

**Galilean Nights Event ID:** gn1,116

**Number of telescopes:** 7

**Number of organisers:** 6

**Number of attendees:** 375

**Event Report:**

A talk by Ross Powell from Wellington Astronomical Society (WAS) began our Galileo celebrations in the evening on Thursday 22 at Wellington City Library. Attended by 40 people, Ross focussed on the important contributions Galileo made to modern science as well as the impact of his observations with the telescope.

On Saturday afternoon it was the turn of younger budding astronomers to join in the occasion with fun activities and experiments provided by WAS members at the library for 5-12 year olds, including making simple telescopes with cardboard tubes and small magnifying lenses, learning about pendulums and phases of the moon, and demonstrating falling objects and gravity. 50 or so youngsters (and their parents!) enthusiastically joined in and a fun afternoon was had by all.

Everyone was encouraged to join us again later in the evening for telescope viewing at the Thomas King Observatory in the lovely setting at the top of Wellington's Botanical Gardens. The skies cleared beautifully as it became dark and 250-300 members of the public were thrilled to have stunning views of the moon and jupiter with it's four satellites clearly visible. Ques of people waiting to have a look through the 5 inch Grubb telescope stretched out the observatory door all evening and telescopes set up outside also captured people's interest. WAS members commented that they hadn't seen such interest at the observatory since Halley's Comet!

Galilean Nights was another great opportunity for Wellington Astronomical Society and Wellington City Libraries to combine forces in bringing the International Year of Astronomy to the public, with the wonder of looking at the night sky again inspiring young and old alike to look at our beautiful skies with a new level of interest – thank you Galileo!