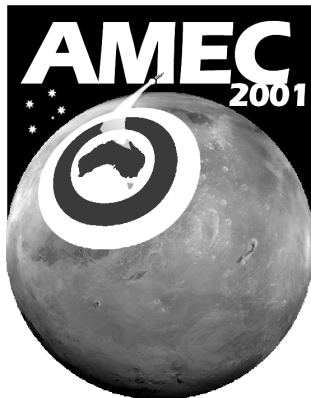


MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Melbourne to host 1st Australian Mars Exploration Conference (AMEC)



Melbourne, Australia - Australia's future participation in the exploration of Mars is on the agenda of the forthcoming inaugural Australian Mars Exploration Conference (AMEC), organised by the Mars Society Australia.

To be held at Melbourne University on the 12th & 13th of May as part of National Science Week, AMEC will include presentations on a broad range of topics including Martian geology, robotic exploration, the search for life and the lessons of Antarctica for Mars exploration.

The conference follows the extremely successful tour last year of Dr Robert Zubrin, founder and President of the Mars Society and author of "The Case for Mars".

The theme for the conference is "From the Red Centre to the Red Planet," reflecting its focus on how Australians can become involved in Mars exploration and science. A primary goal of AMEC will be to generate excitement in the Australian community about our possible future national participation in Mars exploration.

Day 1 of the conference will include presentations from:

- Professor Malcolm Walter (astrobiologist), Macquarie University.
- Dr Nick Hoffman (geophysicist), La Trobe University.
- Mr Gerard De Valence (economist), University of Technology, Sydney.
- Dr Philippa Uwins (geologist), University of Queensland.
- Professor Ray Jarvis (roboticist), Monash University.
- Dr John Webb (geologist), La Trobe University.
- Mr Jason Hoogland (engineer), University of Queensland.

Day 2 of the conference will consist of workshops on the Mars Society Australia's technical projects. These include Jarntimarra, a project to catalogue Mars-analogue sites in outback Australia suitable for testing hardware, and HOP - a one of three Mars Society international projects to design and build a Mars analogue rover. Delegates will be encouraged to participate in the workshops and become involved in the projects.

A highlight of day 2 will be a live interactive phone hook up with Dr Robert Zubrin.

Registration forms and further information are available at www.marssociety.org.au

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