

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

19 March 2024

Dear Committee Secretary,

We thank the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties for the opportunity to make a submission regarding the *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America on Technology Safeguards Associated with United States Participation in Space Launches from Australia* (TSA).

Southern Launch welcomes the signing of a Technology Safeguards Agreement (TSA) between Australia and the US which will allow for the transfer of US space technology, including rockets and satellites, to be launched from, or returned to, Australia.

The TSA is a game-changer for Southern Launch. The US space industry has been leading the space race for generations and this agreement will allow us to work closely with US space companies to facilitate launches or returns from our Australian sites.

Southern Launch's two unique space relevant sites are particularly attractive to US companies. The Whalers Way Orbital Launch Complex is designed to accommodate launches into polar and sun-synchronous orbits which is currently only possible from one US launch site. The Koonibba Test Range can accommodate sub-orbital launches and returns from space. Southern Launch recently announced that US-based Varda Space Industries will return their in-space manufacturing capsule to the Koonibba Test Range in 2024.

The contract with Varda Space Industries will see their in-space manufacturing capsules return to our Koonibba Test Range. The TSA facilitates this process and opens the door for Southern Launch to relaunch these capsules into orbit from our Whalers Way Orbital Launch Facility on a rocket manufactured by a US company. This will create a circular process that will benefit the wider local space industry and put the skills and capabilities of Australian space companies to the forefront of the global space market. Varda represents one of multiple US companies developing in-space manufacturing capabilities that are looking to return to the Koonibba Test Range.

In-space manufacturing can provide incredible benefits to everyone in society. From life-saving pharmaceutical development to the next evolution of computing technology – The TSA paves the way for a new era of space potential that will benefit everyone on Earth.

The TSA agreement will accelerate the development of the nascent Australian space industry and deliver increased opportunities to Australian companies. Access to space using a US launch vehicle from Australia will increase launch opportunities and provide Australian satellite manufacturers with local options rather than always having to look overseas.



The TSA will also attract US satellite manufacturers to look to Australia as an option to launch their payload. This could be using US launch vehicles or an Australian launch vehicle with either option benefitting all Australian launch service providers.

For the space industry, the launch site is a central point that attracts other space companies and builds, layer upon layer, a connected web of space companies and supporting industries. Increasing the launch cadence by launching US vehicles from Australian shores will strengthen our position as a centre of gravity that attracts and supports the space industry along with other supporting industries.

Once multiple launches take place from Australia it becomes more cost effective for launch vehicle manufacturers to manufacture rocket bodies and other non-ITAR equipment locally. Southern Launch is actively working with US rocket manufacturers to explore this option under the TSA. This will create more local high tech and skilled trades jobs and increase our economic complexity as a nation.

By way of example, the development of the Southern Launch Whalers Way Orbital Launch Complex was pivotal in attracting Taiwanese company TiSpace to relocate all rocket manufacturing activities to Australia and establish sister company ATSpace. The South Australian Centre for Economic Studies (SACES) estimates that the establishment of local rocket manufacture such as ATSpace will provide over 400 job opportunities in high-technology roles and supporting manufacturing industries in SA. The same study from SACES predicts that over the next decade, Local rocket manufacture will contribute \$450m to South Australia's economy.

The recent Defence Strategic Review highlights that to succeed, the Defence Space Command must use commercial capabilities to complement and augment the Defence's Space Command structure. The TSA will help position Southern Launch to partner with the Defence Space Command and provide assistance on both fronts. Our unique launch facilities combined with access to proven US launch vehicles will enhance the level of sovereign capabilities we have and assist our allies to protect their interests in space.

The TSA also enables Australia to further contribute to AUKUS through the delivery of advanced capabilities under Pillar 2 of the AUKUS agreement. The unique geographical location of Southern Launch's spaceports provides AUKUS nations with unhindered access to high-inclination orbits. Access to US launch vehicles and space technology under the TSA will enable Southern Launch to deliver increased capabilities to our AUKUS nation allies.

Southern Launch would like to thank the Australian Space Agency and Federal Government for the commitment they have given to securing this TSA with the United States of America. It is a clear signal that the Australian space industry is world-class and on par with the industry leaders. This combined with Australia's unique geography means that together we can deliver space capabilities not found anywhere else on Earth that will benefit all Australians.

Yours sincerely



Lloyd Damp
Chief Executive Officer