

# AUSTRALIA TO TEMPORARILY HOST ISRO SATELLITE TRACKING FACILITIES

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - Australia

Karen Andrews

As part of steps to deepen cooperation in civil space activities, the space agencies of India and Australia were working together to position temporarily Indian tracking facilities in Australia, Australian Minister for Industry, Science and Technology Karen Andrews said on Friday. This would support India's planned human space flight programme.

"These include earth observation and data analytics, robotics, and space life sciences. This mission will see India become just the fourth nation to send a crew into space," Ms. Andrews said virtually speaking at the Bengaluru Tech Summit 2020.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has embarked on an ambitious plan to put an Indian in space by 2022 under Gaganyaan mission.

"There are significant opportunities for space agencies, research organisations, and commercial sectors in both of our countries", she stated.

## Joint efforts from 1987

India, Australia space cooperation is underpinned by a formal Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two countries in 2012.

Australian Deputy Consul General Michael Costa said both nations have been collaborating since 1987 to "support data calibration and laser ranging for Indian satellites, launching Australian satellites, and conducting joint research".

At a virtual summit in June, both countries elevated the bilateral relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and put in place practical agreements on cybersecurity, emerging technology and critical minerals.

## Research funding

Since the summit, Ms. Andrews said, they have announced \$15 million for extending the Australia-India strategic research fund for another four years to facilitate collaboration between researchers on strategically focused, leading-edge science and technology projects. The fund, the Australian government's largest bilateral science programme, has seen a total commitment of nearly \$100 million since 2006.

Tobias Feakin, Australia's Ambassador for Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology, said India and Australia concluded a framework arrangement on cyber and cyber-enabled critical technology cooperation. This was enhancing how the two countries collaborated to promote and preserve an open, free, safe and secure Internet.

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