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## ACUO Applauds the Senate Committee Report on Drones

ACUO applauds the final Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport, following its Inquiry into *Regulatory requirements that impact on the safe use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, Unmanned Aerial Systems and associated systems*.

"The report demonstrates the Committee gained a thorough understanding of Drones and their associated issues," said Joe Urli, the President of the peak industry association, Australian Certified UAV Operators Inc. (ACUO) "The Committee was able to cut through a variety of interests to understand that this isn't just about the many applications for drone technology, it's just as important that we facilitate orderly growth of this industry, safely and efficiently", said Joe Urli.

ACUO maintains that the rollout of the CASA (CALA) regulatory amendments in 2016 was not in the best interests of aviation and public safety, or the commercial drone industry in Australia more widely. ATSB incident report figures [about drones] have increased almost 120% over the previous year, with no signs of slowing down.

"CASA's amended regulations appeared to depart from common sense approaches to safety, and that's why ACUO sought to challenge them, in an effort that eventually culminated in the Senate Committee Report. Were it not for this intervention, the Committee would not have had opportunity to identify the deficiencies in CASA's suite of drone regulations, nor go on to make the recommendations they did to now try and back-fill some of the gaps", said Mr Urli.

Of the 10 recommendations made by the Senate Committee, ACUO can trace at least 7 of those as being initiated by ACUO in its own formal submissions to the Committee.

Those who thought CASA's amended regulations in 2016 were a good idea have now come to realise that whilst economic factors might have made some sense initially, the negative impacts on aviation and public safety and security, and ultimately on the professionalism of the drone industry in Australia, have left us over-exposed. Approximately one third of certified commercial drone operators have had serious negative impacts on their business as a result of CASA's amended regulations, and that too could have been avoided. If we are to baseline with the rest of the world then we need to have a few fundamentals in place and the Senate Committee fully agreed with ACUO on this.

Those fundamentals include:

- A whole of Government approach to how the industry will be shaped in years to come, including on unmanned traffic management;
- Basic training for all drone operators
- Wider enforcement initiatives (beyond just CASA) including better cooperation and curated actions by police and local council officers.

"We urge the Australian Government to respond promptly and decisively in demanding implementation of the recommendations of the Senate Committee", said ACUO President, Mr Urli.

**About ACUO:**

The Association of Australian Certified UAV Operators Inc. (ACUO) is a not-for-profit association launched in 2009 by seven of the first eight certified Australian UAV Operators. The association was formally registered in Queensland on the 31st March 2010.

ACUO is bound by its Constitution to:

- Promote the growth and expansion of the commercial UAV/UAS/RPAS industry in Australia
- Promote and protect the interests of CASA Certified Operators and;
- Establish the association as a responsible authority

ACUO is a Non-Corporate Partner Organisation member of UVS International, the global unmanned systems industry associated headquartered in Paris. ACUO is Australia's representative on the International RPAS Coordination Council, a prestigious industry body initiated by UVS International to coordinate RPAS standards globally.

ACUO is also a member of The Australian Aviation Associations Forum (TAAAF), an alliance of the majority of Australia's major aviation associations to ensure the industry presents a united voice to government on key aviation issues and policy.

ACUO regularly provides advice on UAS related issues to governments, public and private enterprise, businesses and organizations on the fundamentals of UAV/UAS/RPAS operations in the Australian national airspace, and associated issues.

For further information please contact:

For all Executive enquiries, Media Relations etc.:

**President:** Joe Urli

**Email:** [president@acuo.org.au](mailto:president@acuo.org.au)

**Phone:** 0408 382 165

For all General Association, Administration and Membership enquiries:

**Secretary:** Brad Mason

**Email:** [secretary@acuo.org.au](mailto:secretary@acuo.org.au)

**Phone:** 0408 772 571

**Website:** [www.acuo.org.au](http://www.acuo.org.au)