



Photography: Drone chopper - CSIRO

Using drones in national parks

Information for recreational users

Drones – also called remotely piloted aircraft – are small aircraft covered by civil aviation laws. When using a drone in a national park visitors must follow these rules and comply with the NPWS Drones in Parks Policy.

Drones can dangerously interfere with park operations, such as fire management and other aviation activities. Drones can also disturb wildlife and also intrude on visitor privacy. It is up to the operator of a drone to make sure that it is airworthy and is flown safely.

If visitors wish to use a drone in a park they must check with the park manager if it is allowed and adhere to the following rules.

1. Make sure that you don't fly your drone where it will annoy park visitors, be a nuisance to wildlife, or interfere with park management operations.
2. Check the Alerts page of the NPWS visitor website (www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/alerts/Alerts-list) for the latest advice about fires and floods affecting parks and park closures. Access to parks may be restricted or prohibited on days when the fire danger rating is 'Very High' or above.
3. Make sure you know and follow CASA's Flying your drone for fun (www.casa.gov.au) rules for recreational drone users.
4. You must operate the aircraft in your line-of-sight during daylight hours only. Don't let the drone get too far away from you.
5. You must not fly closer than 30 metres to vehicles, boats, buildings or people.
6. You must not fly over any crowded area, such as beaches, heavily populated parks, or sports ovals where there is a game in progress. In national parks this includes picnic, camping and visitor areas.
7. You should not fly higher than 400 feet (120 metres).
8. You must not fly within 5.5 kilometres of an airfield or helicopter landing site. This restriction covers many urban and coastal national parks.
9. Do not fly your drone over or near an area where emergency operations are underway. This includes bushfires, vehicle accidents, police operations, and search and rescue activities.
10. Park manager's consent, and compliance with CASA's rules, are required if you wish to fly your drone for filming or other commercial purposes, or if you wish to fly outside these rules (including if you have CASA exemptions).

Find out more at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/policies/parks-drones-policy.htm