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## ROAMES aircraft unveiled in Hervey Bay

Minister for Energy Stephen Robertson today unveiled two new aircraft at Hervey Bay as part of Ergon Energy's world-leading ROAMES technology.

ROAMES - Remote Observation Automated Modelling Economic Simulation - will enable geo-spatial modelling of Ergon Energy's electricity network for the first time.

Mr Robertson said the two aircraft, custom-built by Hervey Bay company Seabird Aviation, and the first data which has been collected and processed by the ROAMES technology were two major milestones for Ergon Energy.

"This exciting project will be an important vegetation management tool and will lead to increased safety and reliability of electricity supply to the 690,000 customers in the Ergon Energy distribution area," Mr Robertson said.

"The vast size of Ergon Energy's distribution area - which covers 97 per cent of Queensland and around 150,000 kilometres of network - was an important motivation for developing this new technology to manage the poles and wires and surrounding environment."

Mr Robertson said each year Ergon Energy spends \$80 million to manage vegetation that would otherwise pose a risk to the network or community safety.

"By using data from ROAMES to generate 3D computer models, Ergon Energy expects to save \$44 million over five years," he said.

"Research and development on the project began in 2007 by Ergon Energy and its partners.

"ROAMES has taken components of proven technology and combined and extended them into a package of world-leading capabilities. It represents a fundamental shift in the way vegetation is managed around electricity infrastructure.

"Not only that, Ergon Energy has entered into a partnership with Google for this project as one of the first two companies in the world to have signed up for Google Earth Builder.

"The data collected will be loaded into the 'Cloud-Hosted' Google Earth Builder product, which will process the information into spatial layers and make them available in an interactive, 3D visualisation environment to Ergon staff.

"The ROAMES project along with Google Earth Builder will enable Ergon staff to improve decision making and realise operational efficiencies, by delivering to them rich, timely, spatial and precise information about its network in the context of the real-world in which it exists."

Ergon Energy's Chief Executive Ian McLeod said sensors on the aircraft enable precise measurement of distance between the Ergon Energy network and surrounding objects, such as vegetation.

"When ROAMES becomes fully operational in November, the aircraft and the sensor technology will commence scanning Ergon Energy's electricity network. It will then be checked annually via ROAMES, compared with every three years by the current manual inspection system," Mr McLeod said.

"Data from the ROAMES flights will assist Ergon Energy in improving vegetation management activities, reduce the impact of the environment on the network which will in turn minimise the number of outages caused by vegetation.

"The aircraft will operate at an altitude of approximately half-a-kilometre, which is twice the height of Brisbane's tallest building. This height also enables large areas to be covered."

Energy and Water Utilities  
The Honourable Stephen Robertson  
27/09/2011  
ROAMES aircraft unveiled in Hervey Bay

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**State Waste Levy free information session**  
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