



An Australian Government Initiative



MEDIA RELEASE

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Search for the stars in Science Week

- Do you know the names of constellations and how to find them in the night sky?
- Want to learn how to find south using the stars?
- Like to learn about Indigenous astronomy?
- Want to win a year's supply of ABC Shop DVDs, books and CDs?

Then get involved with the Big Aussie Star Hunt. Because 2009 is the International Year of Astronomy, National Science Week is launching the Big Aussie Star Hunt to get Australians everywhere to look up at the night sky and learn a few things along the way. You don't need binoculars or a telescope – just a good view of the sky at night.

Visit The Big Aussie Star Hunt website to learn how to spot stars and constellations such as the Southern Cross and Scorpius and discover their Indigenous stories. Take part in the national light pollution survey and you could also win up to \$2000 worth of ABC Shop goodies.

All you need to do for the survey is count how many stars you can see in Scorpius (the more stars you can see, the less light pollution) then enter your results on the website to help us create a light pollution map of Australia to show the best places to see the night sky. Once you've completed the light pollution survey you can enter the competition by answering the question: "*Which constellation would you rename, what would you call it and why?*" (In 25 words or less).

You can enter as an individual or a school group. The winner of the individual prize will win ABC goodies worth \$2000 – that's an ABC Shop DVD, book or CD every week for a year! The winning school group will receive \$1000 worth of ABC Shop goodies for their school.

National Science Week runs from August 15 to 23. More than 800 events will be held across the nation, including a national tour of the world's brightest scientists (and an astronaut!).

The International Year of Astronomy is coordinated globally by the International Astronomical Union and endorsed by the United Nations. IYA activities in Australia are funded with assistance from the Science Connections Program within the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

To join the Big Aussie Star Hunt, visit www.starhunt.net.au

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