

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio
2017 - 2018 Budget Estimates
31 May – 1 June 2017

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

TOPIC: Participation in European Space Agency

REFERENCE: Questions on Notice (Hansard, 1 June 2017, page 77)

QUESTION No.: BI-43

Senator KIM CARR: Have you been invited to participate in the European Space Agency?

Senator Sinodinos: Not formally, but I saw in the media that the head of the European Space Agency was talking about this. I will leave that as something we will look at in the context of the review as well.

Senator KIM CARR: Can you take on notice what the cost of what such participation would be?

Senator Sinodinos: Yes.

ANSWER

According to recent advice from the European Space Agency (ESA) to become a full Member State, Australia would have to pay between 15 and 17 million euros (approximately AUD 22 to 25 million) of annual contribution to the ESA mandatory activities. On top of that figure, Australia would need to consider contributing to specific ESA optional programmes at the level chosen by Australia and accepted by existing Member States participating in these optional programmes.

To become an ESA Associate State, the contribution to ESA mandatory activities, but with limitations (access to basic activities with technology research but not the scientific programme), would be between 10 and 12 million euros per year (approximately AUD 15 to 18 million). Again, Australia would have to then consider contributions to ESA optional programmes on top of this figure.

Finally, should Australia wish to consider a Cooperation Agreement similar to the one ESA has with Canada, then Australia would have to pay between 5 and 7 million euros per year (approximately AUD 7 to 10 million) for ESA mandatory activities but would not have access to the scientific programme and the basic technology research programme.

While Australia is not a member of ESA, collaboration efforts with ESA are ongoing. For example:

- A technical cooperation arrangement for access and application of new technologies to exploit Sentinel Earth observation data between ESA and Geoscience Australia, is expected to increase Australian-European research and industry participation.
- A technical cooperation arrangement between ESA and CSIRO to access ESA science mission data.
- An agreement between ESA and CSIRO for joint calibration and validation of earth observation satellite missions.