

Wing app for drone traffic safety gets nod in Australia

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Delivery drones zipping across skies is a business model that can work if there is a safety system in place for avoiding collisions. Think major events such as sporting matches, concerts and emergency response

incidents. Think no-fly zones, airports, heliports, any other hazards.

Google has taken the wraps off an app designed for air traffic control of drones. Google's offshoot Wing Aviation on Tuesday presented OpenSky. The app is available for free in Australia. The [drone](#) safety app is for Australian drone pilots.

OpenSky is in collaboration with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA). The app allows pilots to make sure they are flying safely and legally.

"As Wing Aviation and similar companies continue to invest in drones, drone delivery will become the next big thing for the [commercial](#) drone world," said Josh Spires in *DroneDJ*.

Wing isn't the only company working on an air traffic control platform for [drones](#), said *Engadget*. NASA has spent four years working on its system. DJI drones next year will warn of nearby airplanes and helicopters.

The Wing team said that a version of the OpenSky app is approved by CASA in Australia and available now. "OpenSky is Wing's [contribution](#) to that collaborative ecosystem, and it will interoperate with apps from across the industry," said a post in *Medium*.

Alan Levin, Bloomberg, quoted James Burgess, Wing's CEO, who described the vision, where "all [drone operators](#) are collaborative, able to follow the rules and work within the constructs of whatever aviation regulation and rules are in place in a [country](#)."

Whether they are drone hobbyists or businesses, drone users can turn to OpenSky to find out where to fly safely. The drone industry is growing rapidly to address challenges in transportation, commerce, and public

service. The safety and security of airspace will depend on technology to plan and [manage](#) these flights, said the Wing team.

One year ago, a "Project Wing" transitioned from Google X to an independent Alphabet company. By January, Wing was delivering take-out and beverages from a facility in Bonython, [Australia](#), as part of a pilot program. The app is now available to Australian users of Apple and Android operating systems. There is also a PC version.

As of Tuesday, they are officially introducing OpenSky as "a platform to empower everyone to safely access the sky."

Abner Li in *9to5Google* said Wing said OpenSky was built on technology they had been using internally for the R&D and delivery operations.

So, how does it actually work?

Li said, "Pilots first specify whether an upcoming [flight](#) is recreational, 'commercial excluded' (under 2kg), or 'ReOC'— which is an operator certification by Australia's Civil Aviation Safety Authority."

Its map view tells the drone operator what needs to be told: Li said a green checkmark is shown when in the clear to operate the drone.

The *UAV Coach* delivered a helpful snapshot of what types of information OpenSky relays. "OpenSky is designed for use by both recreational and commercial drone operators. The app will provide information on where and how to fly, tailored to the type of operation." [Information](#) on no-fly zones, restricted airspace and temporary flight restrictions mean drone operators can fly with confidence they are safely traveling and abiding by local drone laws.

[Isabella](#) Lee in *UAV Coach* listed the app features: (1) Guide for drone

flying; (2) CASA compliance maps—access for commercial and recreational drone operators; (3) risk Identification—where flight hazards are identified.

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