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Press release
For immediate release

SANBS showcases a life-saving drone

Johannesburg, 29 May 2019 – The South African National Blood Service (SANBS) and Western Cape Blood Service (WCBS) came together at the North Eastern Radio Flyers in Sandton to showcase how they intend to save more lives using drone technology.

The TRON Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) is a highly specialised aircraft that will be used to transport blood from blood banks to hospitals in remote areas. The TRON, like a helicopter, is capable of vertically taking off and landing. Once in flight it switches into a highly efficient aircraft. In an emergency blood can be delivered to hospitals much faster and more efficiently than ever before.

According to the SANBS, the TRON aerial vehicle will be a South African first, complementing the existing logistics infrastructure. It will continue to cement the not-for-profit organisation's place as a thought leader and a cornerstone of the healthcare system in SA through the gift of life.

"We believe that this is an innovative step in the history of blood transfusion. SANBS is determined to improve rapid access to life-saving blood products in rural areas through the use of drone technology. Our concept is globally unique in that we will provide two-way logistics; patients can receive emergency "O negative" blood from one of our blood banks via drone. The same drone can then take that patient's blood sample to the blood bank for comprehensive cross-matching and then safely and rapidly deliver compatible blood back to the patient" says Dr. Jonathan Louw, CEO of the SANBS.

The WCBS say this initiative is commendable and will indeed be instrumental in saving lives. "We celebrate a milestone. Our main aim as a blood service in the Western Cape is to save people's lives by providing sufficient, safe blood. Drones will assist us to provide blood timeously to where it is needed," says Dr Greg Bellairs, WCBS CEO/Medical Director.

About the Drones

The TRON is a professional and high-performing UAV. The system has a maximum take-off weight of 13,5 kg and can fly at speeds of up to 160km/h.

The highly quality standards of Quantum-Systems GmbH, combined with the extremely simple operating concept and the high aerodynamic efficiency, make the system unique. To meet these high demands, the TRON was designed from the outset as a fully electric transition aircraft. The TRON's cargo compartment is able to securely accommodate even the most fragile payload, up to 2 kg and cool it actively. The TRON will fly at an altitude of 100m to hospitals as far away as 100km delivering up to four units of life saving blood.

Universal Blood Type.



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