



# Media Release

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## Filming Begins on WA's First Space Documentary

Western Australia's first space science documentary has been filming across the Wheatbelt, Mid West and Murchison. Funded by the University of Western Australia, Curtin University and the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR), the documentary will be a unique insight into how the State is fast becoming the astronomy and stargazing capital of the world.

The new documentary, *Star Tracks*, will bring the most modern of space science endeavours together with WA's most ancient knowledge of the dark night sky. It focuses on the world's mega space science project, the Square Kilometre Array, whilst travelling the State to feature the characters and places where high-tech science melds with ancient Aboriginal Astronomy.

The creator behind *Star Tracks*, Donna Vanzetti, Director of Beam Me Up Media envisages a regular television series that will put WA on the world stage when it comes to WA's space science assets and world-class Astrotourism sites.

"*Star Tracks* is an opportunity to showcase Western Australia as the world's 'Astro Hotspot'. With our pristine dark night skies, the Square Kilometre Array, our ancient Aboriginal astronomy heritage, and many other cutting-edge space science projects, WA has many wonderful stories to tell," she said.

The SKA project, half of which will be built in WA's Murchison region, has already attracted over 200 radio astronomy professionals to the State and will be the largest and most capable radio telescope ever constructed. During its 50+ year lifetime, it will expand our knowledge of the universe ten-fold and drive technological advancement across the globe.

ICRAR's Executive Director Professor Peter Quinn—who leads the West Australian science team said WA is an ideal location to build a project such as the SKA radio telescope.

"The radio quiet environment is critical to the science and the State is at the cutting edge of this technology," he said.

"It's a terrific opportunity to showcase the science and our world-leading researchers with a documentary such as *Star Tracks*. It will appeal to the person on the street and will no doubt inspire the next generation to study and work in WA's fast-growing Space Industry."

Filming at both the University of WA and Curtin University has introduced WA's top space science heroes and their mind-bending work and more recently, the production team travelled to the remote Murchison Radio Observatory, the site for the Square Kilometre Array. The site is usually off-limits to the general public due to the radio quietness required for radio astronomy, however the team were given special permission and captured the enormity of the project, the beauty of the desert landscape and the challenges the science team face working in this harsh environment.

Other filming locations include the Pinnacles Desert, Cervantes and Moora featuring iconic WA landscapes, Aboriginal astronomy and the stunning Milky Way easily seen from these locations.

Local WA Astrophotographer, Michael Goh, has been travelling far and wide to capture WA's beautiful night sky through amazing time-lapse sequences as part of the documentary.

"WA's night sky is one of the darkest on the planet and it's one of the best locations to see the Milky Way. We have low populations in regional WA and low levels of light pollution. WA's regions are a magnet for astrophotography," said Mr Goh.

More filming is planned with the program set to be completed in coming months.

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**Contact information:**

Ms Donna Vanzetti | Director, Beam Me Up Media | 0429 207 855 |

<https://www.facebook.com/StarTracksTV> [donnav@beammeupmedia.com.au](mailto:donnav@beammeupmedia.com.au)

Prof Peter Quinn | Executive Director, ICRAR | 08 6488 4553 | [peter.quinn@icrar.org](mailto:peter.quinn@icrar.org)

Mr Michael Goh | Michael Goh Photography | 0433 997 818 | [michael@astrophotobear.com](mailto:michael@astrophotobear.com)