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Hold the phone: now you can SMS aliens

Nicola Berkovic

THEY may or may not like to “phone home” — but if there are aliens living on the planet Gliese 581d, they are soon to be bombarded with text messages from Science Minister Kim Carr.

Senator Carr will today send an interstellar SMS to the planet, which at a distance of 20 light years, or 194 trillion kilometres away, is the closest Earth-like planet that could support life.

The message, to be sent from Canberra’s Questacon to mark National Science Week, will say: “Hello from Australia on the planet we call Earth. These

messages express our people’s dreams for the future. We want to share those dreams with you.”

If there are aliens out there, they will need a dish to receive the message, which will not arrive before 2029.

It is believed to be the first attempt to make contact with the planet, which astronomers believe could hold abundant liquid water, necessary for supporting life. The planet, whose “years” last just 66.8 days, was discovered in 2007.

Australians will also be able to send Twitter-like messages to the planet via www.hellofrom-earth.net.