



**Wellington Astronomical Society
2018-06 eNewsletter**

**Wellington Astronomical Society Inc.
email Newsletter for June 2018**

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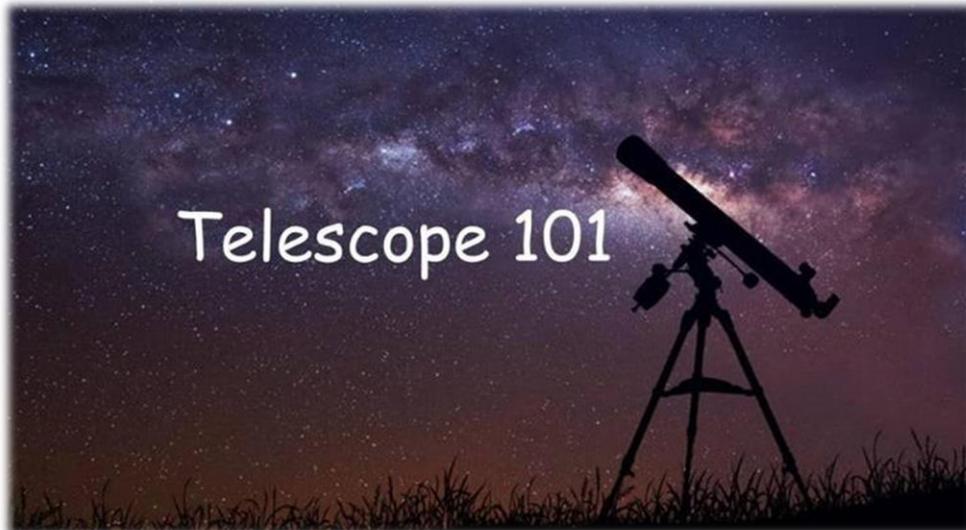
1. JUNE 2018 SOCIETY MEETING

The next WAS meeting will be held on Wednesday 6th of June at 7:30 pm at Space Place, Carter Observatory, 40 Salamanca Rd, Kelburn.

This month's meeting will contain the following:

1. Night sky in June
2. Astronomy News
3. Main talk at 8:00pm

Telescope 101 - Antony Gomez



Want a telescope but don't know what to get or have no idea how to use it? This introductory session will give you the tools and knowledge to get started! We will be looking at different telescopes (reflective and refractive), types of lenses, how telescopes differ and what objects in the sky are best to look at. There will be telescopes on show if you want have a look at the different types. You are welcome to bring your own telescope along if you are having difficulty in using it.

Antony is the current President of the Wellington Astronomical Society. As a child he looked up at the stars but it wasn't till 2000 that he had his first look through a telescope. Now he is passionate about promoting Astronomy through public outreach and education, showing others the wonders of the night sky. He has a keen interest in the physical sciences, especially in quantum physics and cosmology, which looks at the birth of the Universe and its ultimate fate. As a past scientist working in climate change, he has spent a short time in Antarctica, visited the Keck and other big telescopes on the top of Mauna Kea, Hawaii.

2. EVENTS

WAS Astrophotography group / Dark Sky Observing - Saturday 16th June, 7:00 pm, Brooklyn Hill Turbine.

We have access to this site for both astrophotography and dark sky observing. Please be at the gates by 7:00pm. The gates will be opened for cars to drive in and closed again at 7:15pm. There won't be anyone there to let you in if you are late. Any updates will be posted on the WAS Astrophotography Group Facebook page closer to the time. For further details or cancellations contact Chris 021 890 222, Paul 021 251 1559 or Antony 021 253 4979.

Astronomy Night: Pūrakau - The truth behind our Myths & Legends, Tātai Arorangi - Friday 22nd June, 6:00 pm, Lower Hutt War Memorial Library.

Toa Waaka will discuss the personal relationship to our universe and how Māori relate to the creation story informed by precolonial observation and perceptions.

WAS Observing Evening - Saturday 23rd June, 7:00 pm, Tawa College. See many wonderful objects, star clusters, galaxies, dying stars and nebulae. We will be focusing on the area around the Southern Cross and Milky Way which lies high across the night sky. The planets Jupiter, Saturn and Mars are also visible.

Come and learn how to star-hop through the night sky to find many of the various astronomical objects using the Society's Dobsonian telescopes. Chris is often there on Friday evenings too so feel free to come along though it would be best to give him a ring on 021 890 222 to check on conditions.

Matariki Dawn Viewing – Saturday 30th June, 5:00 – 7:00 am, Te Tangi Te Keo – Mount Victoria Summit
Enjoy a special opportunity to view the rise of Matariki from Tangi te Keo / Mount Victoria summit. The Māori New year was traditionally signalled with the sighting of Matariki in the early morning eastern horizon. WAS will have telescopes up on the viewing platform for this special early morning viewing of Matariki.

3. ASTRONOMY NEWS

Space & Science Festival



It was successful evening at the Space & Science Festival with over a thousand people there. It was great to have 10 WAS members helping out which meant there was time to talk to people and have breaks. We had queues behind each of the 4 telescopes with a fifth telescope live-streaming to a screen. People were amazed to see the craters on the Moon, Jupiter & its moons, and Saturn & its rings through the telescopes. The live-streaming and Stellarium were a hit with the kids. There were lots of other events taking place which included presentations from Dr Yvonne Cagle (NASA), Dr Jen Blank (NASA), Emily Melhuish (RocketLab) and Dr Catherine

Whitby (MacDiarmid Institute). Unfortunately, it was pretty full on most of the time that we didn't have to partake in the other events or presentations.



