Could you provide on notice a little more detail about how such a thing might look.**

   A coordinated effort and support from the government and Defence senior leadership are needed across three service to be able to communicate and learn from each other and from defence industry on the UAS/C-UAS aspects. A dedicated Uncrewed Aerial System Centre is needed to coordinate efforts in the UAS/C-UAS developments, testing and evaluation for Defence, National Security and Border Protection Forces. This could be established via allocating an enclosed facility that will be capable of recreating various conditions , including those similar to the real battlefield experience (i.e., jamming presence, GPS/GNSS environment).

   Various requirements could be posed for the centre to support Defence and National Security. This could be one of the powerful ways of collaborating with defence industry to

resolve issues of the national priorities. This Centre should provide opportunities for research and development (allocated funding to specific grants of the defence priorities), testing and evaluation of the capability that is required by Defence. This capability should receive certification and all require clearances form the Defence Airworthiness Authority or equivalent to ensure the safety of the capability for testing. This Centre will also serve as the training facility for UAS/C-UAS operators, as well as for the Defence personnel for operating a drone of a specific type or C-UAS to protect against them.

This is similar to the UK initiative, based on the Strategic Defence Review recommendations that an initial operating capability for a new Defence Uncrewed Systems Centre should be established by February 2026 to accelerate exploitation of small, uncrewed air systems (UAS) across all three military services, helping to deliver them to the front line faster (UK MoD pledge £5bn towards drones and lasers - Airforce Technology).

The Army in particular will pursue a three-layered operational formation that risks uncrewed systems in disposable and attritable layers while preserving personnel and platforms as a more valuable third layer. The SDR offers a prescribed model: "A '20-40-40' mix is likely to be necessary: 20% crewed platforms to control 40% 'reusable' platforms (such as drones that survive repeated missions), and 40% 'consumables' such as rockets, shells, missiles, and 'one-way effector' drones."

The Centre of Excellence should not focus on Defence only, as other services, like National Security and Border Protection may benefit from it.