



Editor - Amy Saunders ●●●

## Reaching beyond the stars

Accessing space is expensive, so much so that when the first satellites launched into orbit around our world, they were the preserve of government organisations alone. The world's first satellite, Sputnik 1, was placed into orbit by the Soviet Union in 1957 and marked a major step in the exploration of space. Later in 1960, the world's first satellite designed for communications applications, Echo 1, was launched into orbit by NASA. While the commercial segment started to edge into the space arena with the 1962 launch of Telstar 1, it wasn't until much later that commercial entities gained a real foothold in the newly-opened space sector.

The satellite industry has come a long way since 1962. The tide has turned, and now commercial organisations have considerably more money to shake at the space segment than government and military groups. Of course, governments will always retain some level of satellite sovereignty, and it's vital that certain military assets remain independent of commercial groups and classified in nature, however, as we move into the NewSpace era, the private sector will have an increasingly important role to play.

As we prepare for Satellite 2019, some 62 years on from the first-ever satellite launch, the impact that commercial entities have made on the space sector can be felt more keenly than ever before. The level of flexibility available to privately-owned corporations has enabled a whole host of amazing innovative applications, all made possible via satellite; bridging the digital divide with broadband-speed connectivity; connecting the unconnected in remote, rural and mobile locations; bringing in an era of unprecedented connectivity with 5G and the Internet of Things (IoT); automating utilities, agriculture, and oil and gas operations with machine-to-machine (M2M) communications; self-driving planes, trains and automobiles; and, if current efforts are successful, enabling the deep space communications that will support off-world settlement missions and space tourism journeys.

It's amazing what we can achieve with satellite technology, and we must remember that all these advancements are just the beginning. The industry is still very much in its infancy at just 62 years old – the universe is our oyster, and it's time to reach beyond the stars.

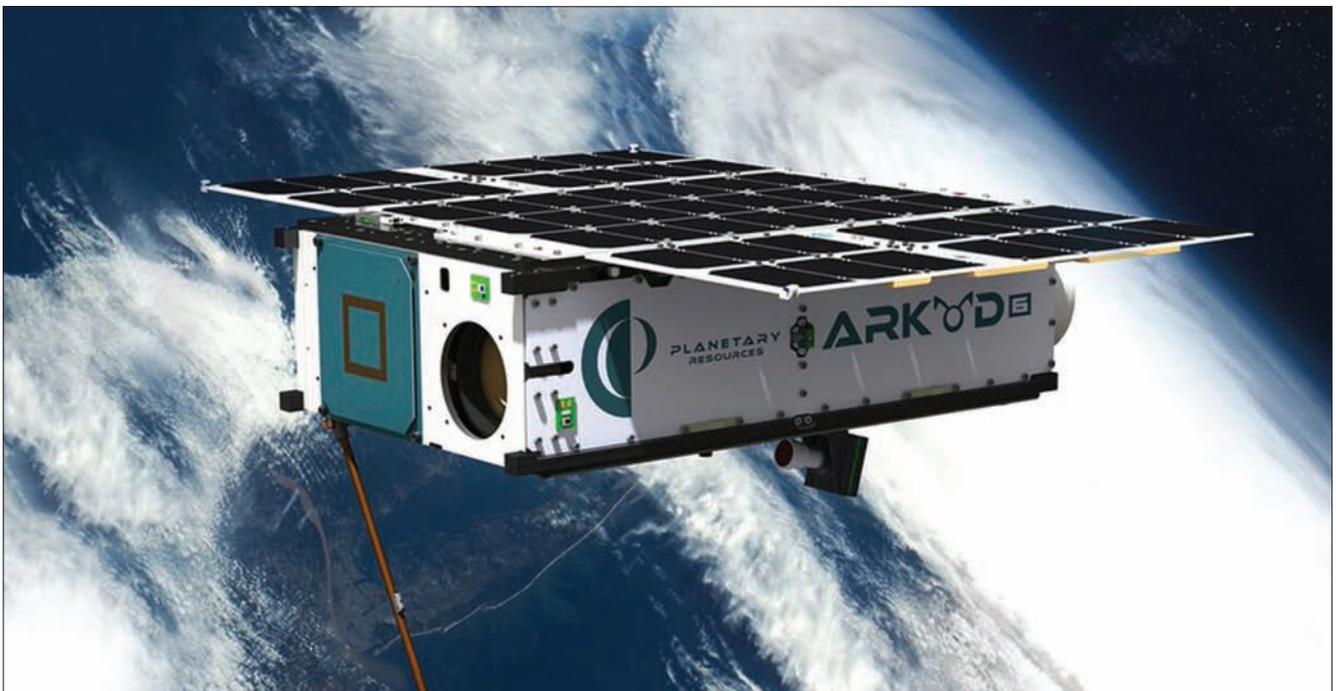


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