Visibility for the general public of bright objects during 2018

Please double check visibility information sources before organising a large event and check that the objects chosen are reasonably high, above trees and buildings

From the city and suburbs the most successful objects in the sky for the general public tend to be the Moon, Saturn, Jupiter and occasionally Mars, Venus (and Mercury).

* Supporting the above, a few splendid bright naked eye highlight regions in the sky like the Crux and Eta Carina regions, Scorpius and Sagittarius, Orion and the Pleiades and Hyades.
* One of, or both globular clusters Omega Centauri and 47 Tucanae are readily visible all year.
* Of course there are always many stars, clusters, nebulae etc. in the sky but most are faint and can be disappointing to inexperienced observers using small telescopes from light polluted areas.
* The Milky Way, Magellanic Clouds and the Andromeda galaxy are best seen with the naked eye or binoculars. Fabulous under dark skies but no longer visible from large cities with streetlights.....

Below are the estimated **best periods for public, school, family viewing in the early evening** around 7 p.m. in mid winter and much later, around 9 p.m. in mid summer:

The Moon: best evening views are a few days each (lunar) month around First Quarter
For 2018: from about 2 days before to 3 days after **First Quarter - see next.**

around Thu 25 January (no bright planets in evening, holiday time in Australia!)
Lunar Eclipse Total 31 Jan 11:51 pm - 1 Feb 01:08 am & Partial from 10:48 pm and up to 2:12 am
around Fri 23 February
around Sun 25 March (Venus just after Sunset?) (1 April - Daylight Saving ends)
around Mon 23 April (Jupiter very low)
around Tue 22 May (Venus early, Jupiter)
around Wed 20 June (Venus early, Jupiter, Saturn)
around Fri 20 July (Mars Opposition 27, Jupiter, Saturn, Venus, Mercury - see dates below)
Lunar Eclipse morning of 28 July Total 6:30 am until moonset, Partial from 5:24 am onward.
around Sat 18 August (Mars, Saturn, Jupiter, Venus)
around Mon 17 September (Mars, Saturn, Jupiter, Venus) (7 October - Daylight Saving starts)
around Wed 17 October (Mars smaller, Saturn, Jupiter low, Venus and Mercury very low)
around Fri 16 November (Mars small, Saturn low, Mercury low)
around Sat 15 December (if you really need planets, try Neptune and Uranus)
NOTE: two hours later in the night the planets can be seen about a month earlier.
NOTE: in other months the planets can often be seen well later in the night and morning.
In mid-winter more can be seen by starting earlier around 6 p.m. Please ask for advice.

Saturn: best from June to October
Jupiter: best from late April to early October
Mars: June to September; a very good opposition year, especially during July and August
Venus: evening sky best May until mid September; morning sky November - December
Mercury: low in west very briefly around March, July (best) and late October - November

Orion, Hyades, Pleiades region: best from late December to April
Crux, Carina region: nice and high in the winter; much lower in the summer
Scorpius, Sagittarius region: best from June to October

To repeat, **the listings shown here are only for best early evening viewing** (schools, parks, etc.)
By viewing earlier or continuing later in the evening the visibility periods are extended considerably and observing later in the night and morning will benefit from more stable atmospheric conditions.
NOTE: If the Moon is not a priority, to view star clusters, galaxies and nebulae much better, choose a different time of the night or month when there is no bright Moon in the sky
(Notes put together by Alfred Kruijshoop. Please advise if you see any errors or omissions.)