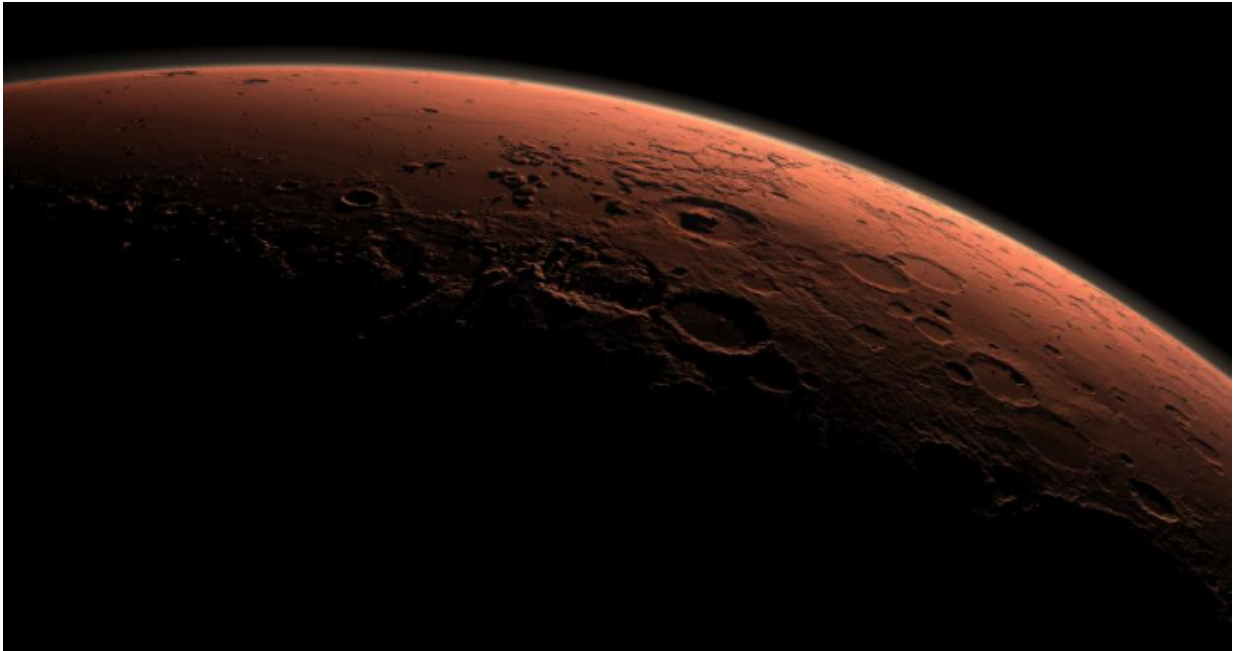


Going to Mars and never coming back

April 30 2018, by Dr Kate Raynes-Goldie



Credit: NASA

If all goes to plan, humans will be settling Mars by 2032. And there's a good chance someone on the crew will be from Australia.

[SpaceX](#)

[founder Elon Musk](#)

[has said he wants to die on Mars](#). If you were given the chance, would

you go to the [red planet](#)? What if it was a one-way trip?

The [Mars One](#) programme is offering just that. And when they began accepting applications in 2013, between 2700 and 200,000 people ([the actual number is a source of debate](#)) from around the world put up their hand to go to Mars and never come back.

Mars One

Mars One launched in the Netherlands in 2011. The goal of the organisation is to create the first permanent human settlement on Mars by 2032. Funding for the programme will come from a variety of sources, including [donations and a documentary series](#) that would document humanity's first colonisation of another planet. While exciting and ambitious, the viability of the programme and its proposed revenue model have [faced criticism](#) from a [variety of sources](#).

The candidate pool has now been whittled down to 100. [Seven of those 100 candidates are Australian](#). And one of those candidates is WA-based [Josh Richards](#).

1 of 100

Josh is a [physicist, explosives engineer, soldier, comedian and self-described troublemaker](#). Originally hailing from Victoria, Josh says that he doesn't consider himself "to be of anywhere". Instead, he told me, he sees himself "very much as human". And this feeling of being human first is what initially drew him to Mars One.

"Serving with both the Australian and British forces kinda detached me from a lot of those ideas about nationalism and sense of place," Josh told me. "It's part of the reason I signed up ... and why I would be OK going

one way ... I don't have a strong sense of home."

Indeed, Josh believes that our focus on countries rather than humanity is something that keeps us apart. More importantly, it's what keeps us from doing great things.

"The reason we haven't gone to Mars is we are still fixated on nations," Josh said. "We're still fixated on that idea that where you are born defines your worth as a human being. So, to me, Mars One focusing on being a truly international organisation that really seeks out diversity, seeks out differences and tries to identify what we have in common ... is bringing our entire species together to do something extraordinary."

Next step, Mars?

Even though Josh is one of the 100 finalists, only 12 to 24 of those candidates will actually be going on the mission. The next phase, Josh tells me, will likely take place in [Wadi Rum](#), Jordan (appropriately, where they also filmed [The Martian](#)). There, they will run through corporate team-building exercises, with the stress levels increased in order to more closely simulate a Martian mission. This will reduce the pool down to 40, who will then go on a 3-week camping trip which will bring it down to the final 12 to 24. This should all happen towards the end of this year or early 2019, Josh says.

Whatever happens, Josh's message is important and powerful for the future of humanity: "The only way we can do truly extraordinary things where we redefine who we are as a species is when we work together to do it."

If you want to hear more about his inspirational journey and message, Josh will be speaking at the [Australian Computer Society's Gala Dinner](#) on 1 June 2018 in Perth.

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Provided by Particle

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