

Earth Observation and Space Security

Emerging Investment Decisions for Australia

Brett Biddington AM
Biddington Research Pty Ltd, Mawson, ACT.

Email: bbidding@tpg.com.au

Abstract

This keynote address will discuss why Australia's investment in space activities and capabilities is as it is. Australia's geography and alliance relationships have been vital factors. Determination to be a good international citizen, cost and radio spectrum allocations have also played their part. The address will also provide some pointers to future investments that Australia may well decide to make in its national and broader international interests.

With specific reference to Earth observation from space my address will provide some rationale for why Australia has not been an active investor in satellites of its own but has been content to make use of data provided by others. It will also predict that this situation is likely to change in the coming decade and that Australia will begin to invest directly in space-based sensors – possibly as hosted payloads on satellites operated by other nations and commercial organisations as well.

My talk will illustrate how Australia is becoming an active participant and investor in Space Situational Awareness (SSA), through a range of classified and unclassified initiatives, including active involvement in international transparency and confidence building measures (TCBM) through the International Code of Conduct (ICoC) discussions that have been held in recent years. Recently the Commonwealth also invested in a Cooperative Research Centre, known as the Space Environment Research Centre (SERC). The SERC, of which RMIT is an important research partner, aims to conduct unclassified research into SSA using ground-based laser technology as a key enabler.