

Visibility for the general public of bright objects during 2019

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 (such as the Melbourne metropolitan area) 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 or medium size 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.....

Estimated best periods for public, school, family viewing from southern Australia in the early evening, around 7 p.m. in mid winter and much later, around 9 p.m. in mid summer:

The Moon for 2019: best public evening views are a few days each month around First Quarter from about 2 days before to 3 days after **First Quarter - see next.**

around Mon 14 January (Mars very small, low in the west)

around Wed 13 February (Mars very small, low in the west)

around Thu 14 March (Mars difficult) (7 April - Daylight Saving ends)

around Sat 13 April

around Sun 12 May (Jupiter very low in the east later in the evening)

around Mon 17 June (Jupiter all night, Saturn rising low in the east)

around Tue 9 July (Jupiter, Saturn)

Partial Lunar Eclipse morning of 17 July; penumbral part probably just visible from 4:44 am, then more distinct umbral phase from 6 am until the Moon (about 60 % eclipsed) sets at Sunrise 7:30.

around Thu 8 August (Saturn, Jupiter)

around Fri 6 September (Saturn, Jupiter) (6 October - Daylight Saving starts)

around Sun 6 October (Saturn, Jupiter low, Venus and Mercury low in the west)

around Mon 4 November (Saturn, Jupiter and Venus in twilight the west)

around Wed 4 December (Saturn and Venus low in the west)

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 July to October

Jupiter: best from June to September

Mars: still just possible January to March but small and fading

Venus: evening best late September to the end of the year

Mercury: low in twilight in the west for short periods around June and October

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.)