



International Year of Astronomy 2009

Australian National Node

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IYA 2009 is an initiative of the International Astronomical Union and UNESCO.

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For immediate use

UN makes 2009 International Year of Astronomy

The United Nations (UN) 62nd General Assembly today proclaimed 2009 as the International Year of Astronomy (IYA).

IYA2009 will be a year-long, community-based celebration of the science, history and cultural impact of astronomy for people throughout the world, and will draw attention to the night sky as the heritage of all humanity.

“2009 will be the 400th anniversary of the Italian scientist Galileo Galilei turning a telescope to the sky,” said Professor Matthew Colless, Chair of Australia’s National Committee for Astronomy.

“That act started modern astronomy. It led to the extraordinary knowledge we now have of our own solar system, planets around other stars, galaxies beyond the Milky Way, and the history and fate of the Universe.”

Ninety-nine countries have signed up to take part in IYA2009. In Australia, planning for the Year is being carried out under the auspices of the National Committee for Astronomy, which is a committee of the Australian Academy of Science.

Events will include school activities, public “star parties”, exhibitions, tours and live shows. “Astronomy is one of the most accessible ways to engage with the natural world, and it’s a great gateway into science for young people,” said Professor Colless.

IYA2009 is an initiative of the International Astronomical Union, which represents the world’s professional astronomers, and UNESCO.

More information

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IAU statement, including text of UN Resolution: <http://www.iau.org/iau0702.486.0.html>

International IYA website: www.astronomy2009.org

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