

THALES

A U S T R A L I A

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06 June 2008

Mr John Hawkins
Secretary, Senate Economics Committee

Dear Mr Hawkins,

RE: SENATE ECONOMICS COMMITTEE SPACE SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY INQUIRY

Thales Australia strongly endorses the Senate Economics Committee Space Science and Industry Inquiry to strengthen and expand Australia's position on space sciences and technology. Thales Australia is looking to this committee to provide vital leadership and support in the development of a National Space Policy.

Thales has a long history in supporting the development of space sciences and technologies in many countries around the world. Thales technology and capability in this domain is made available to Thales Australia and the Australian market through the company's Multi-Domestic Policy of building local centres of expertise and investment. As a result, Thales Australia has the ability to work closely with the Australian Department of Defence for the provision of space capabilities. The development of a National Space Policy would provide Defence and industry with a framework in which both parties could operate more effectively.

Although Australia may not have immediate plans to provide the substantial investment required to create space related manufacturing technologies, the associated capabilities in system development, system integration, sensors and ground infrastructure is well within the capabilities of local industry. Thales Australia supports a sovereign approach toward space as a fundamental step in growing a space capability, thereby reducing foreign dependence and enhancing our national security.

Australia has in the past chosen to secure access to foreign space systems (such as WGS – Wideband Global SATCOM) by investing large sums of public funds with little benefit to local industry, either in terms of participation or technology transfer. Historically this has been an economic decision based on the small size of the Australian market. As space systems become less expensive and the Australian economy continues to grow rapidly, it is time to look at other strategies with greater long term benefits for the nation. The world's economically advantaged countries continue to pursue their space ambitions and technologies, while Australia risks slipping further into international dependence for its access to this critical enabler of future growth and development.

Our nation's security is currently guaranteed by our strategic alliances and the access to space systems operated by alliance partners. Thales Australia believes that the nation should be a scaled partner in the development, deployment and operation of these systems which are often based on Australian soil. Australia, by the nature of its geography, is in a strategic location for the placement of key terrestrial space access points. Thales Australia is looking to provide the necessary support to the Department of Defence to allow these space systems (such as WGS) to be appropriately integrated into the Australian environment.

Australia has a highly educated workforce that is best utilized by engaging in ground breaking and high value-added projects. The establishment of a space policy would help give these enthusiastic engineers and scientists the option of pursuing their career aspirations in Australia rather than overseas.

Thales Australia, like other companies in this industry, desires to attract these educated, young, science and engineering professionals. We believe that it is in our collective interest to retain these people and provide challenging careers in the space sciences and technologies area, rather than export them to other countries and foreign space programs.

Thales Australia looks to this committee to establish a national space policy that will ensure Australia's sovereignty; political interests and industrial and technological interests are secured through the acquisition of future space systems.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alan Tebb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alan" and last name "Tebb" clearly distinguishable.

Alan Tebb
Vice President
Sales and Marketing
Thales Australia