



# Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA)

Councils are increasingly utilising Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) for a wide range of purposes, from infrastructure inspection, mapping, weed spraying, disaster and environmental monitoring, to shark surveillance.

This fact sheet provides guidance to Councils on managing risks associated with RPA either owned or operated by Council or accessed by Council through a commercial operator.

## Statewide Mutual Public Liability Scheme

All General Public Liability Insurance contracts in the insurance market specifically exclude claims arising out of the ownership, maintenance or use of any aircraft. Such risks are typically insured separately under an Aviation Liability Policy. However, Statewide Mutual has endorsed the Public Liability Scheme Wording to provide member councils with RPA cover.

The Scheme covers Council's legal liability for third party property damage and/or third party bodily injury arising out of the operation of RPA. This cover is provided subject to:

- all other policy terms, conditions and exclusions;
- the RPA being operated in compliance with the regulations of the Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and
- a requirement that specific permission is sought by the Member from the relevant authorities to operate the RPA above 500m in altitude.

However, no cover is provided to Members under the Scheme for damage to an RPA. Should Council wish to insure their RPA for the risk of physical loss including theft, please contact your Account Manager to discuss your requirements.

## Regulation

The licensing and operation of RPA in Australia are regulated by CASA. Commercial operators and remote pilots of RPA must conduct operations in accordance with CASA standards, more specifically CASR 101. The following link to CASA's website will provide information relating to licensing and commercial operations, [www.casa.gov.au/aircraft/landing-page/flying-drones-australia](http://www.casa.gov.au/aircraft/landing-page/flying-drones-australia).

## Considerations for Council

There are a range of risk management considerations for Council relating to RPA use. It would be prudent for Council to review the following considerations as part of an overall management system to successfully control the risks associated with RPA operations:

- **Policy** – will the operation of RPA be affected by existing Council policies or by-laws?
  - Privacy concerns of the public and businesses when operating RPA with recording devices fitted should be considered. Does Council's privacy policy capture this?
  - Does Council have existing by-laws governing the use of RPA? For example some local

government areas have determined to be RPA free zones.

- **Resourcing** – does Council have a strategy in place to ensure there are sufficient resources to achieve Council’s objectives in using RPA?
- **Procedures** – has Council established a set of procedures clearly addressing requirements for operation?
- **Education & training** – has Council addressed education and training requirements that reflect legislated requirements, the objectives of Council’s policies, and are adequately resourced and clearly communicated?
- **Documentation** – has Council implemented a documented system for the creation, collection and storage of all records related to the commercial operation of the RPA and its operators e.g. AVCRM? (see below for details)
- **Safety Management System (SMS)** – does Council have an SMS which is in line with CASA’s requirements? Utilisation of AVCRM is recommended.

## Contractor Management

For some councils it may be more cost effective to utilise RPA contractors to undertake works. Before engaging a contractor there are a number of considerations for Council which will help minimise potential exposure to liability.

- Is the contractor registered with and using AVCRM?
- Is the contractor adequately insured for the type of work to be carried out including:
  - Aviation Liability insurance;
  - Public Liability insurance; and
  - Workers Compensation (where applicable)?

If so, what insurance documentation will be accepted as evidence of the appropriate insurance? e.g. Certificate of Currency, or full policy wording?

- How will the insurance information be checked? e.g. through the Contractor Insurance Management System (CIMS) provided by Statewide Mutual, a Council employee or Statewide Mutual Account Manager?

- Does the contractor have a Safety Management Plan which satisfies CASA’s and Council’s requirements for the proposed work?
- Has pre-flight and site specific documentation been received, recorded and considered?

## AVCRM

### Funded by Statewide Mutual

AVCRM is a completely customisable, paperless risk management solution for RPA and aerodromes. AVCRM is managed by a team of aviation professionals who understand the operational and regulatory demands required to maintain compliance through CASA. The system is provided to all Statewide Mutual members at no cost.

The AVCRM RPA Manager application has been specifically designed to mitigate risks and increase safety for RPA operation increasing efficiency and transparency within the management system.

Being a paperless solution, AVCRM streamlines the operational process, hazard identification and operational approvals. The application removes the onerous task of maintaining the complexities of compliance paperwork, making operations more streamlined and accurate when it comes to auditing the operation of RPA.

Each page within the application has a Video Tutorial button to assist with the process, and AVCRM also offers a support ticket system available 24/7 allowing users to submit requests for further guidance. Telephone, live website and email support is also available during business hours.

Commercial RPA operators can register to use the AVCRM system at minimal cost. This should be encouraged by councils who are engaging RPA operators to undertake works for Council.

### For further information please visit the CASA website

[www.casa.gov.au/aircraft/landing-page/flying-drones-australia](http://www.casa.gov.au/aircraft/landing-page/flying-drones-australia)

Your Regional Risk Manager and Account Manager are available to provide additional information and help upon request.