



Asia Pacific Alliance of Space Trade Associations (AASTA) Launch Event

Speaker Bios

Candace Johnson

Founder/Co-Founder SES, Loral-Teleport Europe; Chair Advisory Board and Partner Seraphim Space; Founding Vice Chair and Board Member NorthStar Earth & Space, Council member SST (Singapore Space and Technology) Think Tank, Recipient of Arthur C. Clarke's Innovator Award 2025

Candace Johnson is a world-renowned space infrastructure, network and innovation entrepreneur and investor. She is Founder/Co-Founder of one of the world's largest satellite systems, SES (Société Européenne des Satellites), Europe's first private satellite communications network Loral-Teleport Europe, the world's first Internet based online service Europe Online, Oceania Women's Network Satellite (OWNSAT), a founding investor in the Kacific Satellite System. Ms. Johnson is also Founding President of the VATM, the Association of Private Telecom Operators in Germany and Founding President of the Global Telecom Women's Network (GTWN). Currently, Candace is Chair of the Advisory Board and Partner of Seraphim Space Fund, Founding Vice Chair of NorthStar Earth and Space, and Non-Executive Director of VUSION, the world's leading IOT/Electronic Shelf Labelling group. Ms. Johnson is a member of the Executive Board of the ICC, International Chamber of Commerce, Member Saudi Space Agency Advisory Council, Vice President of Institut EuroplA, the European Institute of Artificial Intelligence. She was also Vice-Chair of the B 20 Task Force on Technology, Innovation and R&D for 2023.

Known for her pioneering work in the European and global space ecosystem, she has been decorated by the Luxembourg Government with the Commander of the Order of Merit and the Officer of the Oak Leaf Crown as well as being decorated by the German Government with the Officer of the Federal Order of Merit.

She is President Emeritus of EBAN after having completed a four-year presidency of EBAN, (European Business Angels Network), during which she was honoured to help found ABAN (African Business Angels Network) amongst other initiatives. In 2020, she was Co-Chair of the Women in Business Task Force for the G20 in Saudi Arabia.

Ms. Johnson has received numerous Lifetime Achievement Awards from such prestigious organisations as the World Communication Awards, Women in Aerospace, The International Alliance of Women and the Global Telecom Women's Network (GTWN). Ms. Johnson has an honorary doctorate from the Hong Kong

Polytechnic University, Masters with honours from the Sorbonne and Stanford and an undergraduate degree from Vassar College.

Across her celebrated space career, she has played a vital role in establishing strategic partnerships across continents, promoting satellite technology as a solution to digital connectivity challenges, and championing the development of space business ecosystems.

Hidetaka Aoki

Co-founder and director at Space Port Japan; co-founder of SPACETIDE Foundation; Space Evangelist; VC, Council member SST Think Tank

As a Space Evangelist, Mr. Aoki is a decades-long champion of the Japanese space ecosystem, working to promote its space business and create a robust private-sector-led space industry with his expertise in both the space business and space technology.

After receiving a master's degree in aerospace engineering and a pilot's license in the U.S., he worked at Mitsubishi Electric, where he developed Japan's first spacecraft, Kounotori, and SLIM which is Japan's first lunar lander and won a number of awards.

As the Co-founder and director of Space Port Japan, a Japanese hub to gather talents and resources of space industries and space port industries in Asia, he is credited with deepening Japan's reputation as a key space innovation hub in Asia and promoting the spaceport business. He also co-founded SPACETIDE Foundation, Japan's first industry-wide platform for accelerating NewSpace activities. He has also served with JAXA and several government committees in his expansive space career. As an experienced investor, he has supported a deep bench strength of space startups for over 10 years.

Recognized for his strategic vision, Mr. Aoki continues to promote technology innovation and operational excellence within Japan's space sector, emphasizing the importance of sustainable and responsible space endeavors.

Jason Bender

Space Lead Partner; Deloitte Australia & Asia Pacific; Experienced entrepreneur and Corporate Innovation Expert, Council member SSTThink Tank

A leader of Deloitte's Space agenda to accelerate the growth and scale of the Space Industry, with a focus economic growth and jobs. His team conceived the global Gravity Challenge, connecting downstream demand with space-tech supply capability delivering commercial outcomes for both the corporate organisations and innovators. Now in its eight year, it has seen over 1200 global teams participate from over 20 countries, to solve more than 50 challenges - resulting in over 30 commercial contracts for the space innovators.

A design and technology focussed executive with 30 years of experience in innovation and business development across dynamic tech sectors. He delivers strategic insights to diverse space ecosystem stakeholders including high growth potential tech companies, defence/space primes, universities, government (industry development, regulator and space data consumer and service provider), defence and downstream users of geospatial data such as mining & energy resources, utilities, agriculture and insurance.

He drives collaboration between government and private-sector space businesses to accelerate growth of the space ecosystem across the Asia Pacific region, connecting the dots across the entire space value chain.

As an experienced entrepreneur who has founded, scaled, and exited 5 businesses across Australia and Europe, he brings a strong entrepreneurial mindset, critical in helping to accelerate the growth of space business ecosystems and driving strong commercial outcomes across space-for-space and space-for-Earth segments.

Nicolette Yeo

General Manager, SST Think Tank

Ms Yeo is a familiar face in the space startup ecosystem, having spent the better part of her career driving space ecosystem-building.

At the helm of SST Think Tank – Asia's first think tank dedicated to the commercialization of space – she led its successful launch and defined its mission to mainstream space as a horizontal technology with real-world applications across sectors such as climate, connectivity, logistics, and national security. She spearheads key initiatives including the *Growth Lab*, which supports space startups in scaling globally, and an executive leadership program that introduces space-driven innovation strategies to corporate leaders.

Prior to this role, she oversaw the global Space Accelerator Programme at SSTL and supported space startups in business planning, market validation, internationalization, fundraising, and strategic partnerships. She also led innovation consulting projects for corporates in the space and adjacent sectors.

She started her career at the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) and went on to hold roles at SGInnovate and Entrepreneur First, contributing to investment, policy, and startup ecosystem development. She also brings first-hand experience as a founding team member in early-stage startups, where she worked on product strategy, partnerships, and organizational design.