



Media Alert

14 August 2009

Talk to the Stars this National Science Week

Australia's largest national festival, National Science Week, kicks off tomorrow and will feature over 800 activities and events running across the country from Brisbane to Broome and everywhere in between.

Between 15-23 August, Australians will be able to participate in science festivals, music and comedy shows, interactive hands-on displays, open days and online activities, which will be held at museums, pubs, universities, schools and even zoos.

Most of the events are free and open to the public allowing anyone interested in exploring their passion for science the opportunity to get involved.

Now entering its 12th year, National Science Week has well and truly cemented itself as Australia's largest festival, reaching an audience of over one million people.

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

Some of the key initiatives for National Science Week are listed below, with details about all National Science Week events available at www.scienceweek.gov.au.

Talk to the aliens

Hello from Earth, a web-based initiative launched last week for National Science Week provides Australians with the opportunity to send text-like messages to potential intelligent life beyond Earth.

Until 5:00pm, Monday 24 August, Australians can post 160 character goodwill messages that will be beamed, with the help of Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex at Tidbinbilla to Gliese 581d, the nearest Earth-like planet outside our Solar System likely to support life.

Hello from Earth has already been widely embraced by the global community, with over 8,100 messages registered on the website from the UK, USA, France, Canada, Spain, India and Brazil, as well as hundreds from Australians eager to send their message to the stars.

www.hellofromearth.net



national science week

Meet a real-life scientist

A key activity for 2009 is the National Tour, featuring special guest appearances by NASA Astronaut Megan McArthur, international paleontologist Scott Sampson, theoretical physicist Lawrence Krauss and leading environmentalist Tanya Ha.

These international guests will be visiting every State and Territory giving public presentations, participating in panels, debates and promoting science throughout Australia.

Check the National Science Week website for the full tour schedule.

Reach for the stars

Have you ever wanted to find the Southern Cross or identify where Scorpio lies in the sky?

Now is your chance with the Big Aussie Star Hunt, an interactive activity supported by the ABC and developed for National Science Week.

The Big Aussie Star Hunt is a website-based project that helps members of the public locate constellations such as the Southern Cross and Scorpio, as well as providing Indigenous Australian astronomy stories.

You don't need a telescope or binoculars to participate – just a good view of the night sky. This is an activity that Australians can participate in, no matter their geographical location.

www.starhunt.net.au

ENDS

Media interviews and photo opportunities are available.

For further information please contact Leigh Exelby at shac Communications.
leigh@shaccommunications.com (07) 5532 0157 0422 396 111