

SmartSat and New Zealand Space Agency collaborate on joint R&D initiatives to advance space sector innovation

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Adelaide, 31 January 2024 – [SmartSat Cooperative Research Centre](#) (SmartSat), Australia's leading space research centre, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the [New Zealand Space Agency](#) (NZSA) to accelerate the growth of Australian and New Zealand space industries.

Under the new agreement, SmartSat and NZSA will collaborate to develop new capabilities and expertise in the space sector through the advancement of innovation, R&D, and workforce development.

The agreement was signed at the NZSA headquarters in Wellington by Professor Andy Koronios, SmartSat CRC Chief Executive Officer and Iain Cossar, Head of the New Zealand Space Agency.

Under this agreement, up to NZ \$6 million will be made available from the NZ Government's Catalyst Fund to support New Zealand researchers to participate in new joint research initiatives in:

- **Earth Observation:** covering Natural Capital, Biosecurity, Crop Health, Pasture Condition, Emission Monitoring, South Pacific Synthetic Aperture Radar and Maritime Domain Awareness. These research projects will aim to use space data to enhance decision making for land and sea-based environments.
- **Space Situational Awareness:** developing new techniques to monitor the orbital environment better. One example is Satping – spacecraft position and velocity and ID from the spacecraft. Another is ground-sensor data processing and visualisations for anomalies and manoeuvre detections.
- **Optical Communications:** joint science work on adaptive optics to explore how to coordinate a network of Australasian optical ground stations that can actively support space exploration.

SmartSat CRC Chief Executive Officer Professor Andy Koronios commented: "We're delighted to sign this agreement with the New Zealand Space Agency. This partnership will enable us to join forces and harness our resources and expertise for several important projects. Earth Observation research plays a critical role in better understanding environmental challenges that pose significant risks to both our countries. The agriculture sector is crucial for both Australia and New Zealand, and improving sustainable practices through pasture mapping, human activity, and emission monitoring will be vital for current and future food security."

Head of the Australian Space Agency Enrico Palermo welcomed the MOU signing.

“This agreement reaffirms our strong partnership with New Zealand. Not only do our nations share a unique geographic position, we are also aligned when it comes to using space technology and innovation to improve life here on Earth.

This Australian Space Agency is proud to have worked with SmartSat CRC and the New Zealand Space Agency to set up this agreement, which builds on Australian Government investments in capabilities such as optical ground stations.

Space is a global endeavour and by sharing knowledge and resources, we can create outcomes that benefit both our nations.”

Minister Judith Collins, New Zealand Minister for Space, has provided a statement on the new agreement on her official [website](#).

END

SMARTSAT CRC ENQUIRIES:

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ABOUT THE SMARTSAT CRC

The SmartSat Cooperative Research Centre brings together over 135 participating organisations, including national and international partners, with more than 400 researchers. With a portfolio of over 150 R&D projects across Advanced Communication, Connectivity and IoT Technologies, Advanced Satellite Systems, Sensors and Intelligence, and Next Generation Earth Observation Data Services, SmartSat continues to contribute to building Australia’s space R&D capability. Find out more at www.smartsatcrc.com.

ABOUT THE NEW ZEALAND SPACE AGENCY

The [New Zealand Space Agency](#) sits within the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and is New Zealand’s lead government agency for space policy, regulation and sector development.