

POLICY REGISTER

DRAFT

DRONE (REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT) USE POLICY

Policy adopted: xx xx 2026 Minute No.

Reviewed:

File Ref: P13-1, A2-3.1, L3-25

1 DOCUMENT CONTROL AND REVIEW

This document shall be reviewed:

- Immediately if there is evidence that incident investigations are not resulting in appropriate changes to prevent a recurrence of the incident;
- Immediately if any provision is contrary to law;
- Within 12 months immediately following a Council Election; or
- Immediately if there is a significant change in the level or availability of technology associated with the testing for inappropriate alcohol and /or drugs use.

Issue	Prepared/ Revised By and Date	Action/Amendment Description	Approved By and Date
1.0	Scott Hosking Work Health & Safety/Risk Co- ordinator	First Edition	23 July 2026 xx.7.2026

2 INTRODUCTION

Drones (Remote Piloted Aircraft (RPA)) are becoming increasingly popular for both commercial and recreational use in Australia and worldwide. There is an increase in recreational drone users using open spaces, such as local parks and reserves, to fly drones. Recreational use of drones in parks can interfere with visitors' enjoyment and individuals' privacy.

Council also operates drones and may engage contractors to:

- conduct aerial surveys of Council assets such as, but not limited to, roads, bridges, water reservoirs and buildings for the purpose of assessing maintenance issues;
- take aerial photographs and videos (including use of thermal imaging cameras) of Council owned and/or managed assets such as outdoor recreation areas, sporting fields and community facilities;
- conduct surveys of local biodiversity, flora and fauna, weeds and pest species, including use of thermal imaging cameras;
- conduct aerial surveys of Council owned and/or managed land with limited access due to terrain or geographical features such as floods;
- take aerial photographs and videos at Council and third-party events; and
- document the construction of Council projects, project promotion within mainstream and social media, industry conferences and publications.

3 PURPOSE

This Policy sets out Council's minimum requirements for the use of drones within the Warren Shire, including:

- commercial and recreational drone uses who use Council managed facilities for take-off and landing purposes; and
- Council owned or managed drones used for the purpose of gathering data for use by Council.

Council has obligations and a duty of care in relation to providing safe spaces for visitors on Council owned and controlled lands including wrongful acts committed by third parties.

Council also has obligations to provide opportunities for the public appreciation and enjoyment of the natural values of its parks and reserves. Council is committed to the safety of residents who occupy Council managed land, including parks, sporting ovals and recreation reserves, and requires that all drone operators on Council land operate in accordance with all regulatory and privacy legislation.

Further, Council has an interest in monitoring the level of drone activity taking place on its land, to ensure that designated areas can be supported with appropriate signage etc.

4 SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

- users of commercial or recreational drones on Warren Shire Council managed land.
- Council Managers, Council Staff, Council Contractors and volunteers of Council involved with RPA operations;
- all Council-owned and Council-managed RPA systems and technology; and
- any data and/or information collected by it, including geospatial data.

It does not apply to the use of drones on privately owned land within the Shire.

5 DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority (the Commonwealth Government agency responsible for ensuring aviation safety).
Drone	Means remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) which can be used for recreational and commercial uses.
Commercial use	When flying a drone for money, or any form of economic gain i.e. asset and infrastructure monitoring and inspection, aerial mapping, filming and photography, CASA requires operators to hold an RPA (Remotely Piloted Aircraft) operator's certificate (ReOC). If the RPA weights less than 2 kilograms, an operator's certificate is not required, however the operator must notify CASA.
Recreational use	when flying for fun or a hobby, and not commercially, regulations are less restrictive and allow people to fly a drone without being a certified pilot. However, safety rules and regulations still apply.
Council managed land	for the purposes of this policy, Council managed land refers to parks and reserves which are owned, occupied or under the control of Council.
Controlled airspace	Airspace of defined dimensions which an air traffic control service is provided to flights in accordance with the airspace classification.
Restricted area	An area declared under the Airspace Regulations 2007 for which permission must be granted by the controlling authority before any operations in that area can occur while it is active.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

Warren Shire Council is the owner of any data collected by the RPA. Access to data will be managed in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) and the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW).

