

Drone Leadership Group Minutes

Chairperson	Kirstie Hewlett
Date/Time	Tuesday, 2 February 2021 11.30-1.00pm
Location	Ministry of Transport 3 Queens Wharf, Wellington, 6011 (opposite TSB Arena) and via Skype
Invited participants	Peter Crabtree (MBIE) Joe McKay (MBIE) John Kay (CAA) Dean Winter (CAA) Katie Bhreatnach (Airways) Mark Blanchard (Airways) Helen Doukas (Airways) Kirstie Hewlett (MoT) Note, other staff from the respective member agencies will also be in attendance

1. Introductions/apologies

Katie Bhreatnach and Mark Blanchard were apologies. Helen Doukas attended in their place. Dean Winter was an apology.

2. Roundtable of updates

MBIE provided a brief update on the Airspace Integration Trials Programme (AITP). It is progressing with a number of applicants that are interested in joining the programme. It is also thinking about the next steps for companies that are already in the programme. Furthermore, MBIE emphasised the good position of both international and domestic partners.

Airways noted that it did not have any new updates to provide since its last meeting with the Regulatory team of the Ministry of Transport (the Ministry) just before the Christmas break.

CAA stated that the current queue of Part 102 applications for drone operations is getting thinner. It mentioned that it has hired some additional staff with the funding that was previously received and are working through the issues. The organisation is also focussing on gaining more efficiencies, since COVID resulted in a significant reduction in the levies which fund most of CAA's work. MBIE acknowledges that it has received positive feedback from the industry when it comes to the queue of Part 102 applications.

3. Discussion on approach to engaging with the new Minister/Government on drones (including insights from any previous Minister meetings)

The Ministry reflected briefly on the meeting with Minister Wood on drones in New Zealand and the proposed regulatory programme. A meeting with Ministers Wood, Woods and Nash and representatives of the aerospace sector has been set to discuss issues that have been identified by representatives of the aerospace sector. A joint briefing with MBIE will be provided by the Ministry.



[Redacted]

4. Update on the Ministry’s drone discussion document

The Ministry briefly summarised the content of the drone discussion document and the process taken to reach the current version. The document received a lot of good feedback from the government stakeholders consulted while it was drafted. The focus has been on collaboration. All parties involved appear to be happy with the current version of the document, which addresses the concerns raised about earlier drafts.

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5. Airspace Integration Trial Programme (AITP) expansion options

MBIE provided an update on the AITP. The program has progressed from focussing on attracting and selecting participants to moving beyond selection to trials that are underway, which makes them think about the next steps and about what value companies can offer from a holistic perspective. MBIE suggests that an aerospace strategy could be important to address challenges and answer regulatory questions.

The Ministry asked whether there were any plans to raise more awareness about the companies participating in the AITP from a communication perspective. MBIE agreed that there is a need for more attention to what is happening in the programme. It has many use cases available that can be used to inform the public about the use of drones. The Ministry noted that some of these examples could be included in the Discussion Document before it is considered by Cabinet.

6. Next steps on UTM

The Ministry has participated as an observer in a meeting on UTM hosted by officials in Australia. The Ministry noted positively that Australia also has a principle-focussed approach to UTM, with a focus on engaging with stakeholders, followed by system architectures. The Ministry will continue considering potential next steps, and will revert to the Group in due course.

The Ministry noted that it could be useful to set up an internal UTM workshop in which potential policy issues can be raised.

7. Any other Business

No other points were raised.