

Students spend a day in space

By RHIANNON SHINE

Students from John XXIII College spent a day of their holidays exploring space through robotic telescopes at the University of WA on Tuesday.

Their day was part of the program SPIRIT, which lets WA school students access the tools used by researchers and astronomers to observe and collect astronomical data via the internet.

The program, developed by UWA's centre for learning technology, is unique in Australia and there are only a few of such programs worldwide.

SPIRIT program manager Paul Luckas said the project taught students how to log into remote telescopes anywhere in the state.

Mr Luckas said students loved it.

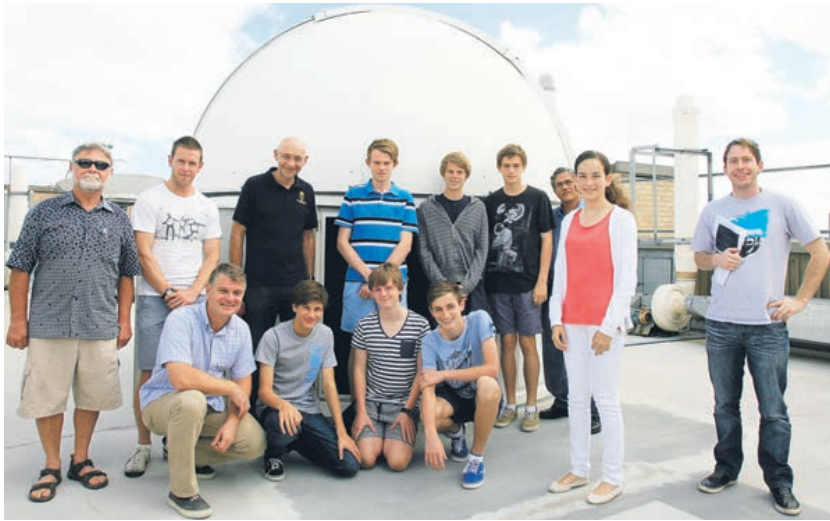
"Astronomy is a notoriously difficult subject to teach," he said.

"At 2pm on a Thursday afternoon in a double period of science, how do you convey the beauty of the night sky?"

"You almost always end up in a textbook with a picture of Galileo looking through a telescope 400 years ago instead of something contemporary."

The program is supported by the International Centre for Radio Astronomy and has been running for three years. Dozens of schools have taken part, including Christ Church, MLC, Scotch, Shenton College and John XXIII.

"We've had well over 250 students come through the system already," Mr Luckas said.



Heavens above ... John XXIII students know there's more to astronomy than textbooks and Galileo.

Photo: Billie Fairdough

Mr Luckas said SPIRIT was not exclusive to high-achieving academic students.

"It helps engage students who aren't usually interested in learning by doing something that's cool," he said.

John XXIII Year 10 student Alex King (15), who is considering a career in science, said he was very excited to take part in the SPIRIT program for the first time.

"I'm interested in physics mainly and astrophysics," he said.

Book abuse brings big bill

Peppermint Grove council had to pay \$732.52 for lost and damaged books and stock to six other councils.

The payments included \$30.80 to Subiaco for a damaged copy of Alexander McCall Smith's *The Minor Adjustment Beauty Salon*.

"The cost of the lost and damaged books is recovered from the borrower before remitting to the appropriate library," council corporate services manager John Roberts said.

Councillors queried \$1362 paid to Wilson Security for responding to library alarms.

"Fifteen alarms over two

months again? I thought we had it under control," deputy mayor Charles Hohnen said at last Tuesday's meeting.

Library and community service manager Debra Burn said it was a combination of staff and hirers accidentally setting off the alarm.

"It's an ongoing annoyance," Ms Burn said.

"Because everyone comes in through the foyer - that's where it falls down. It's a complex system.

"We've charged a couple of groups for setting it off after instructions and hand-holding."

Ms Burn said she got Wilson to refund a call-out charge after

A new restaurant is slated for a former bus repair shop in North Fremantle.

Hamish Fleming and Robert Bray want to set up a venture called Propeller in their building at 222 Queen Victoria Street.

In their liquor licence application they said it would be open from 6am to midnight, including Christmas and Anzac Day and Good Friday.

Mr Fleming also owns the Mechanics Institute small bar in Perth.

He and his wife Siobhan Blumann have also bought the Court Wine Bar, own Mrs Brown bar in North Fremantle, and three Flip Side burger bars.

The Propeller liquor licence application cost \$1102.

Wilson did not re-set the alarm properly.

There was a \$604.57 payment to Dorma for door maintenance at The Grove.

At Manners Hill Park, Murphy's Electrical Company got \$875.60 for toilet repairs and Fluid Electrical got \$187 for reticulation repairs.

"Paper towels supplied at the toilets have been replaced with air hand driers," Mr Roberts said.

"It is more cost effective and should reduce the number of blocked toilets."

He said the reticulation works should correct lawn dead spots.

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