



Milky Way. Private Collection

ABORIGINAL ASTRONOMY AND THE CLASH OF CULTURES



DATE: 25 August 2014,
TIME : Start time 6:00pm, finish 7:00pm
VENUE: Building 30, Lecture theatre 30.G.212,
UWS Campbelltown campus
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Like the ancient peoples of the world, such as the Incas, Chinese and the Greeks the Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people have been observing the night sky with its numerous celestial bodies for thousands of years. They used the celestial bodies to create wonderful stories or narratives that were incorporated into their rich social-cultural life. The talk will discuss their interpretation of the night sky from an Aboriginal perspective and its ramifications for Australian society. According to award winning author, Dr Ragbir Bhathal from the University of Western Sydney, 'Some of their interpretations and perspectives of the night sky led to the clash of cultures with Australia's dominant European society. These had consequences not only for Aboriginal society but also for the wider Australian society, such as the Stars of the Tagai and the famous MABO case, the Seven Sisters cluster of stars and the building of the Hindmarsh Island bridge in South Australia and the naming of the Southern Cross'.



BRIEF NOTE ON THE SPEAKER

Dr Ragbir Bhathal is an award winning author who is the recipient of the prestigious Nancy Keesing



Fellowship awarded by the State Library of NSW, the CJ Dennis Award for excellence in natural history writing and the 1988 Royal Society of NSW Medal for services to science and research. He has written 15 books on astronomy. His latest book with Professor Harvey Butcher and Dr Ralph Sutherland is *Mount Stromlo Observatory: From bush observatory to the Nobel Prize*. He teaches engineering physics and carries out research in the School of Computing, Engineering and Mathematics. He is also a Visiting Fellow at the Research School for Astronomy and Astrophysics at the Australian National University in Canberra.