



**PORT MACQUARIE ASTRONOMICAL
ASSOCIATION INC.**

PO Box 1453. PORT MACQUARIE. NSW. 2444

Email: pmobs.info@gmail.com

ABN 45 697 909 376

www.portastronomy.com.au

www.facebook.com/portobservatory

MEDIA RELEASE

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HEADING: Port Macquarie Astronomical Association 'Over the Moon' after
Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Grant Success

CONTACT: Robert Brangwin (President)
Ph 0428 570 369

Member for Port Macquarie, Leslie Williams MP, along with Deputy Premier, John Barilaro has announced that under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund, that Port Macquarie Astronomical Association (PMAA) has been successful in obtaining a \$4,860,065 grant for the upgrade of our Astronomical Science centre.

The Project will result in the construction of a modern astronomy and science centre that will attract local, regional and tourist communities. It will replace the 55 year old Port Macquarie Observatory in Rotary park. This will continue the cultural and historical connection of astronomy to one of Port Macquarie's most iconic sites. It will give Astronomy and Science a valid prominence within our community in an increasingly challenging world.

The Project aims to address the economic and social impacts of the recent fires which have been compounded by drought and COVID-19. This will be achieved through job creation during the construction phase and in the new building. It will promote an expansion in tourism for our hard-hit region as the facility will be unique on the NSW coast between Sydney and Brisbane. The new building will have benefits for the broader community and PMAA, and enable attendees to develop a deeper understanding of the value of science and its contribution in managing our future.

Members of PMAA have been engaged in Astronomy while supporting the community with twice weekly Open Nights for almost 60 years. For the last 15 years, the members have been committed to a replacement building as the current one is no longer fit for purpose.

Development Approval for this iconic site was granted by PMHC in March 2020 indicating that PMAA has the support of the Community, Council and both State and Federal Governments.

The Project is one of 195 locally led Applications selected to receive funding across fire impacted regions of NSW aimed at collectively rebuilding the economy and social wellbeing of those communities.

PMAA President, Robert Brangwin, said " This is a fantastic achievement and will enhance our ability to inspire local, regional and visitor communities to engage with our Universe and reach a better understanding of Earth's place in it."

To learn more about PMAA's Activities visit our website www.portastronomy.com.au or follow them on Instagram @portobservatory and Facebook [wwwfacebook.com.au/portobservatory](https://www.facebook.com/portobservatory).