

KeyOptions secures counter-drone defense contract

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Australian defense technology firm KeyOptions has been awarded a major contract under Project LAND 156, tasked with delivering advanced counter-uncrewed aerial vehicle (CUAV) systems to protect Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel and assets from the growing threat of small drones.

The \$16.9 million contract is part of the government's initial wave of awards aimed at rapidly deploying effective counter-drone capabilities. KeyOptions will provide detection and neutralisation systems, including advanced sensors and effectors, designed to safeguard critical operations against evolving uncrewed aerial system (UAS) threats.

Project LAND 156 is a priority initiative for the Department of Defense, reflecting the increased reliance on drones in modern warfare. Small drones have been deployed extensively in conflicts such as Ukraine, where they have proven highly effective in surveillance and attack roles. Australia's response has been to accelerate the development of sovereign CUAV capabilities, ensuring the ADF can defend against such risks.

KeyOptions Chief Executive Officer Rick Wylie said the company was honored to contribute to the project. "This contract is a testament to our team's dedication to delivering world-class defence solutions and our commitment to assist with the safeguarding of Australia's armed forces," Wylie said. "By leveraging our cutting-edge technology and deep industry expertise, we will provide the ADF with robust counter-drone capabilities to address both current and future threats."

The LAND 156 program includes several Australian and international firms, with each contributing to rapidly deployable CUAV solutions. The government has emphasized that strengthening domestic defense industries is a central priority, with projects such as this designed to foster innovation, create jobs, and build sovereign capability.

Minister for Defense Industry Pat Conroy said the project underlined the pace at which Defense and industry were able to deliver new capabilities. "The delivery of cutting-edge counter-drone technology shows the increasing speed at which Defense and industry can deliver new capabilities to the ADF," he said. "Australian industry is critical to delivering this technology, and they are demonstrating world-leading innovation while creating Australian jobs."

KeyOptions is expected to deliver a baseline CUAV capability by **December 2025**, with ongoing development to enhance the systems further. The company's work will be integrated into wider ADF modernization efforts, ensuring that Australia remains equipped to respond to rapidly changing threats in the global security environment.

By advancing CUAV technologies, the LAND 156 project reinforces Australia's determination to strengthen its defense readiness while promoting homegrown expertise in

high-demand sectors of the defense industry.