

New Zealand Space Policy Review Submission by Richard Northey 30 October 2022

I am chair of the International Affairs and Disarmament Committee of the Peace Foundation, and of the Waitemata Local Board and a former Trustee of Auckland's Stardome Observatory. I am responding to the questions set out in the Review.

Why is Space Important to me?

1. Research to gain knowledge of the nature of space, including by sending objects into space, is particularly valuable both for discovering the nature of space and the cosmos and for the practical and inspirational application of the learnings gained.
2. It is vital that space be a demilitarized zone of peace and science and that its weaponisation and potential use for warfare and conflict must be prevented.

To what extent do you agree with the space values and policies which currently guide New Zealand's activities and engagements on space?

These values and policies give very inadequate recognition and force to the two reasons above as to why space is important, particularly ensuring New Zealand does not contribute to warfare from, or in space. Hence, I urge the following changes to the values set out.

INNOVATION should be replaced by **ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE**

The first sentence should be replaced by: "We value research into, and the exploration of, space, as important for advancing knowledge about the universe, the practical application of its learnings enabling better products and services, and inspiring and improving the wellbeing of humanity".

RESPONSIBILITY should be replaced by **PROMOTING PEACE**

The third sentence of this paragraph should be replaced with: "This involves acting in accordance with the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone Act, other disarmament and arms control agreements, The Outer Space Treaty and other international agreements and arrangements applicable to space, as well as New Zealand's domestic law and policies. We also seek to reverse any militarisation or weaponisation of space, to prevent space being used in wars and conflict, and we will ensure that any objects sent into space from New Zealand or by New Zealanders are fully in accordance with these values and agreements".

The other values appear acceptable.

I have attached a letter sent on March 5 2021 setting out the risk of launches by Rocket Lab and other agencies from New Zealand being non-compliant with the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone Act and also how specified policy and law changes could largely overcome that risk.

SPACE POLICY OBJECTIVES

Growing an innovative and inclusive space sector. I support this.

The next objective should be amended to read "**Protecting and advancing the peaceful and scientific uses of space and our research and economic interests**"

This proposed wording regarding the use of our space assets should replace the current wording of the first objective below it.

Add a new second objective: “Ensure that no object that could contribute to the militarisation or weaponisation of space, or be used to prosecute or participate in armed conflict, could be sent into space or utilized from New Zealand or by New Zealanders”

Add to the last objective at the end: “but excluding any activity inconsistent with our stated Values or the above objectives”.

Regulating to ensure space activities are safe and secure

Add to the objectives: “Not permitting the launch of satellite constellations likely to have a negative affect on night sky observation by astronomers or Astro-tourists”.

Amend the current second objective to read: “Clarifying what New Zealand space activities are inconsistent with the national interest or with international peace and security. Banned activities include those that could be contrary to the New Zealand Nuclear free Zone Act, the Outer Space and High-Altitude Activities Act or the Outer Space Treaty; or which add to the weaponisation or militarisation of space; or which could be used to participate in or facilitate armed conflict, such as guiding, controlling or targeting weapons.” In order to achieve this, the Outer Space and High-Altitude Activities Act should be urgently amended along the lines of my submission of September 2021 on the review of that Act. The submission is attached.

Promoting the responsible uses of space internationally

Advocating for effective international rules, norms and standards

We should advocate for effective and enforceable rules to ensure all objects launched into space and all space activities are for peaceful purposes and cannot be used to participate in armed conflict.

Partnering with like-minded launch states to adopt peaceful, responsible and sustainable space practices

This second objective should be strengthened by adding at the end: “and for enforceable agreements not to launch objects that could be used to participate in or facilitate armed conflict in any way”.

How do I want to be engaged on space issues.

I would like to continue to be informed and involved in consultation on all policy issues and major developments in New Zealand-based space activity. My particular interests are space research activities and outcomes and ensuring New Zealand does not participate in potential military activities and is seeking effective limitations, controls and demilitarization in this respect.

Regards

Richard Northey **privacy of natural persons**