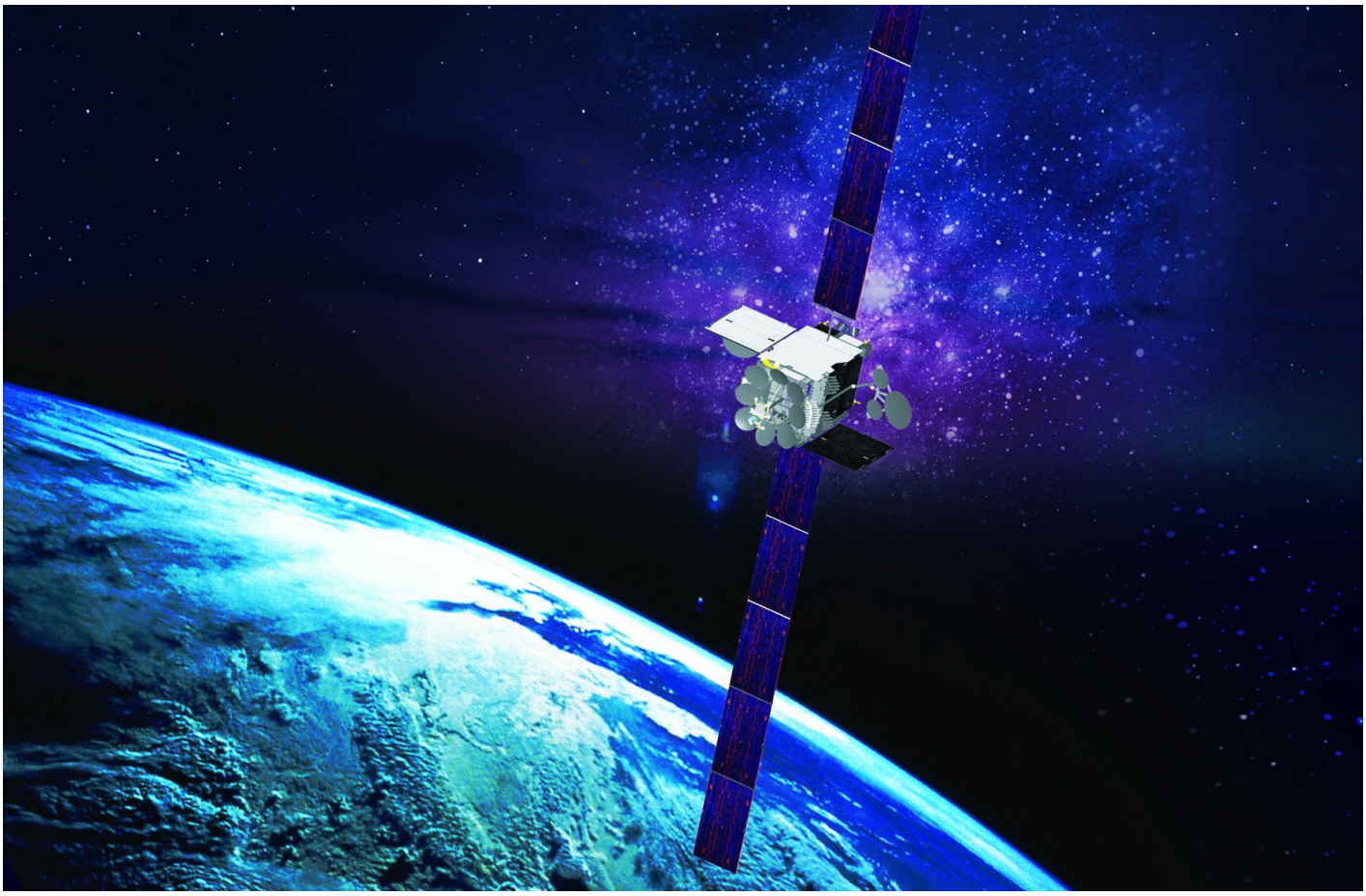
INMARSAT PUBLISHES RESULTS OF PACIFIC ADS-C OCEANIC TRACKING EVALUATION

News / Airlines



Inmarsat has published the results of evaluation trials conducted earlier this year with Australia's air navigation services provider (ANSP), Airservices Australia, to demonstrate **oceanic** flight **tracking** using Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Contract (ADS-C) to meet ICAO's new global standard of a minimum 15-minute reporting interval from the end of 2016.

The evaluation trials involved commercial flights operated by Qantas and Virgin Australia to and from Australia using existing satellite communication capabilities. The results, Inmarsat said, "provide important guidance to the global aviation industry on ways to meet the flight tracking requirements outlined by ICAO in February this year."

ICAO's new 15 minute reporting interval will replace the current 30-40 minute standard, and the Inmarsat/Airservices Australia operations reduced that still further to 14 minutes "to allow for a reduced separation standard, while maintaining a good balance between system limitations, costs and monitoring requirements during normal operations," Inmarsat said.

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It said the reduced interval was “designed to ensure air traffic control has a more accurate view of aircraft positions and can respond to potential incidents in a timelier manner.”

At the end of January this year, trials began to demonstrate that existing **ADS-C** technology could meet ICAO’s normal tracking requirements in oceanic airspace without impacting airline communications costs or operational efficiency. ADS-C is routinely used over oceanic or remote areas to provide information such as an aircraft’s position, speed, altitude and direction of flight to controllers on the ground.

The trials were initially conducted over oceanic airspace in parts of the Brisbane Flight Information Region (FIR), with roll out to all of northern Australia and neighboring Honiara and Nauru in April. Airways New Zealand joined the evaluation in May, with coverage expanded to include the Melbourne FIR.

By the end of the trial in June, aircraft were being tracked using ADS-C across all oceanic airspace in Australia and New Zealand, with the US FAA also signing up to implement the 14-minute reporting standard.

Inmarsat said the evaluation had met ICAO requirements and regulatory performance criterion.

Inmarsat Safety and Operational Services division VP Captain Mary McMillan said: “Ongoing monitoring of the Inmarsat satcom network continues to confirm that the increased message frequency has had negligible impact on the network and total ADS-C messages. This represents a neutral or minimal cost impact and at the same time, we have not experienced any deterioration in ADS-C communication performance.”

Inmarsat said that the successful results of the Australian trial had persuaded other ANSPs to launch their own evaluations.

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