



## Surf Life Saving Australia - Circular

<b>Title:</b>	Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA)   Drones
<b>Document ID:</b>	Circular 36/16-17
<b>Audience:</b>	Clubs and State/Territory Centres, Sport, Lifesaving
<b>From:</b>	Capacity and Capability
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### Executive Summary

The use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), commonly referred to as drones or UAVs, are becoming increasingly popular, particularly those fitted with camera equipment, which allow both professional and amateur operators to capture aerial footage like never before.

While the vast majority of operators fly safely, as the popularity of drones increases, so too does the likelihood of them being flown when it's not safe to do so.

Surf Life Saving is undertaking trials and evaluations in a number of States in relation to the use of RPAs for lifesaving operations. This includes evaluation of suitable RPAs that meet fit-for-purpose requirements and mitigate risk. The development of Standard Operating Procedures and Operations Manuals for control and coordination are also being looked into.

This includes working and liaising with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) to ensure that practices are being complied with and that any developments for use done so with appropriate endorsements.

The use of RPAs has been observed at many activities involving surf lifesaving and the need to ensure that operators and the organisation are not in breach of Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) regulations is of paramount importance.

The following information is provided to ensure this awareness and understanding of the use of RPAs is at all levels of the organisation.

### Operational use of RPAs

Surf Life Saving is conscious of the use of RPAs for a range of purposes relating to surf lifesaving activity, including but not limited to:

- Coaching
- Sports
- Promotion
- Water safety for events
- Carnivals – for filming of events
- Surveillance (patrol support, sharks etc)
- Search and recovery processes

Details for commercial RPAs and other RPAs above 2kg can be sourced from the CASA site <https://www.casa.gov.au/aircraft/landing-page/flying-drones-australia> .

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The following is provided to advise and inform uses of considerations that should be taken before operating RPAs and applies to flying recreational RPAs under 2kg for non-commercial use.

Operating Elements	Conditions
Within visual line of sight	Yes, must be able to be observed with own eyes at all times
Flying in cloud or fog	Not permitted
Height	Below 400ft Above Ground Level (AGL)
Day   Night	During the day, no night flying
Distance from people	More than 30m from people, boats, vehicles or buildings
Over populated areas	Not permitted over populous areas ie beaches, parks, sports ovals while they are in use
Distance from aerodrome/helipad	Not permitted within 3 nautical miles (5.5km)
UAV Operator Certificate	If for commercial use yes
Emergency situations	You must not fly your RPA over or near an area affecting public safety or where emergency operations are underway (without prior approval).
Number of RPAs at one time	You can only fly one RPA at a time

**Key notes:**

- For use for any Surf Life Saving purposes permission is required to be obtained from your State body (Surf Life Saving State Centre) prior to use.
- While use of RPAs may be undertaken privately from SLS use, operators must still comply with all regulations.
- SLS is cognisant of the many positive uses of RPAs while also conscious of the risk mitigation requirements and those required by CASA. It is therefore essential any use aligned with SLS purposes is done in accordance with all SLS, Government and CASA requirements and laws.
- Those seeking to operate RPAs may require separate insurances should permission be granted and you have met the CASA requirements. Check with your SLS State body.

[To download a copy of the CASA DL Brochure click here.](#)

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