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## **ABC's *Stargazing Live* eclipses Guinness World Records title with an astronomical number of participants**

The ABC in partnership with the Australian National University (ANU) and Australians across the nation have smashed the Guinness World Record for the most people stargazing at the night sky across multiple locations, connecting communities in every corner of the country in the successful record bid.

The Guinness World Records title for the *Most people stargazing across multiple venues* at the same time was won during the broadcast of ABC's *Stargazing Live* on Wednesday 23 May,

Due to the overwhelming number of participants involved, the exact number of people that helped to win this record is still being counted, however the ABC can confirm that the history-making achievement easily eclipsed the previous record set by the ANU in 2015 of 7960 people observing across 37 locations, with over 40,000 people across Australia simultaneously observing the moon through a telescope for 10 minutes last night.

*Stargazing Live* host Professor Brian Cox said, "It's great to break the world record for the number of people stargazing simultaneously, but I think this is only half the story. The real value is that many thousands of Australians have been introduced to the wonders of the night sky, and many of those will be children. They will develop a lifelong interest in astronomy and science, and the impact of that will be felt in decades to come. Perhaps the first Australian to walk on Mars will have been inspired by this spectacular night."

ABC Director of Entertainment & Specialist David Anderson said, "*Stargazing Live* made science accessible and entertaining for Australians of all ages, across multiple platforms and services.

"*Stargazing Live* exemplifies the ABC's unrivalled commitment to high-quality and distinctive Australian content that always aspires to inform, to educate and to entertain, and no one but the ABC delivers such indispensable content and services to the Australian community," he said.

"Through our world record attempt, we brought communities together in different locations across the country and inspired them to look to the moon and the stars beyond."

The Guinness World Records title for *Most people stargazing across multiple locations* was claimed by participants at more than 285 "Star Parties" hosted by community groups and organisations in every state and territory, from remote outback locations to metropolitan centres, including:

- Large public events in Brisbane, Sydney and Canberra
- 14 universities across more than 20 campuses

- More than 100 primary and high schools
- Eight observatories
- 43 Girl Guide units and 35 Scout groups
- A special event at Parliament House in Canberra
- Remote locations including Birdsville, Broome, Port Hedland, Karratha, Kalgoorlie, Uluru, Alice Springs, Charleville, and Broken Hill

The ABC rallied over 1000 employees and community volunteers at Star Parties across the country, to assist participants in the world record bid. All registered participants on Wednesday night will receive a certificate from Guinness World Records to recognise their participation.

Off the back of the ground-breaking discovery of a new solar system by *Stargazing Live* viewers in 2017, the *Stargazing Live* citizen science challenge returned for the second series. Viewers were challenged with the task of attempting to identify new supernovae, potentially allowing us to refine the known age of the Universe. Audiences have successfully discovered at least one new supernova (an exploding star), after identifying a flash of light emitted from a galaxy, 1.1 billion light years away.

In 2018, *Stargazing Live* was broadcast across three nights from May 22 to 24 and, for the first time was live around the country on the ABC and ABC ME, as well as being streamed live on ABC iview and the ABC TV YouTube channel and Facebook page. It united Australians from Kununurra to Kiama, Huonville to Uluru, together exploring our place in the universe. The cross-platform initiative demonstrated the ABC's unrivalled capacity to inform, educate, entertain, and engage all Australians. Highlights of the ABC coverage included:

- The launch of the ABC's first Augmented Reality (AR) app, titled *Space Discovery*, which brings the wonders of space to users, including an exploration of Jupiter and the International Space Station, and a space junk clean-up game.
- *Stargazing Live* co-host Julia Zemiro's "road trip" tour of NASA facilities across the United States.
- Celebrated performer Tim Minchin performing Monty Python's *Galaxy Song* live at Siding Springs Observatory with Professor Brian Cox, as well as The Church's *Under the Milky Way*
- *Back to Earth*, a 30-minute chat show on ABC COMEDY after each night's *Stargazing Live*, taking viewers deeper into the universe with Professor Brian Cox and other scientists.
- *A Stargazers Guide to the Cosmos* on ABC and iview, hosted by Greg Quickie (aka Space Gandalf), discovering the wonders of the southern night sky.
- *Great Southern Sky*, Professor Fred Watson's special guided audio tour of the night sky that encourages everyone to enjoy the wonders of the universe.
- *Compass* special "Can a Scientist Believe?", exploring the complicated relationship between science and religion and other stargazing themed episodes and features on *Gardening Australia*, *Julia Zemiro's Home Delivery* (featuring Professor Brian Cox), *rage* and ABC Children's *Giggle & Hoot*, plus an ABC Classic FM playlist of music to watch the stars by.

For more information about Stargazing Live visit [www.abc.net.au/stargazing](http://www.abc.net.au/stargazing)

**ENDS**

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