AARNet to stream total solar eclipse into the â€œGeoDomeâ€• for Australians to view live

Questacon visitors to view one of the most significant solar events this century on July 22

Photography of this event will be available after 12:30pm from: http://www.flickr.com/photos/40737981@N08/sets/72157621644995195/Please click on the AARNet set to gain access to photos.

Canberra, AUSTRALIA 22 July 2009 AARNet, Australias Academic and Research Network, will stream live, high-definition video footage of the longest total solar eclipse this century into the GeoDome an inflatable, immersive 3D theatre at Questacon The National Science and Technology Centre, in Canberra today.

Predicted to be one of the most significant solar events this century, and expected to run for more than six and a half minutes in some areas, the July 22 solar eclipse can be seen from Asia only. It will start in India and cross through Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, China and Japan, ending in the Pacific Ocean.

Chris Hancock, CEO of AARNet, said, Streaming high-definition video footage of the solar eclipse into the GeoDome at Questacon will give Australians the opportunity to experience this amazing solar event, in real time. The GeoDome technology provides an immersive, interactive, 3D experience for the audience, which will make it feel like they are experiencing the eclipse in person.

Professor Graham Durant, Director of Questacon, said, "Questacon is delighted to host the Australian component of this event as another example of our partnership work with Japanese organisations. The use of high-speed connectivity to show live events such as the solar eclipse is an important step forward for science communication."

AARNet demonstrated the GeoDome for the first time in Australia at the recent QUESTnet conference on the Gold Coast. Designed to be set up in less than 30 minutes, the GeoDome provides a fully enclosed, immersive theatre environment for 20-30 people at a time. It enables audiences to navigate through, interact with and collaborate on high-definition images, video and presentations.

The GeoDome includes 1080-pixel high-definition video feeds through a fish-eye lens in real time which will showcase imagery of the eclipse.

Chris Hancock said, Our aim is to work with the Australian education community to incorporate the GeoDome into the school curriculum where possible, to engage students and make the curriculum come alive. The GeoDome is an excellent example of a collaborative, interactive tool that can add real value to the learning process for students from kindergarten to year 12. We are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead with this technology and the benefits it will bring to school children.

Guido Aben, Director of eResearch for AARNet, said, "The bandwidth required for this video stream is in the order of several hundreds of Megabits per second, which would be next to impossible to deliver reliably over the regular Internet. It is precisely because of such scenarios that AARNet is a participant and sponsor to the TEIN3 network a partnership that allows us to do anything from broadcasting this eclipse from Asia into Australia, to offering remote teaching by Australian surgeons to Asian students and more.

TEIN3 provides a high-capacity research and education data-communications network across Asia-Pacific, which currently connects eleven countries in the region. TEIN3 plans to further expand its geographic coverage and offers direct connectivity to Europes GANT2 network. For more information: www.tein3.net.

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About AARNetAARNet Pty Ltd (APL) is the company that operates Australia's Academic and Research Network (AARNet). It is a not-for-profit company limited by shares. The shareholders are 37 Australian universities and the CSIRO. AARNet provides high-capacity leading edge Internet services for the tertiary education and research sector communities and their research partners. AARNet serves more than one million end users who access the network through local area networks at member institutions. For further information, please visit: www.aarnet.edu.au.

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