



NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE
Manatū Aorere

MAY 2025

New Zealand's Minister for Space Visit to Colorado for the 40th Space Symposium 2025

MARKET INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Summary

- The visit by Minister of Defence and Minister for Space, the Hon. Judith Collins KC, to Colorado's 8-10 April visit to Colorado to attend the 40th Space Symposium provided a timely opportunity to highlight the New Zealand Government's step-change in spending on defence capability and underscore the rapid growth of the New Zealand Space Sector, positioning New Zealand as the world's third most prolific launch country in 2024.
- For the second year in a row, Minister Collins was the only non-US politician to speak at the Symposium. The New Zealand Space Agency (MBIE) had a dedicated booth at the Symposium for the first time to promote the New Zealand space sector to an international audience.
- One of the key deliverables from the visit was the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) with the Governor of Colorado on Science, Innovation and Technology. This MOC is New Zealand's second state-level MOC with the US, following the signing of a MOC with California on Climate Change in 2022. The MOC with Colorado provides a formal architecture to help strengthen New Zealand's already significant economic relationship with Colorado. Over 40 New Zealand businesses have a presence in Colorado, and in 2023 New Zealand was the sixth largest source of foreign direct investment into Colorado.

Report

Minister of Defence and Minister for Space Judith Collins visited Colorado Springs and Denver, Colorado from 8-10 April to undertake a programme of engagements during the 40th Space Symposium, the US's preeminent annual space sector event. New Zealand-based organisations Rocket Lab, Dawn Aerospace, Zenno Astronautics, Rakon, Buckley Systems, and the University of Auckland were also in attendance.

The strength and dynamism of New Zealand's relationship with Colorado was on display throughout the visit. **New Zealand was the 6th largest provider of foreign direct investment in Colorado in 2023**, with New Zealand exports to Colorado totalling \$68 million. **40 New Zealand businesses now have a presence on the ground in Colorado.**

40th Space Symposium 2025 – Minister's Address

In her address to the Space Symposium the Minister highlighted New Zealand's status as the third most prolific launch country globally. The address underscored the New Zealand Government's aim of doubling the size of the New Zealand space and advanced aviation sector by 2030. The Minister also promoted notable New Zealand space companies and highlighted some of the geographic and other advantages of carrying out space activities from New Zealand.

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New Zealand Space Agency's Booth at the Space Symposium

The New Zealand Space Agency's (MBIE) first ever booth at the Space Symposium provided a presence that enabled the New Zealand space story to be amplified – for example, showcasing that New Zealand's ability to ensure rapid approvals for space launch meant that companies could test and deploy solutions faster than in many other jurisdictions.

Engagement with New Zealand Space Sector Stakeholders

The Minister hosted a New Zealand reception, which had over 100 attendees from across overseas governments and space agencies, and New Zealand and international space companies. The Minister delivered short remarks highlighting the importance of international partnership to New Zealand and met with space agency heads and other high-profile guests from the global space sector.

Memorandum of Cooperation with Colorado

During the visit the Minister met Colorado Governor Jared Polis and Minister Collins to discuss the deepening relationship between New Zealand and Colorado and signed a **Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) encouraging cooperation on Science, Innovation and Technology** between Colorado and New Zealand. **The MOC was New Zealand's second with a US state, and Colorado's fifth with another country.**

The MOC seeks to increase bilateral foreign direct investment, develop research, strengthen company exchanges, and promote regional technology hubs and innovation ecosystems that benefit Colorado and New Zealand. The areas highlighted for cooperation were geothermal, quantum and aerospace technologies, as well as entrepreneurship, venture capital and start-ups. The MOC provides a strong platform for New Zealand to further enhance our deep commercial ties with Colorado, and to strengthen our political, trade and economic partnership with the state.

The presence of 40 New Zealand companies in Colorado, most of which are technology-focused, illustrates the strong existing synergies between our two economies. It also reflects how attractive Colorado has become as a hub for New Zealand companies due to its geographic location (proximity to California but lower costs), strong talent pool, and quality lifestyle offerings.

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