

# Australian Certified UAV Operators Inc.

*"Strength Through Unity"*

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## ACUO welcomes Defence plan for local RPAS design, development and rolling manufacture.

The association of Australian Certified UAV Operators (ACUO) welcomes today's announcement by senior Department of Defence capability planners of a plan for local design, development and rolling production of small military unmanned aircraft systems.

The announcement, made at the Land Forces 2016 trade show in Adelaide, follows extensive lobbying by Australian industry, including ACUO, over the past two years for launch of a national unmanned aircraft systems initiative.

Defence planners, led by Colonel Andrew Jones from Army capability development, this morning told the Land Forces 2016 trade show that the initiative is likely to be a lead project for the new Australian Centre for Defence Innovation being established in Adelaide as part of the Defence White Paper industry policy.

First operational systems to be developed under the initiative will focus on low cost backpackable systems. From the early 2020s these will augment the Australian Army's Project Land 129 Phase 4 Wasp tactical unmanned aircraft now being acquired from Aerovironment of the United States. More complex systems will be explored as the initiative evolves.

ACUO president Mr Joe Urli says the initiative is "a triumph that directly reflects the deep breadth of small unmanned systems expertise and technology in Australian industry. ACUO explicitly proposed such an initiative in its submission to the 2016 Defence White Paper ([Link here](#)) and the 2015 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade committee inquiry into options for the development of Australia's military unmanned systems industry ([Link here](#))."

Mr Urli said the new Defence initiative "demonstrates the scale of the industry policy revolution now being implemented by Defence and the far sighted vision being displayed by the head of the Defence Capability and Sustainment Group, Mr Kim Gillis. The understanding of the Australian unmanned aviation industry being shown at these levels provides a fundamental basis for long term success of the program.

"The development of practical mechanisms for direct engagement of all levels of the Australian unmanned systems research, development, manufacture and operations base is the next key step to be undertaken in ensuring the successful mobilisation of this initiative. ACUO would like to see Defence host a national round table process to ensure equitable opportunity for participation in the full definition and launch phases. Australian start-ups and SMEs have much to contribute here.

"ACUO will be using its role as the peak national unmanned aircraft systems industry association to ensure meaningful linkages are developed between the Defence initiative and wider Federal and state government innovation and industry development policies".

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