

## Media Release

### Australia's SmartSat CRC – Securing our future

*Ahead of a landmark week for Australia's space industry, including the ninth convening of the highly successful Australian Space Forum, the SmartSat Cooperative Research Centre today announces details of its first R&D projects, prioritising water security, disaster management, and advanced telecommunications innovation.*

The [9<sup>th</sup> Australian Space Forum](#) will take place on Wednesday 19 February, bringing together key figures from the [Australian Space Agency](#), [SmartSat CRC](#) and local industry with representatives from NASA, the Italian Space Agency and leading research centres.

As part of the Forum, the SmartSat CRC, which is based in Adelaide's new high-tech precinct, [Lot Fourteen](#), will provide details of a number of projects it is initiating that will simultaneously help build Australia's space industry and tackle some of the nation's major challenges, such as water management and connectivity across the country.

SmartSat CEO, [Professor Andy Koronios](#), says the profile of events this week builds on the current momentum in Australia's space industry, with optimism around the sector at an all-time high.

"With the Space Agency, SmartSat and the many fast-growing space start-ups at Lot Fourteen, it's obviously an exciting time in Australia's space journey," Prof Koronios says. "However, the impact of all this activity will not be in space – the real impact will be the solutions and opportunities these initiatives deliver back on Earth."

Established a little over six months ago, SmartSat brings together more than 100 international and national partners in a seven-year research initiative, and today the CRC releases details of its first nine research and development projects.

Following the nation's crippling summer of bushfires, top priority for the CRC is development of accurate, reliable communications technology for disaster management, which will see SmartSat collaborate with NASA, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, and local industry partner, [Safety from Space](#), on a project with broad international implications.

"Critical communications infrastructure is often damaged during a major fire incident, which may complicate rescue efforts and put lives at further risk," Prof Koronios says.

"We are meeting with NASA this week to discuss a project that will adapt existing emergency beacon technologies into a form of miniaturised satellite radio, connected into a national incident data management system that will deliver a complete, real-time picture of disaster zones and ensure reliable communication for individuals and communities in danger."

In a separate project, SmartSat will prove-up technologies that will enable its partners and relevant agencies to establish a national network to monitor the quality and quantity of surface and ground water across the country.

Dubbed the 'AquaWatch Australia Mission', this project is to be undertaken in partnership with the CSIRO, and with the support of partners will encompass a national mission to establish a mini

constellation of dedicated AquaWatch satellites, complimented by a network of thousands of terrestrial water sensors that will upload data continuously in near real-time.

“In conjunction with government, industry and scientists, we will be enabling the development of a comprehensive, national monitoring system to provide precise, decision-ready information on quality and quantity across Australia’s waterways and reservoirs, essential for the operation of all levels of government in sustaining basic water services for all Australians.”

The SmartSat-CSIRO Aquawatch program will initiate a suite of additional projects benefiting regional stakeholders including primary producers, environmental managers and resource companies, representing just one part of SmartSat’s broader commitment to regional development.

“One major impediment to growth in many regional areas is lack of communication infrastructure, which is often far inferior to that found in capital cities,” Prof Koronios says. “That not only prevents business and industry from investing in these regions, but also makes individuals reluctant to relocate, even while many [experts point to the great need to grow Australia’s regional areas.](#)”

The remainder of SmartSat’s first-round R&D projects address various technical elements of this national communications challenge, with the goal of establishing cost-effective, sovereign satellite capability to deliver secure, high-speed data nationwide. Developing this network will not only deliver benefits to individuals, industry and the nation’s defence sector, it will also ensure Australia leads global innovation of next-generation technologies such as laser and quantum communications.

“These technologies represent the future of how the world communicates and Australia is home to [internationally recognised experts in the field,](#)” Prof Koronios says. “Now, the mission for the SmartSat CRC is to co-ordinate research in a way that not only solves the unique challenges posed by Australia’s sprawling geography, but in doing so, shows the world a better way to communicate.”

[The 9<sup>th</sup> Australian Space Forum](#) will host an in-depth discussion on this subject, during which Prof Koronios will be joined by SmartSat’s Board Chair, Dr Peter Woodgate, and key industry partners, EOS Space Systems CEO, Professor Craig Smith, and E-Geos COO, Bruno Versini, to outline a road map for the development of ‘leap-frogging’ research that will help build Australia’s space industry.

Facilitating this roundtable will be NASA Goddard’s Deputy Director for Technology and Research Investment, Dr Christyl Johnson, who joins international forum participants including NASA Search and Rescue Manager, Dr Lisa Mazzucca, and Italian Space Agency President, Dr Giorgio Saccoccia.

For interview opportunities and media details of SmartSat CRC research projects, please contact: Dan Lander | [info@smartsatcrc.com](mailto:info@smartsatcrc.com) | 0408 882 809

#### **ALL OTHER OFFICIAL SMARTSAT CRC AND AUSTRALIA SPACE FORUM ENQUIRIES:**

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#### **ABOUT THE SMARTSAT CRC**

The SmartSat Cooperative Research Centre brings together over 100 national and international partners who have invested over \$190 million, along with \$55 million in Federal Government funding under its Cooperative Research Centres Program, in a \$245 million research effort over seven years. Working closely with the Australian Space Agency, SmartSat will make a strong contribution to the Australian Government’s goal of tripling the size of the space sector to \$12 billion and creating up to 20,000 jobs by 2030. Priority industry sectors for SmartSat include telecommunications, agriculture and natural resources, transport and logistics, mining, and defence and national security.