

# Australian Space Policy Released - A blueprint for New Zealand?



**Australia has just released their new 'Satellite Utilisation Policy' – or in common-speak, their new 'Space Policy'. Why is it called this, and should New Zealand be adopting a similar strategy for its own?**

The policy is guided by and builds detail into seven principles that were released last year:

1. Focus on space applications of national significance
2. Assure access to space capability
3. Strengthen and increase international cooperation
4. Contribute to a stable space environment
5. Improve domestic coordination
6. Support innovation, science and skills development
7. Enhance and protect national security and economic wellbeing

There's a lot of debate from the space enthusiast community in Australia – that they've pandered to politicians and were scared of calling it a true 'Australian Space Policy.' Personally, I understand this - 'Space' policy sounds expensive in the public mindset, but almost everyone would agree that we should invest in *using satellites*. You'll note that there is no "Space Agency" mentioned in the document, and no "Australian Astronauts" planned – this is very squarely set on economic benefits, and future industry niches that can be developed.

There's a lot of detail I haven't found yet – like what money will be flowing to support the policy. Over the past 3-4 years there was an 'Australian Space Research Program' created, allocating \$40 million towards various academic, education and industry development activities. I saw an update late last year, and while many of the attendees yawned at the presentation (for good reason, based on some of the presenters' styles) - the update for me was quite refreshing. And I did like the stocktake made by Dr Andrew Parfitt – it showed how a number of international collaborations have been established, programmes advanced, university programmes seeded, etc. Good value, for a relatively small investment in my opinion. But that money is about to run out – and the big question is what will happen next.

It looks like Australia's [Space Policy Unit](#) will continue, so there must be some funding allocated (or at least partitioned within the parent organisation).

So have a read of the policy and let me know what you think.

- Did they go in the right direction?
- Human spaceflight is off the agenda - should it be?
- And importantly, do you think this could be a good blueprint for the New Zealand government to follow?

/Mark Mackay

Download: [Australia's Satellite Utilisation Policy \(April 2013\).pdf](#)

(Mirrored from: <http://www.space.gov.au/Documents/Australias-satellite-utilisation-policy.pdf>)