

# IMAGE: The longest call

August 19 2016

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Credit: ESA/D. O'Donnell

On 10 August 2016, ESA's tracking station at New Norcia, Western Australia, hosting a 35 m-diameter, 630-tonne deep-space antenna, received signals transmitted by NASA's Cassini orbiter at Saturn, through 1.44 billion km of space.

"This was the farthest-ever reception for an ESA station, and the [radio](#)

signals – travelling at the speed of light – took 80 minutes to cover this vast distance," says Daniel Firre, responsible for supporting Cassini radio science at ESOC, ESA's operations centre in Darmstadt, Germany.

The signal reception was part of a series of tests to prepare several ESA stations to support Cassini's radio science investigations, planned to begin later in 2016.

This image shows New Norcia station as seen in 2014 by Dylan O'Donnell, an amateur photographer based in Byron Bay, Australia (the blob of light apparently hovering above the antenna is a light artefact, 'lens flare').

Provided by European Space Agency

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