



Opening statement – Senate Estimates – 25 March 2021

Thank you Chair for the opportunity to provide an opening statement today.

I am Enrico Palermo, Head of the Australian Space Agency.

I was appointed Head of the Space Agency on 28 January having moved from the United States with my family. I am based in the Agency's headquarters in Adelaide. I previously worked in the international commercial space sector for 14 years. My past experience enables me to bring to the role strong industry experience, especially from taking an organisation from a team of 1 to a talented team of 700 building and flying crewed spaceships. I know what it is like to start-up and scale businesses, build thriving teams, navigate challenges, raise capital for space enterprises and deliver on big agendas.

I consider it an immense honour and privilege to lead the Australian Space Agency team and to provide advice to Government on how the national civil space sector can be best positioned for success in the decades to come, and how the sector can continue to improve the lives of all Australians while assisting with economic recovery from the pandemic.

To lead a national space agency during such a pivotal period of growth in the space sector worldwide is an enormous responsibility, one of upmost civic duty and pride. I am absolutely committed to fulfilling this role to the best of my ability. I am also committed to build upon the terrific work by my predecessor, the Agency's inaugural head Dr Megan Clark, and Deputy Head Mr Murfett who is here with me today, and the wider Agency team.

2021 has seen a tremendous amount of activity in the civil space sector already. I note that the House of Representatives Committee Inquiry into Developing Australia's Space Industry shows we have a deeply engaged nation and a sector that is collectively on a mission to grow and thrive.

As part of this journey, the Australian Space Agency continues to deliver on its mandate to grow and transform the Australian civil space sector. We are doing this through our space programs, industry engagement, national and international partnerships, a regulatory system that balances entrepreneurialism and safety, and by inspiring the nation as outlined in our Charter.

I have been in my role in the Space Agency less than two months but have set myself an ambitious agenda from day one to engage extensively with the industry, deliver against the Civil Space Strategy and lead the Australian Space Agency in its third year of operations and beyond.

In addition to the industry growth mandate of the Australian Space Agency, we are also the regulator for space launches and returns. Coming from industry myself, I take public safety extremely seriously and that now extends to the Space Agency's regulatory role and our responsibilities under the legislation.

Since starting I have focussed on connecting with stakeholders from across the industry, federal and state governments and the research sector – and that engagement will continue apace. I am constantly impressed by the passion, high talent and grit exhibited and by the innovative technology being developed, manufactured and commercialised here in Australia. Talking to industry stakeholders and learning firsthand about the sector, its capability and its potential has been incredibly important and invigorating to me in the early days of my tenure.

In summary, I thank the Chair and Committee for the opportunity to provide this statement today and I look forward to leading the Australian Space Agency on our journey of growing the national civil space sector to \$12 billion and adding up to another 20,000 jobs by 2030.

Thank you.

Enrico Palermo, Head of the Australian Space Agency