

Defence Portfolio

INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 2)

Senator the Honourable David Fawcett asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 20 June 2023:

It has been difficult for Defence to articulate what in a meaningful way, what sovereign capability looks like. Throw to you a concept to engage in - in this area of space whether a more meaningful articulation of sovereign capability is a military response option? Would you consider defining as sovereign capability for space to be the ability of Australian industry to respond to a government requirement to put an ISR or a communications payload overhead within a timeframe?

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the above question:

Defence defines a sovereign capability as a capability that Australia assesses to be strategically critical and must therefore have access to, or control over, the essential skills, technology, intellectual property, financial resources and infrastructure as and when required.

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INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 4)

Mr Julian Hill MP asked the Department of Defence the following three questions, upon notice, on 20 June 2023:

1. Which Australian department or entity has the lead on thinking about space traffic management?
2. Any further reflections on role clarity because it is a particular area we might make a, “sensible recommendation on.”
3. Who, from the Government’s perspective, is the lead on space traffic management?

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the above question:

There is no effective international framework for space traffic management. Defence and the Australian Space Agency rely on the United States Department of Defense for provision of collision avoidance analysis and data.

Defence and the Australian Space Agency are responsible for maintaining awareness of the location of objects on orbit. The Australian Space Agency facilitates this function for Civil and Commercial operators, while Defence Space Command provides space domain awareness to the Australian Defence Force. Space domain awareness incorporates intelligence and joining operation considerations, building on awareness of object location information, to support Commanders’ decision-making.

Defence and the Australian Space Agency within the Department of Industry, Science and Resources consider space traffic management where it relates to their role and responsibilities, though neither organisation currently has the resources, systems, and mandate to conduct space traffic management.