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MEDIA RELEASE



Sky is the limit for proposed drone testing facility

Bland Shire Council has partnered with Flight Design Pty Ltd to investigate the establishment of a cutting edge Centre of Excellence for drone technologies based in and around West Wyalong.

Representatives from Council and Flight Design met with key stakeholders in West Wyalong last week to discuss the next stages of the ground breaking plan with the potential to generate millions of dollars in investment into the Bland Shire.

The initiative will create high technology jobs, increased economic activity and tourism and opportunities for local businesses and landholders to access the latest technology.

Flight Design is currently investigating a number of potential sites and has commenced discussions with the State Government, Department of Defence and other potential stakeholders in relation to funding.

Once operational, the drone range will be used to test and develop new technologies and improve existing technologies.

In the meantime, Flight Design is continuing its regular balloon and drone activities from its new hangar space at the West Wyalong airport. The new hangar was constructed by Council with funding under the Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program and will be a key component in Flight Design's future development plans.

Flight Design spokesperson Robert Brand said the company was also investigating the possibility of further utilising the West Wyalong airport for large wing drones – which will generate increased usage and income for the airport facility.

There is currently only one drone testing facility in Australia, a \$13 million project based at Cloncurry in North Queensland, and the Bland Shire proposal would be the first of its kind in New South Wales.

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