There were probably at twice more people at the Day event where WAS had 3 H-alpha solar telescopes and another white filter telescope pointed to the Sun with 2 ordinary telescopes pointed at a water reservoir and a communication tower up on the hills. There were patches of cloud coming through but most people got to see the Sun through one of the solar scopes. Again people were amazed at being able to look at the Sun through a telescope. The NASA and RocketLab people were there again giving presentations while we had exploding nitrogen volcanoes nearby us and rocket launches down on the main field.

Thanks to the Space & Science Festival organisers for doing such a fantastic job at promoting science to the children and public. We are grateful to the Wellington Museum Trust and Tawa College for letting us borrow their solar scopes. A big thanks to the WAS members who came along and helped out with our events! We look forward to being involved again next year.

RASNZ Conference 2018

The Conference took place on the 4-6th May at the Arts Centre, Christchurch which was the site of the original University of Canterbury, quite a spectacular venue close to the city centre. It was also where Ernest Rutherford studied and we were able to visit Rutherford's Den. There was an excellent range of [presentations](#) which included Dr Katie Mack from North Carolina State University and the Fellows' Lecture for 2018 was delivered by Steve Butler. A number of SWAPA students also gave short presentations on their interests in astronomy. It was a fantastic way to spend a weekend, to hear about so many varied areas of interest and research taking place in astronomy. The next RASNZ Conference will be in New Plymouth in May 2019.



The Great Hall at the Arts Centre where the Conference took place.

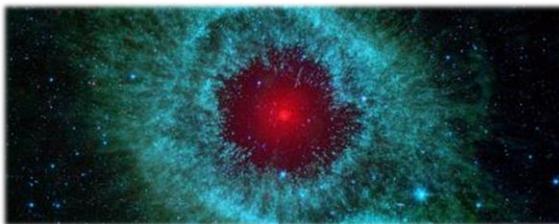


The Wellington contingent which included WAS members and students from the NZ Students' Space Association based at Victoria University.



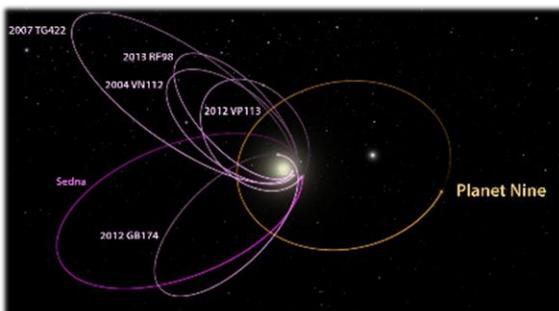
The participants at the 2018 Conference.

[Top Scientists Have Answered The Weirdest Space Questions, And It's Epic - Ever heard of white holes?](#)



The Universe is big, and strange, and there's a lot of stuff out there that works in mysterious ways. Astronomers spend their time trying to understand these workings so they can figure out the Big Questions: Who we are. If we're alone. Where the Universe came from. Where it's going. One of our favourite resources on the web for finding answers to all your burning questions about space is run by Cornell University. It's called [Ask an Astronomer](#), and it has a database of questions sent in by curious readers, all answered by volunteer Cornell scientists.

[Weird Space Rock Provides More Evidence for Mysterious 'Planet Nine'](#)



The solar system just got a bit stranger. As astronomers continue their ongoing quest to find the elusive Planet Nine, a team found a space rock that lends credence to the idea that a huge super-Earth planet really exists in the outer reaches of our solar system. The newfound asteroid, called 2015 BP519, adds to a growing body of evidence about little worlds in the solar system being perturbed by something big. Astronomers detailed its

discovery and description in a new paper, adding that the bizarre angle of its orbit gives more weight to the idea that a big planet is out there — somewhere — tugging on the asteroid's path around the sun.

[SOFIA to Study Southern Skies in New Zealand](#)



NASA's Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy, SOFIA, is heading to Christchurch, New Zealand, to study celestial objects best viewed from the Southern Hemisphere. Observations will include targets that are too low to observe or not visible at all from the Northern Hemisphere — including our neighboring galaxy the Large Magellanic Cloud, the center of our own Milky Way galaxy, and Saturn's moon Titan.

4. NIGHT SKY FOR JUNE 2018

The [Night Sky for June 2018](#) courtesy of the University of Canterbury.

5. CONTACTS

The following members were elected to Council at the Nov 2017 AGM

President: Antony Gomez (president@was.org.nz) - 021 253 4979

Vice President: Duncan Hall (vice-president@was.org.nz)

Secretary: Becky Bateman (secretary@was.org.nz)

Treasurer: John Homes

Membership Secretary: Janine Bidmead (membership@was.org.nz)

Website: Peter Woods (webmaster@was.org.nz)

Telescope custodian: Chris Monigatti

Council: Andrew Fuller, Chris Monigatti, Frank Andrews, Janine Bidmead, Murray Forbes, Peter Woods, Roland Idaczyk

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PO Box 3181,
Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Website: www.was.org.nz

Facebook page: [Wellington Astronomical Society](#).

Facebook group: [WAS – Wellington Astronomical Society](#) (for members)
Facebook Astrophotography group: [WAS Astrophotography Group](#) (for members)
