

# ANU smashes its own stargazing world record

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Citizen scientists in every state and territory have helped The Australian National University (ANU) smash its own stargazing Guinness World Records title and search through thousands of telescope images online to find two exploding stars in space.

More than 40,000 people across hundreds of locations in Australia looked at the Moon at the same time last night to break the world record for the Most people stargazing multiple venues, five times greater than the number of people involved in the previous record.

The effort was so great that Guinness World Records officials were unable to confirm the final numbers on the ABC's final Stargazing Live episode.

ANU held the previous Guinness World Records title for the Most people stargazing multiple venues – just shy of 8,000 participants across 37 locations in Australia looked up to the night-sky at the same time on 21 August 2015.

Dr. Anais Möller from ANU said [citizen scientists](#) searched through images from ANU SkyMapper telescope to help astronomers identify two new Type Ia supernovae, which are exploding stars that scientists use to measure the Universe.

"SN2018bwq is around 1.1 billion light years away from Earth, and it is still getting brighter," said Dr. Möller from the ANU Research School of

Astronomy and Astrophysics.

"SN2018bwp is around 900 million light years away and it is already fading away."

Dr. Möller and ANU astronomer Dr. Brad Tucker lead the [citizen science project](#), which was part of ABC's Stargazing Live broadcast this week from the ANU Siding Spring Observatory.

"I'm amazed that more than 6,000 volunteers have helped us over three days to make more than 1,700,000 classifications in our search for exploding stars in the Universe," Dr. Möller said.

"A professional astronomer would need nearly two years to do the same amount of work, so it's an incredible achievement."

Dr. Tucker said the fact that tens of thousands of citizens took part in the citizen science project and the stargazing world-record effort was amazing.

"Events like the world-record attempt and asking for help with searching for new exploding stars just goes to show that science is really for everyone," said Dr. Tucker from the ANU Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics.

He said the partnership with the ABC to engage the public through Stargazing Live had been fantastic.

"It has been a great showcase of astronomy and all the great work we are doing in Australia," Dr. Tucker said.

"And who knows, it might have inspired the next Nobel Prize winner from Australia."

Provided by Australian National University

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