It is the responsibility of Council's RPA team to ensure that any requests by the public for recreational or commercial use of drones on Council managed land are appropriately assessed and approved in line with these guidelines.

It is also expected that if any Council Officer identifies the unauthorised use of drones within the shire, where possible, the following actions will be undertaken:

- The drone user will be requested to cease conducting use of the drone and to complete a formal application process (as per these guidelines); and
- If a breach of CASA Standard Operating Conditions (SOCs) is identified or suspected, the Council Officer (currently the Work Health & Safety – Risk Co-ordinator) will be required to notify Council's Operation Executive Officer, currently the Town Services Manager or Chief Remote Pilot of the breach.

7 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

7.1 GENERAL OBLIGATIONS

The operation of RPAs is governed by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and determined by the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations Part 101 (CASR101).

This Policy determines Council specific requirements for the use of RPAs (software platform), technology (equipment and hardware) and data in addition to CASR101. It has been developed to ensure that safety, privacy and legislative compliance requirements are considered and met by Council's authorised Council staff, engaged contractors, Commercial and Recreational Remote Pilots (RPs).

7.2 COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FLIGHTS

The operation of RPAs from any Council park, reserve or managed land will require a permit from Council prior to operation.

All recreational and commercial flights must be in compliance with CASA regulations and any authorisations from CASA must be provided to Council prior to any flights being undertaken.

Where the aircraft weighs 2 kilograms or more the operator must have a current Remote Pilot Licence (RePL) or Remote Operator's Certificate (ReOC) issued by CASA.

There is to be no consumption of alcohol on Council owned or managed land and or being under the influence of alcohol of other drugs while operating an RPA on Council owned or managed land.

7.3 COUNCIL OPERATED OR MANAGED FLIGHTS

Council staff must comply with all other Civil Aviation Safety Authority's (CASA) regulations and safety rules for flying drones and other RPA at all times. This includes meeting CASA training and education requirements for remote pilots.

All Council operated or contracted flights must be in accordance with Warren Shire Council – CASR Part 101 Operations Manual.

All Council operated or managed flights must be entered into Council's AVCRM management system.

7.4 CONTRACTORS

Contractors must provide evidence of:

- Details of CASA licencing including:
 - RPA's Operators Certificate (ReOC);
 - Operators licences (RePL); and
 - CASA approved RPA Operations Manual.
- Certificate of Currency for all insurances including:
 - Public liability;
 - Workers Compensation (if applicable); and
 - Aviation Liability Insurance.
- RPA Management System that manages all flight and RPA maintenance requirements.

8 PRIVACY AND COMPLAINTS

Council staff who use drones are required to act responsibly and in accordance with legislation. The reasonable expectations of the privacy of individuals is paramount.

Complaints regarding the use of drones by Council Officers will be managed in accordance with Council's Complaints Management Policy. Where a complaint relates to the conduct of approved users the relevant action officer will be Council's Operation Executive Officer currently the Town Services Manager.

If a member of the community believes that their privacy has been breached by images or footage captured by a drone, on Council owned or managed land, they are encouraged to contact Council via the Customer Request System or the New South Wales Ombudsman at; www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

9 REFERENCES

Warren Shire Council – Complaints Management Policy
Warren Shire Council – Contractor WHS Management Policy
Warren Shire Council – Fraud and Corruption Policy
Warren Shire Council – Legislative Compliance Policy and Procedure
Warren Shire Council – Privacy Management Policy
Warren Shire Council – Workplace Surveillance Policy
Warren Shire Council – CASR Part 101 Operations Manual
CASA Remotely piloted aircraft systems – operation of excluded RPA (AC 101-10)
Surveillance Devices Act 2007 (NSW)
Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
Statewide Mutual – Remote Piloted Aircraft Fact Sheet