



Media Release

19 August 2009

Australians look to the stars for answers

“On a clear moonless night you can't see millions of stars, only about 1,000 - but thanks to an accident of geography and climate, you can see more from Australia than anywhere else in the world,” explains Dr Karl Kruszelnicki, Sydney University.

Now, every Australian has a chance to explore the amazing night sky for themselves thanks to an innovative and interactive website developed to celebrate National Science Week.

The Big Aussie Starhunt, www.starhunt.net.au, allows users to explore the stars, spot satellites and learn about the planets and galaxies that make up the night sky.

Dr Karl is encouraging all Australians to visit the Big Aussie Starhunt during National Science Week and find out about our amazing universe.

“The best thing about the Big Aussie Starhunt is that anyone can get involved, regardless of where you are located - all you need is to be able to see the night sky.

“2009 is the International Year of Astronomy so this is a great opportunity for Australians to look up towards the sky and learn a bit more about what surrounds us.”

As well as helping you to find your way around the night sky through downloadable sky maps, the Big Aussie Starhunt outlines indigenous star stories, showcases amazing astronomical photos and invites Australians to be part of the Star Hunt survey.

Throughout National Science Week, from 15 to 23 August, schools and individuals are encouraged to go out and count stars to measure the amount of light pollution in Australia, in a competition with a \$2000 ABC shop voucher as the prize. There's also a prize for a school group which is a \$1000 ABC Shop voucher for the school.

To enter, users will need to download a star map from the website, and head outside to locate Scorpius in the night sky, before counting how many stars can be seen in this constellation.

Once the survey has been completed and the answers registered online, you will have an opportunity to rename your favourite constellation, with the most imaginative entry coming away with the prize.

The Big Aussie Starhunt has been developed by the ABC in celebration of the International Year of Astronomy and National Science Week.



An Australian Government Initiative

national science week

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We have astronomers and other interviewees available from each State. For interview and photo opportunities, please contact Leigh Exelby at shac Communications.

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National Science Week

Now entering its twelfth year, National Science Week has well and truly cemented itself as Australia's largest festival, with last year's calendar offering over 800 events throughout Australia, reaching an audience of over a million people.

The festival is proudly supported by the Australian Government, as well as partners CSIRO, Australian Science Teachers Association and the ABC.

National Science Week 2009 will run from 15 - 23 August. Details about National Science Week events can be found at www.scienceweek.gov.au.

The International Year of Astronomy

The International Year of Astronomy is a year-long, worldwide, public celebration of astronomy, aiming to raise awareness of Australia's contribution and role in astronomy, encourage people to engage with the natural world and promote understanding of science.

For details about the International Year of Astronomy, please visit www.astronomy2009.org.au