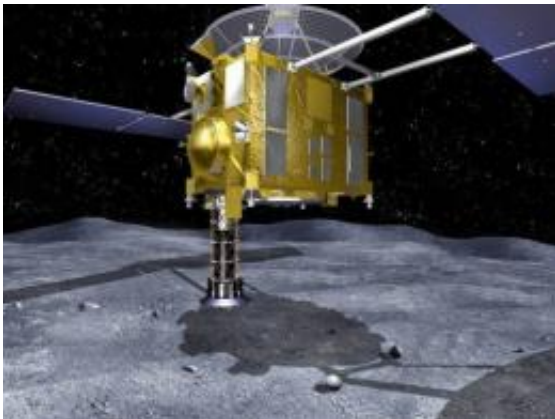


Japanese spacecraft to land in Australian outback

April 21 2010



A rendering file photo of the Japanese space probe Hayabusa which collects surface samples of the asteroid Itokawa. The spacecraft which has journeyed to an asteroid is expected to return to Earth at a remote site in the Australian outback in June.

An Japanese spacecraft which has journeyed to an asteroid is expected to return to Earth at a remote site in the Australian outback in June, the government said Wednesday.

The unmanned Hayabusa craft, launched by the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency ([JAXA](#)) in 2003, is expected to touch down near Woomera in South Australia, Defence Minister John Faulkner said.

"This has been an historic mission," Faulkner said of the Hayabusa,

which reached the Itokawa asteroid in late 2005.

"It is the first time a spacecraft has made contact with an asteroid and returned to [earth](#)."

Australian authorities will assist JAXA in recovering the Hayabusa [spacecraft](#) and are involved in preparations for its final flight path, he said.

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