



Press Release

2nd may 2018

CP061-2018

Australia-France Space Cooperation UNSW Canberra Space and CNES Launch Joint Study on Breakthrough Satellite Design

UNSW Canberra Space and CNES are partnering to study a breakthrough hyperspectral remote-sensing satellite that will be capable of monitoring Australia's and the South Pacific's coral reefs. Under a Letter of Intent delivered this week by Frédérique Vidal, French Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, in the presence of French President Emmanuel Macron and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, the joint study will pave the way for developing disruptive space technologies such as hyperspectral remote sensing, on-board processing, artificial intelligence and formation-flying technologies. Such technologies can serve applications such as monitoring fresh and marine water quality and enabling precision farming practices.

UNSW Canberra Space is the leading space program in Australia, with 40 team members, world class space engineering and science, and disruptive approaches involving miniature spacecraft. The combination of UNSW Canberra Space and its spin-off Skykraft is a significant capability to help meet national needs and opportunities through space technology. In 2017, UNSW Canberra Space and CNES set up a facility with the support of the ACT Government, in the style of the world-class concurrent engineering centre developed by CNES at its Toulouse Space Centre. The study will be conducted at the Australian National Concurrent Design Facility (ANCDF) at UNSW Canberra with instrumental support from CNES.

Director of UNSW Canberra Space Professor Russell Boyce says France and Australia have a strong legacy of space cooperation over 35 years and this project will see that relationship continue. "After two years of working with CNES toward the development of joint space missions, it's fantastic to see our first project come to fruition. Our facility at UNSW Canberra enables spacecraft design engineers and scientists to rapidly design and determine the technical and economic viability of proposed space missions. Our capability includes hyperspectral remote sensing and the on-board processing needed in order to turn measurements into useful information with real world application," he said.

Jean-Yves Le Gall, CNES President, said the recent addition of space as one of the pillars in the strategic partnership between Australia and France has fundamentally consolidated prospects for space cooperation between the two nations. "In 2017 we signed a preliminary agreement with the Australian Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, paving the way for a framework cooperation agreement with the Australian Space Agency when it's set up to enable further development of joint projects. CNES has been a big supporter of Australia and our relationship with UNSW Canberra Space as it grows and matures a domestic space industry. We expect that Australia will become an important strategic partner in this sector," he said.

CONTACTS

Pascale Bresson Press Officer
Raphaël Sart Press Officer

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 75 39 pascale.bresson@cnes.fr
Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 74 51 raphael.sart@cnes.fr