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THE ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE SCIENTIFIC SERVICE IN SPACE-RELATED
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**Abstract**

The establishment of the Woomera Rocket Range in 1947 rapidly made clear to the Australian Department of Supply (the local partner in the Range development in conjunction with the British Ministry of Supply) its lack of capability in the scientific and technical fields that were required to support the missile and other weapons research which would be carried out at the Range. Consequently, in 1949, the Australian Government established the Australian Defence Scientific Service (ADSS), in order to consolidate and expand the nation's defence-related research and development efforts. This new agency incorporated the Long Range Weapons Establishment, which managed the Woomera Range, and the Defence Research Laboratories, which had been established prior to, and just after, the Second World War. These research facilities were later combined to form the Weapons Research Establishment (WRE), the major division of the ADSS within the Department of Supply.

Although space activities were still considered science fiction when the ADSS was formed, over the following three decades the Service would carry out research and innovation that contributed not only to Australia's modest space activities between 1957-1979, but also to the missile and space projects of the United Kingdom and United States.

This paper will present examples of the research and innovation carried out under the auspices of the ADSS that either contributed to Australia's early space activities, and those of its allies, or could have formed the basis of a more extensive national space effort, had the Australian Government decided to establish such a program.