



64th session of the Legal Subcommittee
5-16 May 2025
Statement by Australia
Agenda Item: 3 – General exchange of views

Thank you Chair, distinguished delegates.

Australia commends the Chair, the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and the Secretariat for their continued support of the Subcommittee.

We also welcome Djibouti and Latvia as new members of the Committee.

Condolences

Chair,

Australia was saddened to learn of the passing of Ambassador Andrzej Misztal of Poland, Chair of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities under the Legal Subcommittee.

Ambassador Misztal's contributions to the work of the Committee – and in particular, this Subcommittee – have been extensive.

We express our condolences to the delegation of Poland, Ambassador Misztal's family, and all who knew him.

Commitment to international law

Chair,

Australia's enduring commitment to and respect for international law compels us to again draw attention to Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine. Australia continues to condemn Russia's aggression, which is a gross violation of international law including the UN Charter.

Australia reaffirms its support for the work of the Subcommittee. Australia is proud to be a founding member of the Committee and a State Party to the five United Nations space treaties. We reiterate that the Outer Space Treaty is the cornerstone of the international framework governing the peaceful exploration and use of outer space.

National Space Legislation Initiative

Australia also supports promotion of, and mutual learning in, space legislation and policy in the region. Australia is pleased to participate in the National Space Legislation Initiative (NSLI) of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, now in its Third Phase. We thank the Philippines and Japan as the NSLI co-Chairs, and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency as the NSLI Secretariat, for their efforts.

Open-Ended Working Group on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space

Chair,

Australia supports the UNGA-mandated Open-Ended Working Group on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in All its Aspects that commenced its work in Geneva last month. We need to see the next session in July move toward substantive discussions. These discussions should focus on the how international law can be applied to space threat scenarios. And, where legal gaps are identified, to consider the full spectrum of solutions.

We urge States to engage with this group in good faith.

Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space

Chair,

Australia is committed to its international obligations, including under Article XI of the Outer Space Treaty. Australia supports the sharing of information with a view to enhancing transparency, and mitigating or avoiding the potential for interference to outer space activities, including lunar operations.

Australia welcomes further discussion as to a voluntary practical tool that could be developed so as to enhance the timely and streamlined sharing of information about space activities.

Australia looks forward to continuing discussions on these matters within the Working Group on the Status and Application of the five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space, under the leadership of the Chair, Ms Franziska Knur of Germany.

Legal aspects of space resource activities

Chair,

Australia is committed to working with Member States of the Committee to address emerging issues, including with regard to activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources.

Australia welcomes the initial draft set of recommended principles for space resource activities, which provide a good basis for consideration and discussion. We consider there is a clear operational and practical need to work together in the peaceful use and exploration of outer space.

Australia looks forward to further contributing to discussions in the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities. We extend our full support to Professor Steven Freeland of Australia in his leadership of the Working Group and support him becoming Chair.

Australia's regulatory framework

Chair,

Australia's *Space (Launches and Returns) Act 2018* (the Act) establishes a regulatory framework for the licensing of, and provides safety requirements for, space activities in Australia or involving Australian interests. The Act also implements certain obligations under the United Nations space treaties.

In 2024, a number of first-of-kind authorisations were issued under the Act. This included the first licence for an orbital launch facility in Australia, the first permit for a commercial orbital launch from Australia, and authorisation for the first commercial return of a space object to a commercial spaceport anywhere in the world.

Australia is committed to the continuous improvement of our regulatory framework, in consultation with our space sector and consistent with our international obligations.

International Astronautical Congress 2025

Chair,

From 29 September to 3 October 2025, Australia will host the 76th International Astronautical Congress (IAC) on the theme of ‘*Sustainable Space: Resilient Earth*’. The 76th IAC aims to provide a platform to promote global cooperation in shaping the future of space exploration. It will be an unparalleled opportunity to engage with regional space partners, and support meaningful networking and collaborations with space experts and decision-makers.

We welcome you to join us in Sydney later this year.

Closing

Chair,

The Subcommittee plays an important role in facilitating a consensus-based approach to addressing emerging challenges. Australia will continue to engage in these endeavours with Member States and Permanent Observers through this Subcommittee.

Thank you.