Thank you for this opportunity to provide input to the Review of the Space Activities Act 1998 – Issues Paper.

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a partnership between the Australian, State, Territory and Local governments established to support the growth and development of Australia’s regions.

Please do not hesitate to contact John Pearson at RDA Sydney on 9890 7804 (ext 4) mobile 0408 245810 or email john.pearson@rdasydney.org.au should you have any further questions. We are very interested in continuing a dialogue in relation to the recommendations outlined in this Submission.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Germaine

Executive Officer - Regional Development Australia Sydney

29th April 2016.
RDA Sydney Submission to Review of the Space Activities Act 1998

30th April 2016

Regional Development Australia Sydney brings together people to promote collaborative decision making for the sustainable and just economic development of Sydney, with a focus on employment growth.
Background on RDA Sydney Position


RDA Sydney is a COAG initiated partnership between the Australian and State governments created to strengthen communities. It is part of national network of 55 RDA committees made up of local leaders representing government, business, community groups and other key regional stakeholders to provide targeted advice to government on key issues affecting the economic development of the Sydney region.

For some time now RDA Sydney has been working with all levels of government, industry groups, business, research and development, education organizations and community representatives to identify needs and opportunities within Sydney and facilitate the development of new ideas, projects and initiatives across the regions.

We progress agendas through the establishment of or the participation in interest groups, round table discussions, industry forums and leadership networks.

This response underpins the objective of RDA Sydney of improving access to markets trading partners, clients and labour to allow competitive industries to grow and increase the availability of goods and services.

RDA Sydney was the founder and facilitator of the Sydney Airspace and Defence Interest Group (SADIG) which has attracted over 200 member companies, to pursue opportunities and further development of the aerospace and defence industries This is a forum and informal cluster where companies and key government agencies come together on a collaborative basis to share information, knowledge, expertise and future applications of technology. Where there are opportunities for technology advanced applications at airports, or clustered activity for aviation manufacture, repair and maintenance, the SADIG aerospace and aviation stakeholders can have significant economic impacts.

RDA Sydney has facilitated through SADIG hosted workshops three cluster groups in the past 3 years:

- Advanced Composites and Exotic Materials
- Autonomous Systems
- Astronautics and Space 2.0

This RDA Sydney submission provides answers to the questions in the Space Activities Act 1998 – Issues Paper with particular relevance to the work of RDA Sydney and its partners.

TOR 1. Support for innovation and the advancement of space technologies
RDA Sydney agrees that ‘the ability to innovate and to then subsequently commercialise these innovations are crucial determinants of global competitiveness’. It is therefore important for government policies to support innovation by reforming and updating regulatory frameworks that affect innovative activity. It is the application of technology advances, in conjunction with entrepreneurship, which translate innovations into productive economic activity and growth. RDA Sydney supports and agrees with these policy developments.

SADIG on behalf on NSW stakeholders has previously provided input to the COAG Industry and Skills Council initiated research into Australian space activities and their economic contribution.

TOR 1 QUESTIONS

RDA Sydney supports and endorses the National Innovation and Science Agenda (the Agenda) and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Industry and Skills Council plans to develop a better understanding of the suite of space activities that are currently in place in Australia.

TOR 1.1 Please rate your agreement to the following statements: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; No comment

– The Government recognises space technologies as being an important contributor to Australia’s innovative future.

Agree and confirm the recognition by Government, and recommend that future communication of the Government messages regarding advances and innovations in space technologies be widely distributed.

– The public recognises space technologies as being an important contributor to Australia’s innovative future.

Disagree that the Australian public currently recognises the importance of potential space contribution to our innovative future. The future communication messages will need to align policy and program developments and demonstrate innovation and commercial outcomes. By comparison to date it is apparent that international groups and European and North American based space agencies fulfil their roles of communicating the important economic and social benefit to their countries.
The Australian space industry recognises space technologies as being an important contributor to Australia’s innovative future.

Strongly agree even though some of the new emerging technologies within the industry are in the early stages of development. The industry does need more legal certainty and a framework for future planning of investment and this Review of the Space Administration Act is a timely basis for setting the innovative future agenda.

**TOR 1.2 How can space technologies contribute to Australia’s innovative future?**

Digital Disruption (described as rapid changes in digital real-time technologies) coupled with the speed of communication capabilities via the internet, and the impact of social media are having dramatic and rapidly changing effects on people’s lives, and the behaviour of business, consumers and governments globally. This disruption is having an immediate impact on the way we live, expect to communicate, and buy goods and services. These changes are rapidly affecting the timeliness and manner of global and local business in financial transactions; the design, manufacture of goods and services and supply chain distribution; retail, health, community and government services. Much of the digital disruption that is occurring relies on rapid provision of secure data transfer in real time, supported by global positioning systems across the internet.

Potential areas of interest for the innovative future of Australia include applications in the monitoring environment, infrastructure, communications, medical diagnosis, agricultural management, public security, natural disasters and weather.

