

NEWS NASA



NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20546

TELS. WO 2-4155  
WO 3-6925

*Handwritten:* + TV Computer Tracking

**FOR RELEASE: THURSDAY AM's**  
**June 25, 1964**

RELEASE NO: 64-155

NASA WELCOMES NEW AUSTRALIAN TRACKING STATION TO GEMINI NETWORK

The first tracking station to be completely built for Project Gemini was dedicated today at Carnarvon, Australia, close to the point on Earth exactly opposite from the launch site at Cape Kennedy.

James E. Webb, Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, participating in the dedication ceremonies by telephone, said that NASA established the new ground support station at the antipodal point to Cape Kennedy because every spacecraft launched from the Cape passes close to Carnarvon on its first orbit.

NASA manned spaceflight tracking facilities were moved to Carnarvon from Muehea and Woomera late in 1963 after Project Mercury experience indicated the advantage of this location. Security of the astronaut's life, his flight direction, altitude and velocity must be established early in the first orbit, and Carnarvon is the first land station to see the spacecraft after it passes over southeast Africa and turns northeast up the Indian Ocean toward Australia.

-more-

6/24/64

Webb said that Carnarvon will support the two Gemini astronauts while they maneuver their capsule to rendezvous and join with a second spacecraft, the orbiting Agena space vehicle.

Webb's remarks welcoming Carnarvon to operational membership in the Manned Space Flight Network also initiated the new station to membership in SCAMA. This is the NASA 13-country network of operational voice communications which carried the Administrator's words from NASA Washington Headquarters to Carnarvon at the farthest west point of Australia via 4,800 miles of telephone land line and 8,200 miles of submarine cable.

During Gemini missions, SCAMA will keep flight controllers at the stations in voice contact with the control centers at Cape Kennedy, Houston and the Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md., and all other stations in the network. Teletype circuits also connect all stations and control centers and will carry the flow of flight information from the stations to control center computers during the mission.

Facilities at Carnarvon are built around the recently developed FPQ-6 radar, the most accurate known instrument for radar tracking. Telemetry, command and communications equipment considerably advanced beyond that available for Project Mercury is installed to support the Gemini spacecraft and Agena space vehicle simultaneously and to handle the greatly increased flow of information between spacecraft and ground.

The station will also be used to support NASA's unmanned observatory class of scientific satellites including the Orbiting Astronomical Observatory, the Orbiting Geophysical Observatory and new versions of the current Orbiting Solar Observatory. Carnarvon will be required to track their launch vehicle, monitor the rocket's second burning, and obtain data to determine orbit.

Following Gemini, the station will continue to be used for Project Apollo, as will other NASA facilities in southeastern Australia.

The new station was officially opened by the Honorable Allen Fairhall, Minister for Supply of the Commonwealth of Australia, when he unveiled a plaque recording Australian-American cooperation in the establishment and operation of the station. Built with NASA funds of approximately \$6.5 million, the station is staffed and operated by the Australian Department of Supply under an agreement between the Australian and United States Governments.

Guests at the ceremony included NASA Director of Tracking and Data Acquisition Edmond C. Buckley representing NASA Headquarters, Western Australia's Premier David Brand and the Australian Minister for Defence, Senator Shane Paltridge.