



## The Universe Yours to Discover 2009 International Year of Astronomy

Following on from last year's exciting centenary celebrations, 2009 is the International Year of Astronomy. This year marks the 400th anniversary of the first use of the astronomical telescope: in 1609 Galileo used a small spyglass to view the Moon and the planets, seeing the rings around Saturn for the first time.

To celebrate the International Year of Astronomy, astronomical events are happening all across the globe, including many right here in WA. The full list of events in WA is available from Scitech, but here are the events coming up in March and April.

### **March 5th: Astronomy night at ECU**

### **March 19th: "Elevators to Space" lecture at Horizon the Planetarium**

### **April 2nd-5th: 100 hours of Astronomy, a global event with webcasts from observatories around the world, public star parties, and several local events planned**

Here in Australia we are really lucky to have fantastic skies. There are various ways to help your Scouts see the wonders of the universe, here are a few suggestions.

- Next time you go camping, have a look at Heavens Above before you go to see what will be visible (you can set your location to get a more accurate view). The site has star maps, descriptions of when and where the Moon and planets are visible, and even listings for satellites such as the International Space Station so you can wave at the astronauts! Try and borrow a few pairs of binoculars to take along for use around the campfire, you might be surprised how much you can see with simple equipment.
- Suggest a visit to an observatory or planetarium as a troop or patrol activity. Perth Observatory run night-time tours of their telescopes and have telescopes that you can look through with experienced staff on hand to show you exciting objects. Gingin Observatory at the Gravity Discovery Centre also run public observing nights and have lots of nice telescopes to use. Horizon the Planetarium at Scitech have several highly entertaining shows which include an interactive tour of the current night sky. (Note that these all require advance booking for groups.)
- Visit an astronomy society. The Astronomical Group of Western Australia (AGWA) and the Astronomical Society of WA (ASWA) both have many knowledgeable members, have regular talks and observing sessions away from the city lights. Their websites have contact information and many useful links.

**Scouts also has free planispheres available for Scout troops. These cardboard devices (also known as star-wheels) were produced especially for the International Year of Astronomy and can show you the night sky at any time on any night of the year. If you would like some for your troop, please contact Megan Argo at: [megan\\_dot\\_argo\\_at\\_gmail\\_dot\\_com](mailto:megan_dot_argo_at_gmail_dot_com) or 9266 9249 (office hours only).**

Enjoy the International Year of Astronomy!

