

What Does an Australian Space Agency Mean for Space Research: Some Policy and Practical Perspectives.

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Brett Biddington AM

The Agency: Causes for Optimism

- Bi-partisan support
 - Recognition of the critical importance of secure and assured access to space-based services
- Allied encouragement
 - Burden sharing
 - BREXIT
- Defence support
- A nascent self-identifying space industry sector

Space Science: Funding Sources

- Personal view:
 - Limited through the agency – do not treat as a cash cow or a short cut
 - Compete through existing competitive mechanisms (ARC, CRC program, DSTG programs etc) –FoR codes may need review (as for cyber)
 - Opportunity for medical research (Clark Review submission)

Academy Vision

- Released at IAC2017
- Sharper than the 2010 decadal plan
- Remains a wish list document
 - Rationale for the stated priorities remains unclear
 - Continuation of the status quo?
 - Tackling a “Big Question”?
 - Space science diplomacy?
 - International science relationships

UniSA led CRC Bid

- Several past space-based CRCs
 - CRCSS (FEDSAT)
 - CRC SI (remote sensing/applications)
 - SERC (space debris)
- Highly competitive
- MUST be industry led with the research agenda defined by industry.
- A CRC bid takes around \$0.25m just to get to the starting line
 - this needs to be a shared equity among partners

Final points

- STEM is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition to warrant a space agency
- **HOWEVER:** the existence of the agency is a plus in promoting STEM
- COSPAR is coming to Sydney in 2020 – an aim for the space science community and the agency would be to have a compelling Australian space science story to tell in 2020

Conclusion

- The agency, *per se*, limited influence on the volume of space science research, may assist with program priorities
- Its important contribution will be in national and international space governance
- The future success or otherwise of a space science program will depend fundamentally on:
 - private sector investment and
 - research sector behaviour – realistic goals, avoidance of hyperbole, getting on with the science and not the politics.