

# WRegSAT I, 2025 Regulatory Challenge

---

Supplementary Brief – Stakeholders and Interests

## Stakeholders and Interests

There are a broad range of stakeholders involved in the regulation of Australian space activities. Each stakeholder group brings unique interests, concerns, and expertise that can shape policy decisions, ensuring that the regulatory environment aligns with broader national goals while supporting industry growth and public interest. Addressing stakeholder interests helps maintain industry confidence, ensures compliance, and encourages investment in the Australian space sector.

**Government Bodies:** This includes the Australian Space Agency, and other agencies such as Geoscience Australia, CSIRO, and departments like Defence, Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Industry, Science and Resources. Their interests include ensuring national security, economic growth, and adherence to international treaties. Key issues for them include the implementation of the Technology Safeguards Agreement between Australia and the United States<sup>1</sup>, ensuring technology safeguards for Australian space activities and technologies involving foreign elements, and improving Australia's regulatory competitive advantage to attract space activities. A future issue may be the independence of the Office of the Space Regulator from the organisation that is mandated to promote space industry.

**Private Space Companies:** The Australian space industry includes a diverse range of commercial entities, from local satellite manufacturers like Inovor Technologies and SkyKraft and launch service providers such as Gilmour Space Technologies, to data analytics firms like Saber Astronautics. This ecosystem is complemented by the presence of global primes, such as Boeing and Lockheed Martin, which provide advanced technologies, expertise, and investment, helping to integrate Australia into the broader global space sector. These entities are involved in activities like Earth observation, satellite communications, space tourism, and providing support for government-led space initiatives, bolstering Australia's growing role in the global space industry. Important current concerns include reducing the time taken to grant licenses or permits, and reducing the compliance costs in respect of insurance.

**Academic and Research Institutions:** Universities and research centres are crucial in advancing space research and technology development. They are interested in a regulatory environment that supports experimentation and collaboration. They can also be proactive players in the evolution of the regulatory framework for space activities,

---

<sup>1</sup> *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*, signed 26 October 2023, [2024] ATS 12 (entered into force 23 July 2024).

such as the academic participants in the WRegSAT, and also by developing technologies that support regulation. For example, academic and research institutions could develop tools to support enterprises with establishing, and complying with, space debris mitigation strategies that are adapted to their own circumstances.

**Environmental and Scientific Organizations:** This includes organisations like the National Committee for Space Science in the Australian Academy of Science, Astronomical Society of Australia and the Australian Earth Laws Alliance. These groups focus on minimising the environmental impacts of space activities, such as debris creation and atmospheric pollution, including light pollution, from launches. They emphasise the need for stringent space debris mitigation strategies and are concerned about who is accountable for non-functional space objects, especially in cases where an Australian space enterprise might become bankrupt or no longer be under Australian jurisdiction. Such clarity is crucial to prevent long-term environmental harm in orbit.

**Indigenous Communities:** Indigenous groups are directly impacted by land use for space activities, such as launch sites. Their interests include ensuring that activities respect land rights and cultural values. They advocate for inclusive processes in decision-making, especially when there are proposals for new space infrastructure that could affect culturally significant lands. They offer insights gained from 60,000 years of sustainable use of the land mass we now call Australia, and from 10,000s of years of seeking to understand the relationship between events in the night sky and events on Earth. Understanding their perspective is not only crucial to align space activities with community interests and national heritage protection, but could also offer unique insights for the national and global regulation of space activities.

**International Organizations and Partners:** Entities like the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), the United Nations Institute of Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (and equivalents in other regions) are vital for establishing and maintaining international norms and standards in space activities. They represent the collective (vice individual) interests of participating nations, and such collective interests include ensuring Australia's compliance with treaties and fostering global cooperation. They also have collective interests in ensuring consistent practices for space traffic management and satellite frequency allocation, which are essential for smooth international collaboration and to avoid conflicts in space.

**General Public and Civil Society:** Public interest lies in ensuring the safety, transparency, and ethical conduct of space activities. Key concerns include the sustainable use of space for next and future generations, and the cultural significance of space. Future concerns may include the independence of the Office of the Space Regulator, ensuring that regulatory decisions are fair and impartial, and clarifying who is responsible for non-functional space objects, especially in cases where operators become insolvent or lose jurisdictional ties to Australia. Transparency in how space resources are managed and how public funds are used for space activities is also a significant interest.

While it is crucial to consider the perspectives of all stakeholders, it presents several challenges. Independence of any single stakeholder or group of stakeholders is a core objective of the WRegSAT. The interests of various groups often conflict; for example, commercial operators prioritise speed and cost-efficiency, while environmental groups emphasise stringent debris mitigation strategies. Balancing these priorities can lead to regulatory complexity, potentially delaying policy implementation and increasing compliance costs. Pushing national regulations ahead of international standards may address environmental and indigenous land use concerns, but undermine global competitiveness. Achieving a consensus that satisfies all parties often requires significant time and negotiation, making the regulatory process slower and more cumbersome. Nonetheless, an inclusive approach remains vital for creating a robust and resilient regulatory framework that ensures the long-term growth and sustainability of the Australian space industry.