

MEDIA RELEASE

April 2008

Launching into Daily Life in Space at the Powerhouse Museum

'How do you go to the toilet in space?' That is the question children most love to ask astronauts - even if adults are too embarrassed! Soon Australians will find the answer to this and many more questions about how astronauts live and work in space, in the Powerhouse Museum's refurbished Space Gallery which opens on 12 April co-inciding with Yuri's Night, the annual international celebration of spaceflight.

The new Space Gallery will retain some old favourites such as rocket motors, shuttle tiles and the ever-popular Moon rock. These will be joined by a collection of new artefacts from the Museum's collection, many not previously seen including a Soviet flightsuit, spacesuit and spacecraft emergency equipment, as well as material recovered from the Woomera Rocket Range in South Australia.

The updated exhibition provides fresh insight into how astronauts live and work in space and their daily lives aboard the International Space Station (ISS). For the first time in Australia, visitors will be able to experience the illusion of weightlessness in the amazing Zero Gravity Space Lab, which is a focal point of the new display.

Visitors are guided through a 'visit' to the International Space Station by renowned Australian astronaut Dr Andy Thomas and his wife, Dr Shannon Walker, who is also an astronaut. The journey begins in the existing Space Shuttle, where Andy and Shannon host a new audiovisual presentation, filmed at NASA's Johnson Space Centre, which talks about what it is like to live and work on the International Space Station and introduces the International Space Station project.

Moving into the Space Station Habitation Module, visitors can see how astronauts spend their time when they are not working. Daily activities such as sleeping, relaxing, preparing meals, eating, drinking, bathing and staying in shape are explored.

From the Habitation Module, visitors enter the new Zero Gravity Space Lab. Designed by Melbourne-based Helifilms Australia, the Lab is a unique exhibit in Australia and one of only two in the world - the prototype module is at the Principe Felipe Science Museum in Valencia, Spain.

The Zero Gravity Space Lab allows visitors to experience the illusion of microgravity which astronauts experience on a daily basis in Space. Inside the lab a maximum of 10-12 visitors at any one time are taken on an immersive six-minute 'weightless' experience created by some ingenious trickery of the eye and sense of balance. Narrators Andy Thomas and Shannon Walker also highlight the research work carried out on the Space Station and why it is important to people back on Earth.

"Space is a unique and sometime hazardous environment, where many of the everyday activities we take for granted have to be undertaken differently because of its challenging conditions. Space exploration is a great adventure and we hope that visitors will experience the excitement of space through this refreshed exhibition," said Kerrie Dougherty, Curator of Space Technology, Powerhouse Museum.

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When the Powerhouse first opened *Space: beyond this world* in 1988 it was ground-breaking - the first exhibition anywhere in the world to bring together examples of space technology by the three Cold War superpowers – the US, USSR and People’s Republic of China. The world has changed since 1988 and space activities have evolved.

The Museum’s conservation requirements mean that some previously displayed artefacts have been removed from display, but new objects from its collection will make their debut. New objects include a Skylark sounding rocket from Woomera in South Australia; samples of space food, such as an uneaten dinner from the Apollo 8 mission to the moon in 1968; and a Soviet space toilet!

The refurbished Space Gallery opens at the Powerhouse Museum in time for April school holidays - inviting visitors on a unique holiday break in Space!

On View: Space Gallery
Date: From 12 April 2008
Address: Powerhouse Museum, 500 Harris Street, Ultimo, Sydney
Telephone: (02) 9217 0111 or infoline (02) 9217 0444
Website: www.powerhousemuseum.com
Hours: 10.00am to 5.00pm (closed Christmas Day)
Admission: General admission \$10 adult, \$5 child, \$6 concession and \$25 family.
Powerhouse Museum members and children under 4 years admitted free.

Media information, images or interviews:

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