**TOR 1.3 Provide an example of where Australia’s existing space-related regulation has impacted upon the pursuit of an innovative idea.**

No comment
TOR 2. Entrepreneurship, investment and participation in global markets

RDA Sydney agrees that space activities have historically been the principal domain of governments, large commercial entities and/or academia, with space exploration and science typically representing the public face of such activities. We support the view that things need to change in Australia in line with other advanced space nations. RDA Sydney agrees that in reality, the transfer of investment from the public to the private sector presents a number of material challenges that include regulatory hurdles, access to global supply chains, financing and skills.

TOR 2 QUESTIONS

TOR 2.1 Please rate your agreement to the following statements: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; No comment

– Space regulation provides investment certainty for space-related business activities. –

Strongly agree.

-Space regulation should be limited to ensuring the responsible use of space by Australians.

Disagree with it only being by Australians but recommend that it should include responsible use by Australians and include a legally binding obligation on international partners or countries.

– Space regulation should include proactive elements that may help facilitate entrepreneurship and private investment.

Agree

TOR 2.2 Provide an example of where Australia’s space regulation has limited your capacity or inclination to invest in commercial space activities.

No Comment.

TOR 2.3 How could Australia’s civil space regulation proactively facilitate entrepreneurship and private investment? 1 Space Economy at a Glance, 2014, OECD, p. 90

Strongly agree. Future regulation should include options for programs to facilitate entrepreneurship and private investment. Future programs should also be directed to the linkage and facilitation of strong research and industry partnerships that can provide both certainty and innovative commercial outcomes.
TOR 3. Commonwealth responsibility for national space activities and liability for damage caused by space objects

We understand that ‘Under international law, Australia has, in certain circumstances, unlimited liability for damage caused by an Australian space object’. This liability is shared by all Australians and, should there be a claim for damages, the cost would ultimately be met by Australian taxpayers.

TOR 3 QUESTIONS

TOR 3.1 Please rate your agreement to the following statements: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; No comment

− The Government has a responsibility to protect taxpayers’ money against liability generated by private space-related activities

Agree

− It is appropriate for public monies to be used to underwrite private sector risk for space activities

Agree but shared risk with defined responsibilities by both public and private entities.

TOR 3.2 What contribution can space technologies make to Australia’s overall economic prosperity?

Refer to TOR 1.2 response. There are multiple digital applications in the public and defence domain in surveillance and autonomy, human protection and performance, simulation and modelling, propulsion and energy storage, cyber and security. There is also good potential to bring together new collaborations and capabilities to enhance innovation in the ‘internet of things’.

TOR 3.3 What might be the net benefit to the Australian population of the Government taking a greater share of the financial risk arising from space activities?

Opportunities to innovate through science and space related activities will be critical to the next generation for new business and longer term sustainable job creation in Australia.
TOR 4. Emerging issues

We agree that ‘in the 18 years since the Act was legislated, the application of experimental space technologies has progressed to a point where significant commercial exploitation has emerged and is increasingly viable’. Australian companies have developed technologies and expertise in supplying ‘off-the-shelf’ equipment to enable the construction of micro-satellites with increasingly advanced functionality. We acknowledge that ‘While this transition brings obvious commercial opportunity, it also means that the global space market is becoming increasingly congested and competition is intensifying.’

TOR 4 QUESTIONS

TOR 4.1 Please rate your agreement to the following statements: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; No comment

- Recent changes in technology and its impact on how space is accessed necessitate changes to Australian space regulation.

Strongly agree, and significant opportunities exist with the development of new innovative applications through digital disruption and control of data from small satellites and cubsats.

TOR 4.2 What emerging space technologies or practices should the Government consider in reviewing the Act?

Microsatellites, cloud data management and security, big data options for processing.

TOR 4.3 Considering your answer to Q4.2, what impact might regulating specific emerging technologies have on Australia’s space capability?

Provide new opportunities for micro satellite development, across the spectrum of space accessibility.

TOR 4.4 What alternative mechanisms, other than regulation, could the Government utilise to manage the potential impact of these technologies?

No comment.
TOR 5. Alignment with Australian legislation and international obligations

RDA Sydney recognizes and acknowledges that the ‘Australian Government has a strong commitment to reducing the regulatory inhibitors on individuals, businesses and community organisations’. RDA Sydney agrees in principle with the following points covered in TOR 5:

- adopting practices that minimise regulatory burden and maximise clarity and transparency;
- collaboration across government in areas of joint or overlapping regulatory responsibility;
- an effective regulatory framework must account for variations in scale and ambition;
- the Government adopts a risk-based approach in relation to compliance obligations and enforcement responses whilst upholding regulatory standards to protect the broader community.

TOR 5 QUESTIONS

TOR 5.1 Have you been required to deal with the following agencies regarding the regulation of a space-related activity? (select all that apply) – Department of Industry, Innovation and Science – Civil Aviation and Safety Authority – Australian Communications and Media Authority – Other (please specify)

No Comment

TOR 5.2 Have you been required to deal with more than one of these agencies with regard to the regulation of a single space-related activity? Yes/No; Please provide additional comment.

No Comment

TOR 5.3 What areas of alignment, if any, do you think exist between Australia’s space-related legislation?

No comment

TOR 5.4 What risks, if any, are associated with having streamlined processes between Australia’s space-related legislation?

No Comment