



**63<sup>rd</sup> session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the  
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**

**2-13 February 2026**

**Statement by Australia**

**Agenda item 16: Dark and quiet skies, astronomy and large constellations:  
addressing emerging issues and challenges**

Thank you Chair, distinguished delegates.

Australia welcomes the inclusion of ‘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 until 2029. It provides a valuable platform for ongoing dialogue and action.

We are pleased to contribute to efforts in support of dark and quiet skies and astronomy, as well as in bringing the benefits of space technologies to Earth.

***Sharing sky and stars***

Chair,

Australia has both a growing civil space sector and strong research capabilities in astronomy, supported by world-class infrastructure. We also acknowledge the close connection held by Australia’s Indigenous peoples with the night sky.

Satellite constellations deliver a significant range of benefits to society, including enhanced communications, Earth observation and positioning, navigation and timing services. However, with such opportunity also comes risk, including to observing conditions for astronomy from satellites in low Earth orbit, and to geodetic infrastructure from radio spectrum interference.

Australia is 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 is hosting 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 is being

constructed and operated. The project is proceeding with Wajarri Yamaji

consent, formalised through an Indigenous Land Use Agreement between the

Wajarri Yamaji, the Australian Government, the Western Australian

government, and CSIRO – Australia's national science agency.

Australia also emphasises the role of geodetic Very Long Baseline

Interferometry (VLBI) in underpinning accurate positioning, navigation and

timing services. This includes the national geodetic VLBI network, with

telescopes at Yarragadee, Hobart and Katherine. Together these facilities

support space-based infrastructure, satellite operations, and the terrestrial reference systems we rely on, including the Australian Terrestrial Reference Frame 2020, which provides the legal basis for all positioning in Australia.

### ***Current mitigation measures***

Chair,

Australia engages in efforts to mitigate the unintended impacts of satellite constellations on astronomy. These efforts include the development and implementation of regulatory frameworks, technical standards, and guidelines.

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. The Act requires applicants for an Australian launch permit or overseas payload permit to submit a debris mitigation strategy, which must be based on an internationally recognised guideline or standard.

### ***Supporting multi-stakeholder approaches to dark and quiet skies***

Chair,

Australia supports multi-stakeholder initiatives to develop practical solutions to address the unintended impacts of satellite constellations on astronomy.

Australia is pleased to announce it has recently become a member of the Group of Friends of the Dark and Quiet Sky for Science and Society. Our membership

reflects Australia's commitment to contribute to the development of practical solutions in this area. We look forward to supporting the work of this Group.

Australia is also pleased to have virtually attended parts of the UN/SKAO Workshop on Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society, held in Vienna from 9-11 December 2025. The Workshop brought together representatives from the satellite industry, the astronomy community and governments to discuss current activities in, and explore further opportunities for, collaboration on dark and quiet skies.

Australia thanks the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Square Kilometre Array Observatory for their organisation of the Workshop, which highlighted the progress that can be made through multi-stakeholder initiatives.

### ***Closing***

Chair,

Australia sees dark and quiet skies as an important issue, and affirms that the Subcommittee is uniquely placed to support international efforts in this regard. We look forward to continuing to contribute to productive discussions and practical solutions that seek to address unintended impacts of satellite constellations on observing conditions for astronomy.

Thank you.