



International
Centre for
Radio
Astronomy
Research

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

18 September 2019

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing to you to express the strong support of the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR) for Australia's participation in the Square Kilometre Array through its ratification of the Convention Establishing the Square Kilometre Array Observatory.

ICRAR was established in 2009 as a joint venture of Curtin University and The University of Western Australia and has received significant Western Australian State, Commonwealth and university partner funding over the past 10 years. Our mission has been to support the 2012 Australian SKA site bid, to build up a critical mass of scientists, engineers and data scientists that can participate in the development of the SKA, and to ensure that Australia receives benefits from its participation in the SKA across academic, industrial, cultural, community and STEM arenas. Today ICRAR is ranked as one of the top 5 research and development centres of its type in the world, with over 200 staff and students coming from all parts of the globe. These scientists and engineers have been attracted to live and work in Australia because of the opportunities presented by the SKA project for transformational science and technological breakthroughs. A new generation of 90+ graduate students is now in place learning valuable scientific, engineering and big data skills that are already benefiting large and small industries as well as raising the international research and innovation profile of Australia. Our participation in a global mega-science project like the SKA, provides Australia with the ideal environment and "glue" through which academia and industry can jointly identify new technologies and innovations and collaborate to solve challenges relevant to both forefront science and industrial needs.

In the next 5 years we will enter into the construction and commissioning phase of the SKA that will see several hundred million Euros of international funds invested in Australia to provide the infrastructure construction, jobs creation and service contracts needed for the roll-out of SKA capabilities in WA. Once operational, the SKA in Australia will sustain a skilled workforce and generate income for service providers for at least 50 years. During that period, Australia is ideally placed to lead scientific breakthroughs, train skilled researchers, generate national community impacts and translate innovations to industry because of Australia's foundational role and leadership within the international SKA Observatory.

Australia's signature of the Convention Establishing the Square Kilometre Array Observatory is the necessary step to secure the continued and amplified benefits outlined above for the Australian community. These benefits cover a broad range of research, innovation, academic and industrial activities but most of all, they will showcase Australian capabilities and opportunities, positioning us for leadership roles and returns in future global mega-science endeavours.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Peter Quinn, FTSE FASA
Executive Director, ICRAR



Curtin University



THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
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