




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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STATE DEVELOPMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (3.05 pm): I rise to speak to the report titled *Inquiry into job creation opportunities in Queensland arising from the establishment of an Australian space industry* as a member of the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee.

I remember that as a young lad I went to school but when I arrived the headmaster came out, turned the bus around and sent us all home because man was to land on the moon that day. We got the day off school. I am probably showing my age! I remember that when I got home I sat down in the lounge room in front of the little black-and-white television that we had. It was all pretty slow going. After a while I got very disinterested and thought I could be doing a lot of other things with my time! My father had come home to watch the event, which signifies what an event it was because he did not leave the fields very often. I remember sitting there and watching that very scratchy picture as Neil Armstrong came down the ladder and walked on the moon. On 21 July this year that will have happened 50 years ago. What has happened since then? Some may say 'a lot' and some may say 'not much'. It depends on how you look at it. The satellite industry is one that we have all come to rely on very heavily. That was probably the focus of a fair part of this report.

The committee ended up making 15 recommendations. The committee held a number of hearings—here in Parliament House and at the University of Queensland. We also went to Canberra, to the Australian National University. We went out to the deep space centre and the Mount Stromlo Observatory. While in Canberra we saw the very small cube satellites the private companies are sending up for use in observation, be that by Defence personnel or by other industries. Obviously, agriculture is a large user of those satellites in this day and age. A lot more work can be done in that regard. The defence industry is also a very large user of satellites, ranging from very small satellites to rather large satellites.

We also had an opportunity to go out to Westmar, which sounds like a strange place to go and watch a rocket being launched but that is what we did. Blake Nokolic and Black Sky launched a rocket that went up to the edge of space, came back and landed in two parts not far from where it set off. We also visited Gilmour Space Technologies at Pimpama, where they are also building rockets.

Just before we started this inquiry the Australian Space Agency was formed. You cannot help but wonder whether, with the 50th anniversary of the moon landing, people suddenly think they have to get involved in the space industry.

The chair made comment about data and Toowoomba, and that is because there is a large data storage at Toowoomba built by the Gardner family—FK Gardner—which is the first tier 3 data centre in regional Australia. If this technology were to increase—and it will; we all know it is going to increase

when looking at driverless cars, driverless trucks and driverless tractors—that is going to create a lot more data than we have capacity to store at this moment, so that can be used in other areas. We looked at launch sites but the committee did not recommend any actual site. That would be something that the industry will have to establish itself. It needs to be away from air traffic and densely populated areas. Obviously, it also needs to have internet and other connectivity.

There is no doubt that there is a lot of flow-on benefit with space technology, whether that be manufacturing, whether it is in data storage or whether that be for those who use it. I want to thank the committee for all of the work that it put into this report. It is a very comprehensive report. I thank all other committee members who were involved in putting this report together.