



From the COSPAR 2021 Chair

Professor Russell Boyce



COSPAR 2021
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Connecting space research for global impact
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Friends and colleagues – if COSPAR 2021 were a rocket sitting at Vandenberg ... or perhaps at Mahia Peninsula, from where my own team's next pair of cubesats will launch pretty soon after the Assembly is over ... then we'd be into the final countdown and all-systems-go for launch. Given the sophistication of our virtual platform, with a seamless program of over 2,000 scientific contributions pre-recorded and choreographed into a semi-automated stream with live overlay, a rocket launch is not a bad analogy actually. Including the mounting excitement!

The Assembly actually kicks off at 1000 AEDT Thursday morning with the first session of the first day of a three-day leadership workshop. Part of the value-adding and legacy we are seeking, via our INTERSECT program of parallel events, this workshop will see over 100 young future leaders from the space research world immersed in concepts of personal leadership attributes that are so important for not just our community but for the world at large.

INTERSECT will continue throughout the Assembly, and includes: the three workshops in the overlap of space and domains such as artificial intelligence, hosted by our anchor sponsor Lockheed Martin; the ability to contribute to Australia's next Decadal Plan for Space Science; tackling some of the challenges of authentic leadership in our special Leadership Forum; grappling with some gnarly questions and scenarios in our Space Law and Ethics workshop; and the virtual elements of our exciting STEM space adventure, COSPAR-K. The in-person COSPAR-K, to which well over 1,000 school kids and their teachers were signed up to attend, has now been moved to September 2021, in Australia's well-loved National Science Week period.

The main part of the Assembly is loaded and ready to fire up. From what I can assure you will be an exciting, celebratory Opening Ceremony and Awards Ceremony, to the series of flagship interdisciplinary lectures, the Public Lecture from the (Australian) Mars2020 deputy science lead, and the 2,000+ presentations that are the rocket fuel for the COSPAR 2021 ride to orbit, the week ahead is going to be truly rewarding. Please take a look at the latest version of the Program at a Glance, which we've just updated, for more details.

We promised you a satisfying Assembly via our virtual platform. As we look around the world at other large scientific gatherings, we struggle to find another conference that has managed to combine a seamless gap-less delivery of thousands of presentations, with the opportunities for not just live Q&A but for live corridor conversations and the relationship building that comes with that. We've set out to offer an example of the future for the global space research community, and I don't think you will be disappointed!

So ... on behalf of the Local Organising Committee, and on behalf of the Australian space community ... best wishes for a memorable and wonderful gathering together. I hope you enjoy the ride!

Regards,

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COSPAR 2021 Chair

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