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Optus set to launch game-changing new satellite in 2023

- Optus is planning lift off with its eleventh satellite deployed for Australia and New Zealand
- First satellite operator in Asia Pacific to launch next generation, software-defined VHTS

Optus today announced a giant leap in its satellite business, confirming a contract with Airbus Defence and Space for a brand new, OneSat software-defined satellite, Optus 11, to be deployed for Australia and New Zealand in 2023 at the current Optus D1 orbital location of 160°East.

Optus has entered into a revised agreement with Sky New Zealand which will be the cornerstone customer leveraging the new satellite.

Optus will be the first satellite operator in Asia Pacific to launch a software-defined satellite that can provide both flexible concurrent broadcast and broadband services via a very high throughput satellite (VHTS) design.

The game-changing satellite is fully configurable in space, meaning its location, coverage, bandwidth and capacity can be changed in orbit as customer demands evolve – where traditional satellites are limited by on-ground configurations that cannot be altered after launch.

Optus Chief Executive Officer, Kelly Bayer Rosmarin said: “Today's exciting news is a testament to Optus’s commitment to invest in cutting-edge next generation technology to enhance our world-class communication networks. Optus 11 cements our scale and leadership in the trans-Tasman satellite industry, and will enable us to provide unique, flexible services and customer experiences tailored to our customers’ needs.”

Optus Managing Director, Wholesale, Satellite and Strategy, Ben White said: “Optus 11’s software-defined technology marks a paradigm shift in how satellite communication will be delivered across Australia and New Zealand and it will offer unparalleled flexibility for our satellite customers. Telecom markets don’t stand still and the ability to re-configure payloads in-orbit is a game-changer. It allows us to adapt to shifting business landscapes and tailor the delivery of services and capacity through dynamic beam-forming technologies.”

Sitting 36,000km above Earth, Optus 11 is also able to host a satellite-based augmentation system (SBAS) payload – which has the ability to greatly enhance the accuracy and precision of existing GPS and positioning systems across the ANZ region and pinpoint a location to within a decimetre, without the need for mobile or internet coverage.

Optus 11 will join five other Optus satellites in orbit and expands Optus’ geo-stationary satellite fleet to become the largest in the company’s and Australia’s history.

Mr White added: “Optus 11 will add capacity and resilience to our satellite fleet and its unique capabilities will give our broadcast customers the option to tailor their dynamic video delivery via IP streaming, and our broadband customers can benefit from better performance and higher individual throughputs. In addition, it will support the Optus mobile network using satellite backhaul and the Government’s Mobile Black Spot Programs (MBSP).

Media release

“The spacecraft’s ground-breaking design is a very exciting development and software-defined satellites will become the future of this industry. We look forward to bringing this new, world-leading technology to Australia and New Zealand and continuing to support Australian jobs in the Space industry.”

Optus will be the first operator in the world to utilise the Ku band (11-14GHz) spectrum for the software defined VHTS in both broadcast and broadband services. Optus 11 will also provide greater coverage than our previous satellites, with a reach from Antarctica to the Cocos Islands and covering a vast majority of the Pacific region. It will have the ability to cover oceans previously out of reach to Optus and provide tracking spot beams coverage to planes and vessels anywhere within the Optus 11 footprint.

Optus provides satellite services to Australia and NZ Government departments, companies and broadcasters including Foxtel, ABC, SBS, Seven Network, regional broadcasters such as Imparja Television, Sky New Zealand and Kordia, in addition to services in McMurdo Sound, Antarctica.

Media enquiries:

Rob Sharpe
Optus Corporate Affairs
media@optus.com.au
Tel: (02) 8082 7850