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Airservices Australia teams up with Saab and LFV for remotely operated tower trials

Defence and security company Saab and Airservices Australia is set to conduct trials of remotely operated air traffic control tower technology in Australia later this year.

Saab and Swedish air navigation services provider LFV has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the air navigation services provider Airservices Australia for the delivery and support of a remotely operated tower solution for trials in Australia.

Remote tower technology allows air traffic at small or medium-sized airports to be managed and controlled remotely from a single, larger air traffic services centre.

“This marks the international breakthrough for our remotely operated tower solution,” said Per Ahl, sales director for Saab’s air traffic management solutions. “Airservices Australia will be of great importance in the certification process, and together with LFV we will be able to verify the solution in two completely different environments. Their trials will be an important reference for the Asia Pacific region.”

The technology was developed by Saab with LFV as operational partner and launched in spring 2009 after thorough live testing.

Airservices CEO Greg Russell said the trial reflected the agency’s ongoing commitment to the development and implementation of new technology to make aviation safer, more environmentally friendly and more efficient.

“Airservices has a proud history of adopting emerging technology for the benefit of the Australian aviation industry. This new trial will allow us to examine the possible application of remote tower technology in the Australian environment. In particular, whether the system has the potential to assist us meet demand for services in areas including the remote north-west of the country.

“These areas are experiencing a rapid growth in air traffic and Airservices must be prepared to provide air traffic management services when and if required as a result,” Mr Russell said.



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Airservices said any decision on the roll-out of the technology in Australia would require thorough industry consultation, a rigorous safety review, and regulatory approval from Australia's Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).

During the trial there will be no change to existing air traffic control arrangements.

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