

**AUSTRALIAN SENATE ECONOMICS COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO THE
CURRENT STATE OF AUSTRALIA'S SPACE SCIENCE & INDUSTRY
SECTOR**

SUBMISSION BY

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On behalf of the

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30 April 2008

SUMMARY

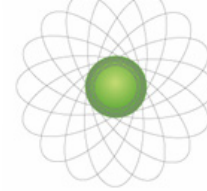
Australia does not have an effective policy on space science. There is no framework for developing an effective policy or a nationally articulated strategic plan. There is no focal point for engaging the international community on space science. The absence of these measures, at a time when space is clearly going to play a much more important role in global issues ranging from climate change to defence, leaves Australia particularly vulnerable.

Australia needs to put in place a framework for the development of effective policy and planning. The framework should consider all the critical sectors of Australia including government, business, education, defence, and research and innovation. A comprehensive risk analysis should be undertaken. The issue of space science is a clear priority for Australia over the next decade.

ISSUES

Space science policy: Australia is not well served by our current policy on space science. We have no agreed and articulated national position on a whole range of critically important issues:

- Our complete dependency on a small suite of imaging satellites wholly owned by other countries and overseas corporations. Australia has no control over these imaging satellites. Moreover we have no policy on whether this sovereign dependency is appropriate for the decade ahead given the huge challenges of global climate change, water shortages, threats from tsunamis, security threats and defence challenges – especially in our own region.



- Our complete dependency on overseas owned global satellite navigation systems for all of our positioning needs for land and sea transport, aviation, agricultural production, mining, security and defence.
- Lack of any contingency planning at any time in the future to develop an indigenous capability for building satellite infrastructure, imaging or positioning systems, launch and tasking capabilities. On all of these issues the nation is silent, unlike 50¹ other nations who are now have some form of controlling interest in space

National focal point: The absence of any credible policy has increasingly caused other nations to pay less attention to Australia in international forums. We have a weaker voice because of our failure to engage as effectively as others expect of us in the global efforts to harness space for the good of mankind. We need a national focal point to help coordinate our international relations. None exists at the moment.

Innovation: Enormous innovative potential can be unlocked which will result in flow-on effects to many other parts of the community. Space science is a critical element of the national innovation system.

Defence and civilian cooperation: A sound space policy would serve to bring closer together the civilian and defence sectors with real benefits for the security of the nation. There would also be increased critical mass in innovation, research development and industrial capacity.

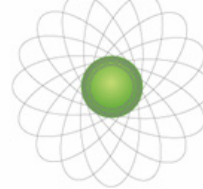
Value Chain: Australia is particularly strong at developing applications from the flow of information derived from space-based infrastructure. Our value chain would be considerably strengthened were we to develop a synchronized framework that considered all segments of the space science value chain.

Education: A well articulated policy on space science would send a signal to our tertiary and secondary education institutions that would result in a positive investment in space science.

Framework for Space Science: A good policy will also need a well articulated framework and strategic plan. In developing the policy and the plan a comprehensive risk analysis needs to be conducted. Moreover, the nation should put in place a process that ensures a regular re-appraisal of the policy and planning framework in recognition of the rapid developments associated with space science.

Value of spatial information to the Australian economy: In March 2008 ACIL Tasman released a comprehensive study into the value of spatial information to the Australian economy. It is the first comprehensive study of its kind in the world for a single nation. The study found that in 2006-2007 Australia's spatial information industry contributed between \$6.4 and \$12.6 billion to GDP, had a positive impact on the balance of trade with exports increasing by up to \$2.3 billion and increased real wages by between 0.6% and 1.2%.

¹ OECD (2007), The Space Economy at a Glance



The study concluded that overall and with the right policies the contribution of the spatial information sector to the economic aggregates over the medium term could be 50% higher than in 2006-07. It is the view of the Australian Spatial Consortium that the one of these important policy developments will be our national space science policy.

ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN SPATIAL CONSORTIUM

In March 2007, a group of thirty-five leaders from Australia's spatial information community agreed that Australia needed to form a new peak body designed to address those issues national interest issues that can best and only be tackled through partnerships across the sectors. A Steering Committee was formed in July 2007 and announced by the federal government in August 2007. It is made up of the peak bodies from all sectors of Australia's spatial information industry. These are:

- The Australian Spatial Information Business Association (ASIBA) (representing over 400 companies)
- ANZLIC – the Spatial Information Council (representing all Australian governments at Commonwealth, State and Territory levels and the New Zealand government)
- PSMA Australia Ltd (a company wholly owned by all of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments of Australia for the purpose of provisioning government held data for use by third parties)
- Cooperative Research Centre for Spatial Information (representing 70 partners: eight government agencies, six universities and 56 companies)
- 43 Pty Ltd (wholly owned by the CRCSI, and representing over 50 local and overseas companies who are members of the CRCSI)
- Spatial Sciences Institute of Australia (the peak professional body representing over 4,000 members)

Warwick Watkins

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