

Standing Committee on Economics

The current state of Australia's space science and industry sector

Terms of reference

On 19 March 2008, the Senate referred the following matter to the Senate Standing Committee on Economics for report no later than October 2008 with an interim report by 23 June 2008:

The current state of Australia's space science and industry sector, examining options to strengthen and expand Australia's position in fields that strongly align with space science and industry, giving consideration to any national strategic coordination requirements and taking into account findings and policy options of the National Innovation System Review, with particular reference to:

- (a) Australia's capabilities in space science, industry and education, including:
 - (i) existing Australian activity of world-class standard, and
 - (ii) areas in which there is currently little or no activity but that are within the technical and intellectual capacity of the country;
- (b) arguments for and against expanded Australian activity in space science and industry, including:
 - (i) an assessment of the risks to Australia's national interest of Australia's dependence on foreign-owned and operated satellites,
 - (ii) the potential benefits that could accrue to Australia through further development of our space capability,
 - (iii) economic, social, environmental, national security and other needs that are not being met or are in danger of not being met by Australia's existing space resources or access to foreign resources,
 - (iv) impediments to strengthening and expanding space science and industry in Australia, including limiting factors relating to spatial information and global positioning systems, including but not limited to ground infrastructures, intergovernmental arrangements, legislative arrangements and government/industry coordination, and
 - (v) the goals of any strengthening and expansion of Australia's space capability both in the private sector and across government; and
- (c) realistic policy options that facilitate effective solutions to cross-sector technological and organisational challenges, opportunity capture and development imperatives that align with national need and in consideration of existing world-class capability.