

Keeping an eye on InSight

November 23 2018



Credit: ESA/D. O'Donnell, CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO

A European antenna in Australia will soon be tracking a US mission currently preparing to land on Mars.

ESA's New Norcia antenna is situated in the red and dusty desert of Western Australia, seen here under the twinkling lights of the Milky

Way. From here, it will provide support to NASA's InSight lander, which is scheduled to touch down on the similarly dry and dusty landscape of the Red Planet, at 20:00 UTC (21:00 CET) on Monday 26 November.

About 12 [hours](#) before the landing, and during the very last 'Target Correction Manoeuvre' before Insight enters the [martian atmosphere](#), this 35-metre deep space antenna will make contact with the lander.

A crucial part of ESA's Estrack network, the New Norcia antenna routinely supports ESA missions voyaging throughout the Solar System, including Mars Express, ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO), Gaia and BepiColombo.

ESA's TGO will join with NASA orbiters to pick up data signals from InSight once it has landed, and relay these back to Earth, providing the first-ever routine data relay support between missions of different agencies at Mars.

You can watch the [landing](#) live on Monday from 19:00 UTC (20:00 CET), via NASA's [webcast](#).

Provided by European Space Agency

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