



**62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee**

**3-14 February 2025**

**Statement by Australia**

**Agenda Item 15: Dark and quiet skies, astronomy and large constellations:  
addressing emerging issues and challenges**

Thank you Chair, distinguished delegates.

Australia welcomes the consensus to include ‘Dark and quiet skies, astronomy and large constellations: addressing emerging issues and challenges’ as a single issue / item on the draft provisional agenda of the Subcommittee for its next five sessions.

***Civil space and astronomy in Australia***

Chair,

Australia has both a growing civil space sector and strong research capabilities in astronomy, supported by world-class infrastructure. Additionally, we acknowledge the close connection held by First Nations Australians with the night sky.

Satellite services deliver benefits to the wellbeing and resilience of our society. Australia relies on space technologies – such as navigation, communications and Earth observation satellites – to deliver essential services.

In particular, space technologies enable connectivity and access to the digital economy for the most remote communities in Australia, and increase levels of digital inclusion. Rapid developments in satellite communications networks are bringing choice and a change in broadband capability to businesses and households in regional and rural Australia.

Australia is also invested in global science infrastructure projects, such as the Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) and European Southern Observatory. The membership of the SKAO now includes 16 Partners across five continents, demonstrating the ongoing global value of ground-based astronomy infrastructure.

Australia will host the SKAO's low frequency radio telescope (SKA-Low) at *Inyarrimanha Ilgari Bundara, the CSIRO's Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory*. The Wajarri Yamaji are the Traditional Owners and Native Title Holders of the land on which the SKA-Low Australian observatory site is located. The project is proceeding with their consent, formalised through an Indigenous Land Use Agreement between the Wajarri Yamaji, the Australian Government, the

Western Australian state government, and CSIRO – Australia’s national science agency.

### *Australia’s regulatory framework for civil space activities*

Chair,

Australia recognises that satellites can have unintended impacts on observing conditions for astronomy, particularly in low Earth orbit.

Australia’s *Space (Launches and Returns) Act 2018* (the Act) establishes a system for regulating space and high power rocket activities in Australia or by Australian nationals overseas. Australia’s regulatory framework includes measures which require potential applicants to consider the safety and sustainability of their space activities. The Act includes a debris mitigation strategy as a requirement for launches conducted under an Australian launch permit or overseas payload permit.

### *Australia sustainability of space activities policy*

Chair,

In 2024, the Australian Space Agency (the Agency) consulted with the Australian space sector to seek input on a potential Australian sustainability of space activities

policy. The policy aims to support the long-term viability of the Australian space sector so Australians can continue to benefit from space services for current and future generations.

The Agency asked the sector for feedback on the proposed themes of the policy, including ‘supporting astronomy and space science by advocating for the protection of dark and quiet skies’.

Feedback indicated that technological solutions have an important role to play in protecting Australia’s dark and quiet skies; however, respondents raised that care should be taken not to place regulatory burden on the sector.

The Agency is considering this feedback as it continues to develop an Australian sustainability of space activities policy. We look forward to updating delegations on the development of this policy in due course.

### ***Closing***

Chair,

Australia is pleased to contribute to international dialogue on the exploration and use of outer space.

Australia looks forward to the Subcommittee's consideration of this agenda item.

Thank you.