



## PRESS RELEASE

### **The International Year of Astronomy 2009: The largest science education and public outreach event in history completes a full cycle at the Science Centre**

*Over 100,000 participated in the various astronomical activities and events in Singapore*

**Singapore, 15 Jan 2010** – The International Year of Astronomy (IYA) 2009 has come to a full circle after an eventful year of astronomical activities and events globally. This is the largest science education and public outreach event in history. It brought together a staggering number of 119,722 participants in Singapore.

To celebrate the IYA2009, the Science Centre Singapore and The Astronomical Society of Singapore (TASOS) organised a series of fascinating astronomical events for professional and amateur astronomers alike. The fun-filled and family-themed events helped stimulate greater interest, especially among young people, in the understanding of everyday astronomy and science.

Dr Chew Tuan Chiong, Chief Executive, Science Centre Singapore, said: “The IYA2009 has been an eventful year of astronomical events. Indeed, it has provided the means for creating structures for collaboration, lasting self-sustaining activities and innovative concepts for the communication of astronomy. In the beginning of 2009, we set a goal to interest 100,000 people in astronomy-related activities. We are pleased that at the close of IYA, we can report over 119,000 participants in various astronomy observations and activities across the island including those held by Science Centre and its partners, schools and independent astronomy clubs.”

The IYA2009 kick started with a star-gazing event at the Science Centre Observatory of the year’s first partial solar eclipse on January 26. Though the first day of the Lunar New Year, the Centre received an overwhelming 6,4000 visitors.

This successful event was followed by a succession of other equally engaging events including the opening of the IYA 2009 in February, where the Centre launched the new edition of the the “Sky Book for the Tropics” and also invited Professor Jocelyn Bell of Oxford University to give a talk on “What’s Going On In The Universe.”

In May The Sidewalk Astronomy Carnival saw over 6,000 people turn up for 2 days of fun astronomy activities, HISTORY™ documentaries and Do-It-Yourself solar system kit, TASOS talks, and onsite stargazing opportunities.

That same month, the Centre launched Shell Singapore Youth Science Festival (SYSF) 2009, themed “Star Science: Exploring New Frontiers. A highlight event, The Shell Astro Nite, saw over 30 schools participating simultaneously in on-campus stargazing.

On 17 November, a Festival of the Stars event was organised at the Japanese Garden to coincide with a Leonids Meteor Shower. Among many activities were international performances brought in to entertain and educate the crowd. The event drew an overwhelming 10,000 people.

The IYA 2009 closes today in Singapore with a partial solar eclipse viewing at the Science Centre Observatory. The event celebrates one of two central solar eclipses in 2010 that transverses across Africa, the Indian Ocean and south Asia. Visitors will be treated to astronomy talks, onsite stargazing as well as Do-It-Yourself experiments for families and kids.

The IYA 2009 was launched by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) and UNESCO. Comprising of 148 countries, it is a global celebration of astronomy and its contributions to society and culture, and marks the 400th anniversary Galileo Galilei’s first astronomical observation through a telescope in 1609, an event that changed the world forever.

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**About Science Centre Singapore**

The Science Centre Singapore is a non-formal educational institution dedicated to the promotion of science and technology among students and members of the public. As a leading Science Centre in the region, the Science Centre Singapore has twelve exhibition galleries with more than 1,000 exhibits, and another 18,000 sq metres of outdoor space showcasing the Waterworks, Ecogarden and the Kinetic Garden exhibits. The Centre also houses the Omni-Theatre — Singapore’s only dome-shaped, 5-storey high theatre with a capacity of 276 seats. The Science Centre received 1.049 million visitors, while Omni-Theatre and Snow City received 400,000 visitors for FY2008/2009. For more information, please visit [www.science.edu.sg](http://www.science.edu.sg).

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