Boeing completes autonomous synchronised flight tests in Australia

Australian-developed on-board command and control system automatically perceives, processes and reacts in coordination with other unmanned vehicles.

BRISBANE, Australia Aug. 17, 2018 — Boeing [NYSE: BA] has successfully completed the first suite of synchronised unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) flight tests using new on-board autonomous command and control technology developed by Boeing in Australia.

Conducted at a regional Queensland airfield, the test flights saw five UAV test beds equipped with Boeing's new on-board system safely complete in-air programmed missions as a team without input from a human pilot.

The milestone comes six months after establishing the company's largest international autonomous systems development program in Queensland.

"What we've created here in Australia has the potential to transform the use of unmanned vehicles for civil, commercial and defence applications – whether that be in the air, on the ground or out at sea," said Shane Arnott, director of Boeing Phantom Works International.

"This capability will be a huge driver of efficiency and productivity. By safely teaming unmanned systems with human operated systems, we keep people away from dull, dirty and dangerous tasks so they can focus on activities that machines can't or shouldn't do."

Boeing's partnership with small and medium-sized enterprises helped drive rapid design, development and testing of this autonomous technology. In just two months, Boeing engaged small-to-medium enterprises and vetted and issued AU$2.3 million in contracts with 14 Queensland businesses.

Over the coming months, the Boeing Australia team will incorporate and test more advanced behaviours on high-performance air vehicles before exploring other domains such as unmanned ocean vehicles.

This activity is delivered in partnership with the Queensland Government as part of Boeing's Advance Queensland Autonomous Systems Platform Technology Project.

For 100 years, Boeing has led manned and unmanned technology innovation and integration from sea to air to space. Visit www.boeing.com for more information. Follow Boeing Australia on Twitter:@BoeingAustralia.

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