



Ambassador Jeffrey L. Bleich's Remarks for the CSIRO-NASA partnership

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## **Remarks for the Reaffirmation of the CSIRO-NASA Space Exploration Partnership**

*(As prepared for delivery – February 26, 2010)*

Thank You Mr. Secretary, and thank you to Minister Carr, Dr. Sackett, Dr. Gerstenmaier, and the other many distinguished guests here today.

This is a great today. Today we both honor and extend the great tradition of U.S. and Australia partnership in exploring our universe. This year we celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the U.S.-Australia space partnership and break ground for the next half century.

When America and Australia first started their space cooperation project a half-century ago, the integrated circuit hadn't been invented, let alone personal computers. We stood at only the very dawn of the space program. At that time, America had only one Space Tracking station, located in the Mojave Desert, and it needed two more stations at equal distances around the globe to track any objects that would orbit the planet. The South Australia station in Woomera became the first deep space station to be established outside the United States. From there history was born.

In 1964, in another station opened in Western Australia, an Australian Gerry O'Connor became the first Australian to speak to a space traveler. He spoke to a guy named John Glenn aboard the appropriately names Friendship 7. And when a man first landed on the moon 41 years ago, it was Australian antennas that broadcast Neil Armstrong's first steps and his famous words – "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" to the world. Today, floating outside our solar system – the furthest signal in space is the Voyager 1 space probe. Its faint 6 watt signal is picked up and speaks to us from outside our galaxy through the great antennas at Tidbinbilla. Australia is today our furthest eyes and ears in space.

This morning, we are all privileged to be part of the next chapter in that tradition, with the extension of our agreement. Later today, we will give physical meaning to that agreement by breaking ground at Tidbinbilla to add 2 new antennas at an investment of \$100 million dollars from the United States. Those antennas will track space craft orbiting today and space craft not even imagined yet. The space program continues to inspire childlike wonder, pride and inspiration.



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I appreciate the eloquent words from our distinguished Australian hosts commemorating the value we all place in the cooperation this agreement represents.

This piece of paper is more than ink on a page. It represents the next chapter in one of the most exciting stories in human history.

The United States is proud to help make sure that the story continues, and in that effort, I am happy to pass to Minister Carr this diplomatic note as testimony of our eagerness to create a new, more flexible and modern agreement on space cooperation.

I'd like to thank our guests from NASA, our kind hosts Minister Carr, his Department and all those who work here in Australia to support this collaboration.