

MEDIA RELEASE

Shire of Esperance

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Get on board this July

With the 40th year of Skylab's descent back to Earth and its impact on the Esperance region nearing, the Shire of Esperance and the Esperance Museum would like to announce the following program of activities for this July.

Australian artist David Carson will be bringing an updated version of his *Out of Orbit* art exhibition to Esperance. The exhibition consists of paintings, prints, newspaper articles and photographs, all about Skylab. There will be several screens with assorted NASA archival videos and a Space Soundscape made especially for the exhibition by young electronic composer Jackson Mouldycliff. In addition, a live feed from the International Space Station, with views of Earth shown in real time. There will be new technology involved with the 360° immersive video screening inside a 6x6-metre-wide inflatable dome which will be set up inside the Museum. The *Skylab Redux– Out of Orbit* exhibition opening will be launched at 3pm on Sunday 7 July, with the exhibition running from 7-21 July at the Cannery Arts Centre. The immersive Dome screenings will take place at the Museum from 8-21 July.

Meg McKinlay, author of the newly released book *Catch a Falling Star* will be coming to Esperance on Wednesday 10 July. Meg McKinlay is a Western Australian author of numerous works ranging from picture books and middle grade fiction to poetry for adults. There will be a "Meet the Author" session at the Esperance Museum from 11.30 – 1pm and a writing workshop from 5pm-7.30pm at the Esperance Library, discussing writing tips and encouraging participants to undertake writing exercises. Bookings are required for these sessions through the Esperance Public Library on 9083 1500.

The Australian Premiere of the documentary film *Searching for Skylab* will take place 6pm on Thursday 11 July, at the Esperance Civic Centre. *Searching for Skylab* is a treasure trove of as-yet-unseen archival footage of Skylab with commentary from its astronauts, workers, major players, and experts. This FREE event will include a Q&A with the Director, Dwight Steven-Boniecki, and screening of the 'Interview with an Astronaut Competition'. Tickets are limited and there is one screening only, so make sure you book your spot.

Come and see the wonderful, out of this world, Skylab inspired fashion creations, while reminiscing the 1979 Skylab party with the Skylab Styles Fashion Parade. What better way to remember Skylab than with a party! Come along dressed in your best 70's outfit and watch the fashion parade. Best dressed and lucky door prizes are up for grabs. Tickets are limited, so please book your spot. Doors open at 6pm on Friday 12 July with the fashion parade commencing at 6:30pm.

Shire President Victoria Brown said, "There will be so much on in July with the Skylab celebrations as well as NAIDOC Week and our French weekend activities. Be sure to look at the program and be part of the action!"

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“We’re very excited to be celebrating this Skylab anniversary, with David Carson’s exhibition, Dwight Steven-Boniecki’s documentary and Meg McKinlay’s book. We are very fortunate to have these talented guests bringing their work to Esperance.”

Head to the Museum page on the Shire website for more information and to book tickets.

Ends

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CC: Skylab 40th Anniversary Community Program of Events

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Skylab?

Skylab was America’s first space station and the world’s first big space station. It was orbiting unmanned for just over five years before it returned to Earth breaking up and scattering debris across the Esperance region in 1979. NASA tried to control Skylab falling back to Earth but it was a bit of a bumpy ride.

At 12.30am on 12 July 1979 Skylab burned through the Earth’s atmosphere. Skylab started to breakup and burned up as it crossed the Indian Ocean headed towards Esperance. It was a bit like fireworks in the sky as it fell to Earth and lasted for about two minutes. Skylab broke up into many pieces. From here in Esperance all the way to Balladonia, bits of Skylab were found throughout farms and in towns.

What did Skylab Do?

It was a science and engineering laboratory in space. A lot of science experiments were carried out up in space and the results of the experiments came back down to earth for scientists to study. Along with observing the Sun and Earth, Skylab also proved that humans could live and work in space.

How many pieces of Skylab do you have at the Esperance Museum?

We have about 30 fragments of Skylab that have been donated to the Esperance Museum.

How big are they?

We have a range of items in size. Fragments can be as small as a golf ball to as big as a table.

How were these pieces recovered?

A lot of the items were recovered by local community members on their own property. The community donated these items to the Museum and they are on display.

Do you get many visitors coming to see the Skylab pieces?

The Esperance Museum is proud to have items of Skylab as one of our displays. We always receive comments from visitors saying that they have come to see what we have in the Museum as well as more specific comments that they are here to see Skylab. Skylab is quite noteworthy and often visited by professionals in the field.