

Central West Qld set to take off as international drone mecca

RAPAD will kick off its plan to make the region a centre for drone testing as it hosts regional Australia's first ever drones symposium in Barcaldine from 11 – 12 August 2018.

RAPAD is proud to present *Outback Aerodrone Symposium* exposing the region to the latest in drones and data technology, with a program including industry experts, hands-on demonstrations, and a trade show.

RAPAD CEO, David Arnold said the event will also launch *Outback Aerodrone: RAPAD's vision of a Centre of Excellence* to position the region to be the choice location to host national and global companies in Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) drone testing.

"Outback Aerodrone 2018 provides a fantastic opportunity to meet and listen to some of Australia's leading drone and data experts right here in our region," Mr Arnold said.

"From agriculture, to emergency services, to infrastructure, drone technologies provide opportunities to support our communities and provide services like never before.

"We've had great success in delivering Start Up weekends and digital training across the region, and our technology precinct at Westech was buzzing last year, further demonstrating that people are already doing amazing things and there's a strong appetite for more," he said.

"The clear, open skies and light hours of Outback Queensland are all part of what makes our region a great drawcard for the world's drone businesses and enthusiasts, as well as other opportunities.

"Our tourism figures are pushing up to one million visitors a year, this technology is another exciting area that can boost those figures and the many outstanding experiences our region has to offer."

RAPAD Chair, Cr Rob Chandler said leading the way with these technologies means that region can be on the front foot to deliver many benefits to the local economy, skills capacity and jobs.

"The Central West is a place where everyone is ready to give it a go and technology is breaking down barriers in many areas - it's an exciting time as we realise the significant amount of untapped potential we have here," Cr Chandler said.

"Technology and the Digital Economy is one of RAPAD's priority areas, and this event is delivering on our commitment to ensure individuals, businesses and communities are ready to take advantage of what's available.

"Technology solutions such as drones are already on the radar or in use for many people in our region – generating local expertise, new businesses and jobs.

"By bringing together industry leaders and professionals from across the sector, the sky really is the limit for what attendees can get out of this."

The Queensland Government released its *Drones Strategy* last year highlighting the importance of the fast growing sector and the State's prime position in the global market.

Queensland is a world leader in drone technology and application. Our drone industry has strong investment and jobs growth, supported by our world-leading research and development capability and a highly skilled workforce. Queensland is a place where drones complement and enhance Queenslanders' lives and support our communities.

The Outback Aerodrone Symposium will be hosted at Gregory Park, 15 minutes south of Barcaldine, with bus transfers available. Registrations are now open with package details and further information available at www.outbackaerodrone.com.au.

-- End --

High resolution footage and images available.

Contacts:

David Arnold, CEO RAPAD – Mobile: 0428 583 301, Email: ceo@rapad.com.au

Kristine Arnold, RAPAD - Mobile: 0427 649 031, Email: karnold@rapad.com.au

Morgan Gronold, RAPAD – Mobile: 0448 739 759, Email: mgronold@rapad.com.au