

Fleet signs on-going collaboration with French Space Agency CNES

ADELAIDE: 25 September, 2017 — Australian space startup, [Fleet](#), and the French space agency, [CNES](#), today announced that they will enter into a strategic collaboration whereby CNES will track and support Fleet's first nanosatellites, once launched.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two organisations has been signed today on the opening day of this year's [International Astronautical Congress \(IAC\)](#) in Adelaide. The signing happened in front of South Australian Premier Jay Weatherill.

“Partnering with a leading international space agency puts us in a strong position for the future” said Flavia Tata Nardini, co-founder and CEO of Fleet. “The support of CNES comes at a critical phase in our space mission. The relationship will play a key role in ensuring that the digital nervous system we’re creating for Earth succeeds. They will also serve as a valuable asset as we begin to connect organisations on to our network.”

“At CNES, we are actively looking for partnerships with game changing NewSpace players,” said Dr Jean-Yves Le Gall, President of CNES. “Fleet is a leader in the Australian NewSpace scene, building on the small satellite revolution to provide the world with innovative connectivity solutions. As one of the greatest challenges in space applications today, This is also something we are looking into closely. Joining forces with Fleet has therefore emerged as a natural development“

As part of this relationship, CNES will use its network of ground communications antennas to track Fleet's two nanosatellites that will be launched in 2018. CNES' support will include orbital diagnostics to characterise the satellites' orbits.

With the orbits of the nanosatellites accurately characterised Fleet will be able to activate, monitor and control the various subsystems of their technology, including the deployment of the satellites' solar panels. The CNES support will enable Fleet to bring its technology into service as soon as possible after deployment from the launch vehicle.

The MoU allows, beyond the first two launches of Fleet's nanosatellites, a continued relationship between Fleet and CNES so that they can collaborate on future initiatives together.

“This is an amazing example of international collaboration, and shows that we are united in solving the world's greatest challenges”, Tata Nardini said.

The partnership between Fleet and the French space agency is the latest in a string of cooperations between France and South Australia, who earlier this year published a joint statement of enhanced strategic partnership in the space sector.

The two governments committed to cooperating more closely in the radio astronomy and space science sectors, building on existing collaboration in relation to exploitation of satellite navigation technologies and satellite imagery for economic and environmental benefit.

On CNES' involvement in Australia, Dr. Le Gall added "CNES has been present in Australia for a long time, but the recent working discussions reflect a whole new dynamic. Space has gained new political importance in proving essential to manage global threats. This fundamentally differs from the traditional perception of space as a demonstration of power, and this is where Australia is naturally finding its place. The global move towards smaller innovative missions, areas where Australia can bring its strengths and capabilities to bear, has rapidly led to a convergence of interest and synergies between us."

Tata Nardini believes that "There has never been a more exciting time in the Australian space industry. Our businesses are thriving, and are entering the world stage. We have small startups like Fleet, Gilmour, and Saber all playing in the same league as NASA and other major space organisations. It's a testament to the burgeoning Australian space industry that the IAC is here this year."

The thought is shared by Dr Le Gall, also President of the International Astronautical Federation, and Chair of the Adelaide Congress, "Today, the international space arena is experiencing a seismic shift. Miniaturisation of spacecraft is lowering the barrier of access to space for a much broader range of public and private stakeholders. I do not think though NewSpace is going to sweep away traditional space players. To the contrary, at CNES we consider NewSpace as a complement to what we do. The CNES-Fleet collaboration is the perfect example."

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About Fleet

Fleet is building the global digital nervous system to power the next industrial revolution. When launched, it will provide free, global connectivity to the more than 75 billion connected devices that will transform industries around the world.

Fleet was founded in South Australia in 2015 by aerospace engineers who wanted to solve the issue facing businesses globally over the next decade: how to connect billions of sensors and devices, simply and cheaply. Fleet will launch the first of more than 100 planned nanosatellites in 2018, creating a global, free connectivity network that will plug directly into the millions of digital sensors already beginning to transform industries like agriculture, logistics, and mining and gas.

About CNES

CNES (Centre National d'Études Spatiales) is the government agency responsible for shaping France's space policy and implementing it in Europe. Its task is to conceive and orbit satellites, invent the space systems of the future and nurture new services to aid us in our daily lives. Founded in 1961, it is the initiator of major space projects, launch vehicles and satellites, and the partner of choice for industry

fuelling innovation. CNES comprises some 2,500 men and women with a passion for space working to open up new and infinite fields of applications in five core areas of focus: Ariane, science, Earth observation, telecommunications and defence. It is a key player driving technology innovation, economic development and industrial policy for the nation. It also fosters scientific collaborations and has forged numerous international partnerships. France, represented by CNES, is the leading contributor to the European Space Agency (ESA).