

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: THURSDAY 22 APRIL 2010

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Stargazers night out this weekend

Members of the public will have a chance to stargaze this weekend at the Mount Canopus Optical Observatory Open Night.

Attendees will be able to examine planets and stars through telescopes with guidance from members of the Astronomical Society of Tasmania Inc.

The Open Night will also include tours of the one metre telescope and facilities and a talk from leading astronomer, Dr John Greenhill, Honorary Fellow in the UTAS School of Maths and Physics.

Dr Greenhill said he is pleased the Observatory will be able to open up the world of astronomy to the public.

“The planets and stars are things that inspire and intrigue many of us- the Observatory is a wonderful place for people to explore these interests,” Dr Greenhill said.

“The experience of seeing a celestial body through a telescope is certainly an amazing one.”

Dr Greenhill’s talk will cover the highlights of recent microlensing research- microlensing is a technique used to discover cool, rocky terrestrial-type planets similar to Earth.

“We have discovered of at least ten previously unknown ‘exo-planets’ - planets about stars other than the sun.”

Dr Greenhill’s talk will also describe the new observatory which is currently under construction at Bisdee Tier to house a donated \$2 million telescope.

The new observatory buildings are scheduled for completion late this year. The telescope will be delivered about the same time and it is expected that astronomical observations will commence in 2012.

There will also be astronomy posters and other items for sale at Open Night and refreshments will be available.

What: Mount Canopus Optical Observatory Open Night

When: 6.30pm-9.30pm Saturday 24 April 2010

Where: Canopus Road, Cambridge, Hobart

Who: All are welcome. Entry is \$2 per person or \$5 for a family group

Information Released by:

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