



## Minister for Police & Road Safety

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Our Ref: 63-06433

PERTH CORONERS COURT

18 MAY 2018

RECEIVED

Ms Ros Fogliani  
State Coroner  
Level 10, Central Law Courts  
501 Hay Street  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Ms Fogliani

Thank you for your letter regarding the Inquest into the circumstances surrounding the deaths of Chunjun Li and Jiaolong Zhang and the recommendation relating to the management of drones for emergency search and rescue operations.

The Deputy State Coroner's Finding has been reviewed by the Western Australia Police Force and the following comment is provided in relation to Recommendation No. 5.

***The regulation and management of drones for emergency search and rescue operations be clarified and training and certification of competent pilots be promoted within search and rescue groups.***

The WA Police Force advise they are currently trialling Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (drones) in a law enforcement capacity. Drones can be used in some circumstances during land search operations for missing persons (weather and terrain permitting). While drones are yet to be tested by the WA Police Force in relation to marine search operations, the evaluation of this function will be considered as part of this project.


It is further advised that this trial has noted that drones cannot normally operate in adverse weather conditions, including winds over 20 knots/36 km per hour or in rain. These types of weather conditions are commonly experienced during marine search and rescue operations. These early findings and the adverse weather conditions outlined in the evidence suggest the deployment of drone technology would not have been possible during this incident.

The WA Police Force are evaluating drones which have the capability of lifting payloads up to 2kg with an approved attachment device. Any use of attachment devices requires Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) approval, both for the device and the attachments incorporation into drone operations. The WA Police Force advise the trial is not evaluating attachment devices.

I am also advised the WA Police Force hold a Remotely Piloted Aircraft System Air Operators Certificate (ReOC) which allows the operation of approved drones in accordance with Federal legislation. Under the conditions of the ReOC, drone operators (pilots) need to be assessed for competency before being licenced by CASA. If search and rescue groups, such as Volunteer Marine Rescue, were considering introducing drone technology into their operations, they would need to comply with CASA legislation.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



**HON MICHELLE ROBERTS BA DipEd MLA  
MINISTER FOR POLICE; ROAD SAFETY**

**15 MAY 2018**