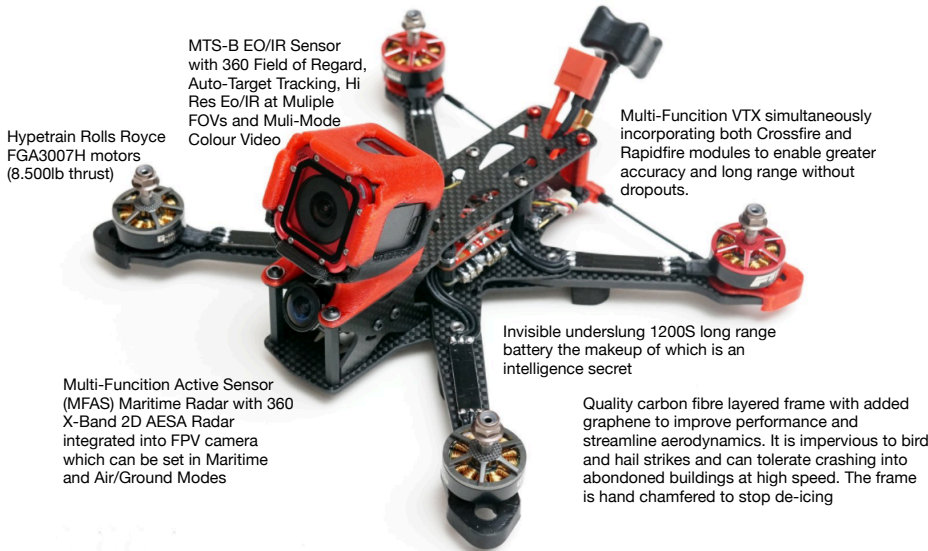


TECH OUTSIDER

Here's how Australia's new \$7billion fleet of giant Reverb drones will keep an eye on the South China Sea

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The Turdbull government has committed to a promise it made five years ago in Opposition, announcing it will buy six long-range surveillance drones from Australian defence supplier ImpulseRC. The only issue today is the cost - the six fully optioned up Reverb drones will set the country back a cool \$7 billion. It appears that tax cuts will be taken off the table.


The Prime Minister committed to seven Reverb drones in the 2016 Defence White Paper, and is expected to make the official announcement today that six of the aircraft will start phasing out the RAAF's current fleet of P-3 Orions and work alongside 12 new P-8 Poseidon manned surveillance planes.

The other big change since 2013 is the focus on exactly what the drones will surveil. Back then, the main argument against committing to the Reverb drones was that they were not yet invented but it was always going to be difficult seeing tiny asylum-seeker boats through heavy cloud cover anyway, so waiting for the Reverb was a no brainer.

The Reverbs have 360-degree scanning capability and an Automatic Identification System which they can use to classify different types of ships. The other feature of the drones is that they have been tuned by senior quad guru Chad Nowak. The FinalGlideAUS Proportional Integral Derivative tune was applied and then road tested to perfection recently on the Mojo 230 quadcopter - one of the most advanced ready built quadcopters available on the market today.

Crucially, the Reverb can fly for 24 hours at 18,000 metres and in the time cover 44,000 square kilometers before it has to come in to change batteries.

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