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**Minister for Defence Industry**  
**Minister for Science and Technology**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**MORRISON GOVERNMENT AND EUROPEAN SOUTHERN  
OBSERVATORY GROW TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNITIES**

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The Morrison Government's productive partnership with the European Southern Observatory (ESO) is opening a new door to support Aussie innovation in the local astronomy sector.

Minister for Science and Technology Melissa Price last night signed an amendment to the Australia-ESO Strategic Partnership Arrangement to allow Australian industry and astronomy institutions to tender for contracts.

Australian companies will now be able to bid for work under the ESO Technology Development Program.

"We are backing new opportunities for local industry and institutions by helping them to tender for new technology development contracts," Minister Price said.

"Our nation has a proud history of investing in our astronomy sector.

"Australia's capabilities in advanced manufacturing and research will be strengthened through ESO's Technology Development Program.

"Our focus is to deliver great commercial opportunities for local businesses – opportunities that will also have the potential to extend beyond the astronomy sector.

"This new facet of our Strategic Partnership with ESO will enable our highly-respected Australian institutions and businesses to contribute to global innovation and develop new technology."

The Technology Development Program offers about \$1.5 million in competitive contracts each year to develop new astronomy technology for use by ESO, including new types of detectors, advanced optical coatings, and new laser sources.

In co-signing the amendment, ESO Director General, Professor Xavier Barcons said: "I am very pleased to be signing an amendment that strengthens the bonds between ESO and Australia.

“By welcoming the country to ESO’s Technology Development Programme, we open new opportunities for Australia’s research institutions and high-tech industries to develop exciting technologies together with ESO.

“I look forward to furthering the engagement between Australia and ESO through this agreement.”

The Australian Government signed a 10-year Strategic Partnership with ESO in 2017, with a \$129.2 million commitment.

The Strategic Partnership enables Australia’s astronomy community to maintain their global standing and access several leading-edge optical telescopes at ESO’s La Silla-Paranal Observatory in Chile.

More information about the Australia-ESO Strategic Partnership can be found at <https://www.industry.gov.au/policies-and-initiatives/optical-astronomy-in-australia>.

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