

## CHANNEL 7

(18.12) The sky is no longer the limit at UniSA with the launch of an international space education program.

### FIVEAA (1395 am)

**Mike Smithson & Lainie Anderson, Presenters** (5AA 7.51-7.52) Program Preview – Space Program in Adelaide

**Smithson:** Coming up before 9 o'clock, we'll be talking about a new space program would you believe ... there's a five-week space program, a short course as they call it, here in Adelaide and it involves students from all over the world

### FIVEAA (1395 am)

Topics of discussion include:

- Program preview

**Jack Snelling, Minister for Employment, Training & Further Education** (5AA 8.11-8.14)  
Launch of a new space education program

*(Smithson: Adelaide was the home of astronaut Andy Thomas who went on to become a NASA whizz kid. Could this be a taste of things to come? A new space education program has been launched in Adelaide; it runs for five weeks and it involves 40 students from around the world. It sounds fascinating. Science Minister Jack Snelling on the line ... now the program, are we going to see more Andy Thomases do you think?)* Look, I'd certainly be delighted if we did. The program, it's a collaboration between the University of South Australia and the International Space University in Strasbourg ... and as you said, about 40 students from right across the world, engineers, scientists, people in space research and even a fighter pilot are undertaking this five-week intensive course *(Anderson: Is this a coup for Adelaide, Minister? Were other cities trying to lure the International Space University here as well?)* It's certainly a coup for Adelaide. I don't know whether there was at the time other universities interested although I'm sure that there would be other universities interested. But it certainly is a coup. The International Space University has a fantastic reputation and this is a very prestigious course. The students who complete the course become part of an alumni of about 3,000 students right across the world working in space policy and other areas of space research at very, very high levels *(Smithson: Jack, are we looking, do you think, in terms of future space development, whether, and I'm speaking to you as you being Science Minister, are we looking at the technology to get satellites into space for telecommunications or are we actually looking, do you think in the far flung future of going to Mars or somewhere like that?)* I think the purpose of this program is a bit more immediate than that. It's more about space policy – how do we deal with some of the legal issues regarding space ... what are the scientific issues involved? And so it's a fairly general course with people involved from all sorts of backgrounds. In terms of South Australia, really this is where we want to go but to get there we've really got to have a strong focus in what we call our stem subjects and promoting science, technology, engineering, mathematics in schools,

and getting more kids to take up those subjects, getting more interest, and something like this is a good start (*Smithson: Jack Snelling, thanks for joining us this morning ...*)

**Professor Andrew Parfitt, Vice Chancellor Division of Information Technology, UniSA**

(5AA 8.14-8.18) Launch of a new space education program

(*Smithson: We've got another expert, we've got Professor Andrew Parfitt ... I'll put the same question to you, is space travel in terms of exploration as important or are we just talking about telecommunications and putting satellites into space?*) Space travel and access to space through launch are probably lower on the priority list for Australia. Australia has had various forays into developing a consistent space policy over the past several decades really, since really we stopped doing space launch from Woomera. What is really important for Australia though is that we're so reliant on some of the services that are provided from space. So the telecommunications, the Earth observation for example; many of the things that we do to observe our planet for environmental management, disaster management, some of the things people do to work out how to deal with the clean up after the floods will come from data that's acquired from satellites in space. So how we work with that data, how we ensure that Australia has access to the appropriate data, they're the real priorities for the moment (*Anderson: We know there are more than 40 students from countries including Brazil, China, India, Italy, Malaysia, are these people already working in specialised fields and what are some of those fields?*) There's a real mix. There are some undergraduate students who are completing engineering, science and other degrees, and because space is such a broad discipline what they're trying to do by coming to this program is to get a feeling for the whole space business, space industry, space sector. So ... undergraduate students, that amounts to about a third of the students ... the rest of the students are indeed either working in industries that are related to space or would like to get involved more in the space industry and so what they're bringing is a level of skills in engineering, science, law, policy and understanding how to apply those to space (*Smithson: Are they paying big bucks to do it, Professor?*) We were fortunate in fact to secure funding from a new Australian Government program, the Australian Space Research Program, which enabled us to make quite reasonable fees for the five week course, which is a residential course so they get accommodation included at Mawson Lakes and all of the meals are included in the program (*Anderson: Well it sounds fascinating and it's exciting to think that South Australia is going to be playing a part in educating future space scientists. Thank you very much for joining us today ... great things we're doing here in South Australia. Really is exciting*) (*Smithson: Oh, it's exciting times. If it was to produce an Andy Thomas, I don't think it will this program, but we need more Andy Thomases. Let's get off our butts and all become Andy Thomases*)