

NEWS

THE OVERSEAS
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION
(AUSTRALIA)



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WORLD TO SEE MOON TELECAST THROUGH AUSTRALIA

The world will see man's first steps on the moon through the facilities of the Overseas Telecommunications Commission (Australia).

And Australians will see this historic space telecast a split second before the rest of the world.

The telecast which is scheduled to take place in the afternoon (A.E.S.T.) of Monday, July 21, will show the Apollo 11 mission commander, Neil A. Armstrong emerging from the lunar module on to the surface of the moon.

The C.S.I.R.O. radio telescope at Parkes, and the Department of Supply's NASA tracking station at Honeysuckle Creek, will be the only stations in the world receiving the television signal from the astronauts.

The signal will be fed through the NASA switching centre at Canberra to the O.T.C. international terminal at Paddington, where it will first emerge as a picture on a television screen.

NASA has installed special facilities at Paddington to monitor this and other space telecasts. This monitoring console is manned by NASA personnel.

From Paddington the programme will be split.

One "split" will go to the A.B.C. studios at Gore Hill, where the signal will be translated from the American 525 line television standard to the Australian 625 line standard. It will then be distributed over the local A.P.O. broadband network to Australian television stations for broadcast.

The other "split" will be fed to the O.T.C. satellite communications earth station at Moree, N.S.W. for transmission to the Apollo mission control centre at Houston, Texas, via the INTELSAT III Pacific communications satellite.

From Houston it will be redistributed to local U.S. television stations and retransmitted across the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean INTELSAT III satellites to other countries throughout the world.

This means that Australians will see this "telecast of the century" at least 300 milliseconds - the time it will take for the signal to cover its 50,000 mile space journey via the INTELSAT III satellite - before anyone else.

At other times during the mission, O.T.C. will be receiving space telecasts via the satellite from the U.S. and these will also be distributed to the local networks.

Radio broadcasting stations will receive segments of "the voice of Apollo" sound relays from the astronauts via O.T.C.'s submarine coaxial cable and satellite links.

O.T.C. has another vital stake in the Apollo mission.

The Commission will provide about 90% of the international communications links in the southern hemisphere which keep the astronauts in their capsules in touch with the mission controller in Houston.

Voice, television, data and telemetry transmissions picked up through NASA tracking stations in Australia are relayed to the U.S. via O.T.C. earth stations at Carnarvon and Moree.

When the capsule is in orbit around the earth, it is occasionally out of contact with land bound tracking stations.

Ships and aircraft are stationed around Australia, to provide a link during these periods, use O.T.C. facilities to relay the transmissions to the U.S. and vice versa.

The O.T.C. facilities used during the Apollo 11 mission are the same as those normally employed in carrying Australia's public international telecommunications traffic.

For further information,
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