



Australian Government
Civil Aviation Safety Authority

Advice for MO and Dept

Subject:

Swarm Light show incident, Docklands, Vic 14 July 2023

Key Points:

- The drone light show was operated by The Australian Traffic Network Pty Ltd (the operator) in support of Matilda's women's soccer match at Marvel Stadium.
- The location of light show was at Docklands, which is close to Marvel stadium. The event took place over the water at approximately 1830 AEST on 14 July 2023.
- The operator experienced a significant failure of their swarm light show of 500 RPA soon after the show commenced. From initial reports approximately 430 RPA descended into the Yarra River after technical issues were experienced by the operator shortly after launch.
- CASA was in immediate contact with the operator and are undertaking our own inquiries with the operator to determine what has occurred and if there are any immediate regulatory safety matters to act upon.
- Initial advice from the operator was that all drones except one landed within the designated show area. The single drone was manually recovered by the chief pilot.
- The operator has engaged six professional divers to recover the drones from the water.
- The operator is undertaking their own investigation into the incident and will be providing a progress report back to CASA by 19 July on their initial findings.
- The ATSB have advised they are undertaking a desktop investigation of the incident.
- The operator has voluntarily ceased any further operations at this time until more detail is known.

Background:

- It is CASA's responsibility to ensure approved RPAS operators comply with aviation safety requirements – this is achieved by conducting regulatory services and surveillance activities.
- In certain situations, local and state regulations may apply to RPAS Operations. It is the responsibility of the RPAS operator to follow any guideline and comply with local and state regulation. Operators generally have a procedure that direct them to addressing these requirements.
- With regards to environmental considerations, it is more practical that approved RPAS operators have a procedure that takes into consideration local and state requirements.
 - Following a review of ATN's RPAS operation manual, CASA can confirm they have procedures that refer specifically to environmental considerations.
 - In addition, Parks Victoria have specific drone event application guidelines for event such a drone swarm show including on the waterways.



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- The Australian Traffic Network Pty Ltd were operating under a current CASA instrument and they are approved to operate up to 1050 RPA to one pilot (the RPA system is highly automated)
- The organisation currently has 1118 RPA registered, 1114 of those are Damoda Outdoor V2 formation UAV (multi-rotor) (MTOW 725g). (Picture of the drone below)



DRONE ISSUES

Key Points

s22(1)(a)(ii)

- *[If raised]* Any questions on the drone light show incident at the Docklands, Victoria on 14 July 2023 should be directed to CASA.

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Pages 4-6 removed in their entirety as irrelevant to the request under s22(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act.

Australia's Future Airspace Framework (CASA lead)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

[If asked about the drone light show incident at Docklands, Victoria, 14 July 2023]

- The Australian Traffic Network Pty Ltd (the operator) experienced a significant failure of their swarm light show of 500 drones soon after the show commenced. The majority of their drones descended into the Yarra River after technical issues shortly after launch. The operator engaged professional divers to recover the drones from the water.
- Any further questions should be directed CASA, who are better placed to provide more information on the status of its investigation.
- It is CASA's responsibility to ensure approved RPAS operators comply with aviation safety requirements.
- In certain situations, local and state regulations may apply to RPAS operations, including environmental considerations. It is the responsibility of the RPAS operator to follow any guidelines and comply with local and state regulation.