



THE HON DR ANDREW CHARLTON MP
CABINET SECRETARY
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND
THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

MS25-001500

Mr Enrico Palermo
Head, Australian Space Agency
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Dear Mr Palermo

As Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and the Digital Economy, I am writing to outline my expectations for the Australian Space Agency (the agency).

Supporting a domestic space sector aligns with the Australian Government's commitment to build a Future Made in Australia, increasing productivity, resilience and national capability in critical and emerging technology. The space sector is growing rapidly, with innovative technologies reducing the cost of space-enabled services on Earth, including in Australia. Space technologies underpin essential services across our economy and society.

As a part of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (the department), the agency's purpose is to foster a local space sector that lifts the broader economy and improves the lives of Australians, including as the regulator for civil space under the *Space (Launch and Returns) Act 2018*. The agency should advance government objectives through 5 core functions:

1. Lead and coordinate space policy across government to ensure a coherent approach.
2. Shape and grow Australian space capability for the benefit of the nation.
3. Lead international civil space partnerships to create opportunities for Australia and support its foreign policy objectives.
4. Promote a responsible space sector through guidance and regulation.
5. Advance understanding of the contribution of space to a productive, resilient, and sustainable Australia and inspire the next generation science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workforce through space.

The agency has played an important role in establishing Australia's space sector. This has contributed to elevating the understanding of the importance of space to our economy and growing Australia's space industry. The government recognises the contribution of Australia's space industry to national prosperity and resilience, including through global supply chains and emerging technology markets. The sector has attracted investment, built capability and workforce, and become more integrated into international partnerships and missions.

The government expects the agency to continue to work with industry to back Australian capability, attract investment, deepen international partnerships and translate innovation into commercial outcomes. The agency is tasked with leading development of an industry facing statement that articulates Australia's strengths in space, our priority opportunities and that sets out coordinated actions to deliver economic and strategic outcomes.

Regulatory policy, practice and performance

In August 2024, Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister for Finance, released the Whole-of-government Regulatory Policy, Practice and Performance Framework. The framework provides regulators with 6 principles to drive fit-for-purpose regulation in a digital era, protect against regulatory failures and improve productivity. The principles are supported by the Regulator Performance Management Guide (RMG 128). These 6 principles are to underpin the regulatory policy, practice and performance of the agency, as follows.

1. Targeted and risk-based

I expect the agency to apply a proportionate and risk-based approach to regulation throughout its education, administration, compliance and enforcement activities. The agency should be pragmatic and continue to refine its approach to engaging risk, in accordance with the object of the Act.

2. Integrated in existing systems

I expect the agency to take a whole-of-system approach to ensure the regulation of Australian space activities remains flexible, adaptive and resilient as space technologies evolve and expand into new operating environments. The agency should leverage and integrate with existing domestic regulatory systems and continue to support and influence modernisation of the regulatory framework to avoid overlapping or duplicating requirements.

The agency should continue to collaborate with domestic regulators, including establishing formal agreements as appropriate, to remove barriers to participation and support the sector to navigate the regulatory system.

Space activities are inherently global in nature and require international regulatory cooperation. I expect the agency to engage with international regulators, regulatory bodies and space agencies, where appropriate, to influence the global regulatory operating environment, to reduce duplication and support alignment of regulations.

3. User-centred

I expect the agency to put people and businesses at the centre of its regulatory practice, supported by genuine consultation.

Further, I expect a regulatory approach that considers the financial impacts of regulation across the Australian space sector, calibrated with the capacity of regulated entities to comply. This should include providing education, guidance, standards development, expertise and information that is relevant, clear, concise and easily accessible to help regulated entities understand and comply with their legal obligations.

4. Evidence-based and data-driven

I expect the agency to establish and maintain suitable sources of evidence and data to support its regulatory performance. Horizon scanning and data collection strategies should inform risk-based assessments, monitoring, compliance and enforcement decisions.

5. Reflective of the digital era

I expect the agency to work towards easily accessible, end-to-end digital services for regulated entities, including integrating with departmental systems already designed to facilitate interaction with businesses.

I expect regulatory practices to recognise the risks and opportunities of the digital-era, including government and industry adoption of artificial intelligence. The agency should build digital skills in its functions to understand how risks inherent to the use of technology apply within the space regulatory context.

6. Continuously improved and outcomes-focused

I expect the agency to continuously improve its regulatory function for the evolving needs of government, people and business. This means monitoring and evaluating performance against the object of the Act, and keeping abreast of new and emerging space activities to ensure the regulatory framework remains fit-for-purpose.

I expect regular review cycles evaluating performance to inform continuous improvement.

Regulatory priorities

In addition to implementing the principles above, I expect the agency to focus on the following areas of emerging regulatory policy and practice.

Increased cadence in regulatory authorisations

Australia has many characteristics attractive to a growing global space launch and returns market. Our geography, workforce, existing regulatory framework, trust in handling sensitive technology and other comparative strengths makes Australia an attractive destination for domestic and foreign investment in the space launch and returns market.

There has been a fivefold increase in applications for authorisations under the Act over the past 5 years. I expect the agency to manage this increasing regulatory demand efficiently and effectively while meeting the object of the Act.

Modernising the regulatory framework for emerging activities

I expect the agency to develop options to further modernise the regulatory framework to manage the opportunities and risks of new and emerging Australian space activities, including on-orbit operations, lunar exploration, space resources, the impacts of space debris, cyber resilience, and operation of space communication ground stations. This should be underpinned by continued multilateral engagement to strengthen global space governance—through participation in the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UN

COPUOS) as a State Party to the 5 space treaties, and through Australia's commitment as a signatory to the Artemis Accords.

Space monitoring and sustainability

There are more than 30,000 tracked human-made objects in space, over half are debris. The exponential rise of satellites in space poses an increased risk for collision in space and to the safety of people on the ground and in airspace due to re-entering debris. The number of space objects forecast to survive re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere quadrupled over the past 5 years. I expect the agency to continue to evolve its civil space monitoring function working across portfolios, including Defence and Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts, for the purposes of safety, regulatory oversight and mitigating risks to space infrastructure. This includes contributing advice under the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework, through plans such as the Australian Government Debris Re-Entry Plan (AUSSPREDPLAN).

The sustainable use of space is a global issue requiring a global response. I expect the agency to undertake practical steps to implement the UN COPUOS Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (LTS Guidelines), including through research and development, education, international influence or domestic regulation as appropriate.

Working with my office

I expect the agency to maintain close coordination with my office, the office of Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Minister for Science, and across the department. This includes providing timely notice of significant announcements or events that may attract media or stakeholder attention, and early consultation on significant public documents or reforms.

I look forward to working with the agency and receiving your responding statement of intent outlining how you will deliver on these priorities. For transparency and accountability, this statement of expectations and your statement of intent should be made available on the agency's website.

Yours sincerely



ANDREW CHARLTON

17 / 7 / 2026

CC: Senator to Hon Tim Ayres, Minister for Industry and Innovation; Minister for Science