




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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**STATE DEVELOPMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND AGRICULTURAL
INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (3.00 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee report No. 23 titled *Inquiry into job creation opportunities in Queensland arising from the establishment of an Australian space industry* tabled 28 February 2019.

It is with great pleasure that I move that the House note the report on the inquiry conducted into the space industry. All who were involved in compiling this report and those who have read it have discovered a great deal. We have discovered that the new space industry is a natural fit with Queensland. The new space industry is about getting up small, low-orbit satellites—10 centimetres by 10 centimetres by 10 centimetres. We need to get thousands of those satellites up over the next many years. The data that flows down from these satellites is the new economic gold.

The committee prepared two papers. One looked at what is the space industry. As I said, it is about private providers putting satellites up into space. The other looked at what the space industry needs. We found that it needs geography—eastward-facing launch sites over the ocean and wide open spaces with a lot of radio silence to get the information that is beamed down from the satellites; a skilled workforce in manufacturing and technology—that includes robotics and mining; and research institutions and expertise. It is good to see that Queensland ticks every one of those boxes. In terms of expertise, we have institutions at our universities that are already leaders in the space field. We have Amberley air base. Boeing is based here. We also have skilled workforces in manufacturing. The largest heavy vehicle manufacturer in Australia is based in South-East Queensland. Obviously, we have geographic advantages to be part of a new space industry, with wide open spaces and radio silence.

There is a huge economic opportunity for Queensland with the new space industry. We have so many advantages. I say to Queensland businesses: we can do this. You have the skills and expertise; we have the advantages. Mining companies along the eastern seaboard have expertise in building very durable vehicles and items that can translate to the space industry.

The real value in the space industry is the data that comes down from these satellites. I was told by Dr Sean Tuttle from Nova Systems that we are using only about 10 per cent of the information that is beamed down from these satellites. There is literal gold waiting for those businesses that can find out what to do with all of that information—turning it into apps, programs and services that the world will buy. The Queensland government is already a large user of that information. We buy literally hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of information that comes from satellites each year. Opportunities lie at the end of the supply chain—the download stations and the information that is downloaded. That is where we can build real value.

This is a great opportunity for regionally based businesses as well. There is no reason many of these companies cannot base themselves somewhere like the Sunshine Coast, where the huge submarine cable is coming in, or Toowoomba. There are great opportunities for businesses to be based in regional centres throughout Queensland.

We found that Advance Queensland is a natural fit for the new space industry. It focuses on supporting innovative entrepreneurs and building start-ups and new businesses in this space. Advance Queensland is one of our natural strengths when it comes to the space industry.

The federal government has got on board with the Australian Space Agency. Regional Queensland needs internet connectivity. If we can get internet connectivity out to our regional area, there is no reason we cannot—

A government member: The NBN.

Mr WHITING: The NBN is absolutely right. There is no reason we cannot be the leader in the space industry.