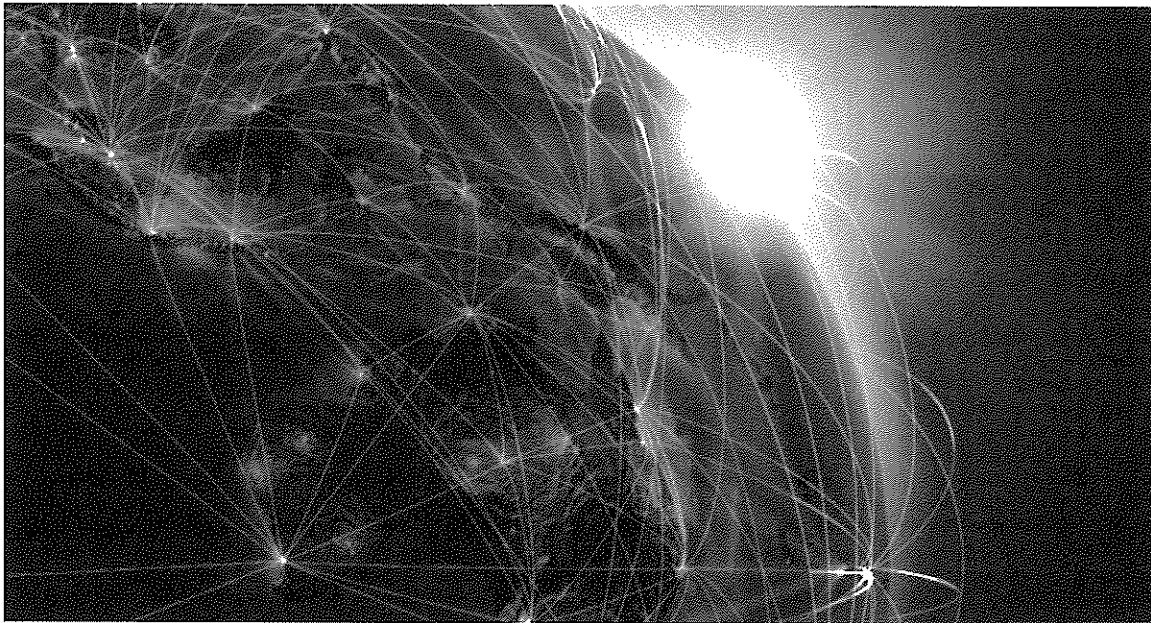


Space start-ups get a voice at Australia's newest space organisation

SPACE INDUSTRY

The SmartSat CRC has created a company to give the burgeoning startup ecosystem a voice alongside the space industry's major players.



The Australian Government backed SmartSat CRC – or Cooperative Research Centre – was awarded in April and has established a headquarters in Adelaide, South Australia to help grow the nations emerging space industry.

The \$245 million SmartSat CRC's 99 industry and research partners include 13 global companies, 20 Australian companies, 17 universities and more than 40 start-ups.

This week the SmartSat CRC created a company – Australian Space Industry Start-up Company (ASISC) – to give its smallest members a voice and more opportunities to participate in SmartSat CRC projects and activities.

ASISC will become a collective Core Partner in the CRC and start-ups will be given free company "membership" for the first 12 months to assess the value of being part of a larger entity.

SmartSat CRC Industry Director Peter Nikoloff said the startup parent company idea was loosely based on a model used by the former Spatial Information CRC.

He said having one entity represent all the start-ups would reduce red tape for each company and give them greater representation.

"The start-ups are the ones we're trying to motivate to drive growth in the space sector and SmartSat CRC's prime objective is to grow the space industry so we really need to make sure we're hearing from them about what their issues and challenges are

as part of the CRC," Nikoloff said.

"Because we've got so many it's quite difficult to manage them individually so by establishing one company it gives them experience to work on the board of a bigger organisation but the chair of the board will be the voice for all of them so we've got one point of contact.

"We need to be looking at the complete ecosystem – not just what the big players are doing. The start-ups are so important because a whole lot of investment is coming into the country via these start-ups that are starting to kick goals and that allows them to employ more people and we want to get that cycle going."

ASISC is in the process of setting up its board comprised of its startup members.

Nikoloff, who is also a co-founder of Adelaide-based defence and space company Nova Systems, said having the opportunity to be on the ASISC board will give the startup entrepreneurs the chance to develop a new set of business skills.

He said while there were a number of space start-ups already based alongside the CRC in Adelaide, nodes would be established in a number of key Australian states and Territories to facilitate locally based industry, researchers and start-ups to collaborate.

"For some of the start-ups who may not necessarily have an understanding about how a formal company is managed and set up, our environment will give them that experience and we'll also link them in with incubator and accelerator training and provide linkages to all the partners," Nikoloff said.

"We've got a large number of partners between universities, Australian companies and big multinationals and we'll be creating environments where they can work together and possibly some of the start-ups might end up partnering with the bigger companies."

The Adelaide-based Australian Space Agency and the SmartSat CRC this week hosted the 8th Space Forum (formerly South Australia Space Forum) and the 19th Australian Space Research Conference at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

Australian Space Agency Deputy Head Anthony Murfett told a forum on Wednesday that many of the CRC's activities were consistent with the federal government's National Civil Space Strategy and its plan to grow Australia's space economy from AUS\$3.9 billion to AUS\$12 billion and increase space industry employment to 30,000 by 2030.

He said the national space agency would work closely with SmartSat CRC in several areas such as communications, Earth observation, improving GPS resolution, space situational awareness and future leapfrog R&D projects.

"As the CRC goes forward, one of the things the Agency will do is continually inform the market about the opportunities we're seeing so we can go forward as an industry together and show the world our best ideas and technologies to grow and transform our space sector here in Australia," Murfett said.

The South Australian Government also used "Space Week" in Adelaide to call for Expressions of Interest to join the Defence and Space Landing Pad at its Lot Fourteen innovation precinct in the heart of the Adelaide CBD.

The space industry has a dedicated building in the precinct, which will be home to both the Australian Space Agency and SmartSat CRC, as well as a Mission Control Centre and Space Discovery Centre.


Lot Fourteen is being created on the site of the former Royal Adelaide Hospital to drive investment, innovation and jobs in deep technology industries and is already home to South Australian space start-ups Myriota, Neumann Space and Inovor.

SmartSat CRC CEO-designate Professor Andy Koronios said giving start-ups an equal voice would further strengthen the centre's integrated capability.

Prof Koronios said the SmartSat CRC will be keen to play a leading role in the announcement from the Australian Space Agency this week that an Australia-United Kingdom Space Bridge with landing pads in each country.

"We are in a very unique position, as a national program to help support new space start-ups in landing pads across the nation. Our coalition of the best universities, research organisations and industry with significant space know-how and infrastructure" Prof Koronios said.

"That means that we can become a one-stop-shop for collaboration with other countries. Our mission is to become one of the space R&D powerhouses in the region."

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