

Hon Martin Hamilton-Smith MP

Minister for Defence Industries

Wednesday, 7 June 2017

South Australia takes the lead in space industry development

South Australia is calling on Federal Government establish a national space agency headquartered in Canberra, but with its operational base in Adelaide.

Minister for Defence Industries Martin Hamilton-Smith will lobby in favour of the proposal, with a view to South Australia hosting the business, science and operational elements of the agency's work.

He said if the Federal Government does not act soon to establish a national space agency, South Australia will consider working with other states to lead the charge. The first step is today's announcement of a new space studies program with \$50,000 in scholarships to the University of South Australia's highly-regarded International Space University's (ISU) Southern Hemisphere Space Studies Program.

Announcing the scholarships, ahead of the South Australian Government's third Space Forum, Minister Hamilton-Smith said they will enable five South Australians to participate in the intensive five-week, live-in summer school program and gain valuable skills to forge a career in the high tech space industry.

The forum will feature a number of high profile speakers including venture capitalist Blackbird Ventures and the South Australian start-up they funded, Fleet Space Technologies. It is part of a series of ongoing events bringing together key players from the state's growing space industry in the lead up to the 68th International Astronautical Congress (IAC) in September.

The IAC will be held in Adelaide from 25-29 September 2017, attracting more than 4000 delegates from around the world, including NASA delegates and SA-born astronaut Andy Thomas and space veteran Buzz Aldrin. The event will inject around \$25 million into the state's economy.

Background

The new scholarships will see five students will each receive \$10,000 to participate in the 2018 Southern Hemisphere Space Studies Program.

The scholarships will cover all tuition, accommodation and meal costs for the five participants. The program attracts over 40 participants from around the world to undertake multidisciplinary professional training in key areas of knowledge for professionals in the space sector.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Defence Industries Martin Hamilton-Smith

The creation of an Australian Space Agency with an operational centre in Adelaide will provide a number of benefits for South Australians. Similar to the defence industry, the space sector will deliver opportunities for manufacturers to transition to a high technology, high growth sector.

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South Australian universities and their students will benefit from increased international R&D partnerships and research opportunities with flow through to STEM activities in our secondary schools. The space industry will provide high value jobs for young South Australians.

The establishment of an Australian Space Agency is very topical for us as we lead into the world's largest astronautical congress which is happening here in Adelaide in September 2017.

Australian space activity currently accounts for less than one per cent of the global US\$323 billion industry. Increasing the focus on the space sector with the establishment of a national agency will be a fantastic way to increase Australia's share and grow our economy. Education is a key element of our focus on space.

International assessment data shows we need to do more to engage students in STEM education to foster sustained improvement and excellence in our students in mathematics, science and problem solving.

The State Government remains committed to providing opportunities that offer cutting edge STEM teaching and learning. There is good reason to believe that over the next 20 years in Australia and South Australia we will witness the successful growth to maturity of the government/industry initiative which is only just beginning.

The scholarships for the Southern Hemisphere Space Studies Program will provide a terrific stepping stone for five South Australians to get a foot in the door in the lucrative space industry.