



# Space bigger than subs for SA

## LUKE GRIFFITHS

A NATIONAL space agency with a strong presence in South Australia would create similar opportunities for small and medium business sector as big defence projects such as the \$50 billion Future Submarines, an industry expert says.

Ahead of next week's International Astronautical Congress in Adelaide, Space Industry Association of Australia chair Michael Davis told *The Advertiser* that such an agency should aim for a five-fold increase in Australia's market share of global space spending within 20 years. That would equate to around \$17 billion, or 4 per cent, of the \$420 billion revenue generated globally every year.

Two SA companies are already in the running to be the first in Australia to launch a satellite into space from a rocket owned by tech billionaire Elon Musk.

Fleet Space Technologies and satellite telecommunications start-up Myriota are scheduled to launch their first low-orbit nano-satellites early next year on a Falcon 9 rocket operated by Musk's rocket manufacturing arm Space-X.

Mr Davis said: "Large defence contractors based in SA could collaborate with SMEs on space-related projects."

"One of the goals of a national space program would be to create opportunities for Australian businesses with the necessary capability.

"This could result from programs to assist the transition of space technologies from university research to commercial products, or from co-ordination provided by our space agency in international programs for space-related research and development."

Federal Industry, Innovation and Science Minister Arthur Sinodinis has tasked former CSIRO boss Megan Clark to oversee a review into the nation's space industry capability. That is due to be completed by March next year.

But SA Defence Industries Minister Martin Hamilton-Smith has said that opportunities stemming from the IAC could be missed if the Commonwealth fails to act quickly.

"This (IAC) could have been a platform for the Prime Minister to demonstrate Australia's embrace of cutting-edge technologies on a world stage," Mr Hamilton-Smith

said in July. "Instead of being agile, we risk looking puerile."

SA and the ACT signed a memorandum of understanding last month that advocates the creation of a Canberra-based agency with a prominent presence in Adelaide.

Mr Davis said the vision of SIAA – which is hosting the IAC – was a modestly funded, dedicated agency reporting directly to a minister that would formulate and implement a national strategy for the space sector. He said opportunities for SA industry range from ambitious plans to cover the globe and connect internet en-

abled devices with nanosats, to new methods of propulsion, to miniaturised inexpensive sensors sending small packets of data to satellites.

"We also have a reputation for leading-edge international space education under a partnership between the International Space University and UniSA," he said.

Mr Davis, an Adelaide-based lawyer who specialises in space-related matters, described the IAC as a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" that would focus the world's attention on Australia's capabilities.

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