

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 18 May

GP tickets on sale Friday 22 May

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE & UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE present

FOR THOUGHT: ORIGINS

Sydney Opera House (28 June) & Melbourne Wheeler Centre (30 June)

Sydney Opera House and the University of Melbourne have partnered to present three events over the next year, with Ideas at the House taking their *For Thought* series interstate to the Wheeler Centre. *For Thought* is an opportunity for the world's leading thinkers to immerse themselves and audiences in the particulars of a topic; discussing the latest cutting-edge research, the newest theories, or the history of how something came to be.

Professor Lawrence Krauss and **Professor Paul Davies** will commence the series with a discussion about the origins of life, the Universe and mankind. The event will take the form of separate keynotes from Krauss and Davies, followed by a panel with an audience Q&A where they will be joined by the University of Melbourne's **Professor Rachel Webster** and additional speakers to be announced shortly.

The event will include Krauss discussing our fascination with the universe and our most fundamental questions concerning its origins; How did the universe come into being and what are the elements that set it on the trajectory that brought it to its current state? Davies will continue with the origins of life, one of the great outstanding mysteries of science. Joined by Professor Webster, the panel will discuss what the future holds for cosmology and the important questions that still need to be answered.

Head of Talks & Ideas at the Sydney Opera House, Ann Mossop, said, *"Our For Thought series is an opportunity to delve deeper into topics of great importance and for our audiences to hear thinkers from Australia and around the world talk about their ideas and research. We are excited to partner with the University of Melbourne to take this event further than the Sydney Opera House and engage with those who are looking to immerse themselves in new and interesting ideas."*

Vice-Chancellor at University of Melbourne, Professor Glyn Davis, said, *"We're excited to be partnering with the Sydney Opera House and the Wheeler Centre to co-present the For Thought series. In creating a program that engages with audiences in both Melbourne and Sydney and tackles significant ideas, For Thought provides an excellent opportunity to share internationally-recognised knowledge to a wide audience. And it should be fun."*

Director of the Wheeler Centre, Michael Williams, said, *"The Wheeler Centre's programming has long benefited from our partnerships with other cultural institutions and universities, which give us access to extraordinary speakers and thinkers of our time. Working with the University of Melbourne and the Sydney Opera House to deliver For Thought is the latest such collaboration, and one about which we're enormously excited. These events will present the latest and most considered thinking about our world, from its present and its future, to – in this very first iteration – its origins."*

Ideas at the House is Sydney Opera House's talks and ideas program. It presents ideas, conversation and debate from leading thinkers and culture creators. Ideas at the House online extends the reach of live events with unique content. As well as a year-round program of inspiring events, Ideas at the House features the annual festivals *All About Women* and the *Festival of Dangerous Ideas*, and one-day events *For Thought* and *Carnegie Conversations*.

The Wheeler Centre is Melbourne's home for smart, passionate and entertaining public talks on every topic, including literature, art, social responsibility, politics, ethics, copyright, urban planning, sports, Indigenous storytelling and public affairs. Across 200+ events each year, you'll find some of our finest local and international speakers sharing their expertise, their imaginations and their ideas. In our five years of existence, the Wheeler Centre has established a reputation for ambition, variety and quality.

INFORMATION

What:	For Thought: Origins
When:	Sunday 28 June, 11am-2pm
Where:	Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House
Tickets:	From \$49
More info:	www.sydneyoperahouse.com

What: For Thought: Origins
When: Tuesday 30 June, 6.15pm-9.15pm
Where: Melbourne City Conference Centre, 194 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Tickets: \$35/\$20 Concession
More info: www.wheelercentre.com

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Professor Lawrence M. Krauss is an internationally known theoretical physicist with wide research interests, including the interface between elementary particle physics and cosmology, where his studies include the early universe, the nature of dark matter, general relativity and neutrino astrophysics. Having investigated questions ranging from the nature of exploding stars to issues of the origin of all mass in the universe, Krauss is the author of over 300 scientific publications and the winner of many awards for his contributions to science, including the Julius Edgar Lilienfeld Prize of the American Physical Society for “outstanding contributions to the understanding of the early universe, and extraordinary achievement in communicating the essence of physical science to the general public.” Previous recipients of this award include Stephen Hawking and Kip Thorne.

Krauss appeared at Festival of Dangerous Ideas (FODI) 2013 on a panel called “[New Religions vs. New Atheism](#)” with Peter Rollins. The talk is the second most highly viewed piece of content on the Ideas at the House Youtube channel (after Stephen Hawking’s comments on One Direction). FODI 2013 also featured the Australian film premiere of [The Unbelievers](#), a documentary starring Krauss and Richard Dawkins.

Professor Paul Davies AM is a theoretical physicist, cosmologist and astrobiologist. He is Regents’ Professor of Physics and Director of the Beyond Center for Fundamental Concepts in Science at Arizona State University, where he also runs a cancer research project and co-directs a cosmology programme. His research ranges from the origin of the universe to the origin of life and the nature of time.

Davies has written several hundred research papers and articles, and about 30 books, many for the general public, the latest being *The Eerie Silence: are we alone in the universe?* He was recently described by *Nature* magazine as “The Disruptor” on account of his provocative scientific thinking. He is a recipient of the Templeton Prize, the Faraday Prize of The Royal Society, the Kelvin Medal of the UK Institute of Physics and the Robinson Cosmology Prize. The asteroid 1992 OG was renamed (6870) Pauldavies in recognition of his work on cosmic impacts.

Davies appeared at the Sydney Opera House in April 2015 to introduce Professor Stephen Hawking, who was beamed live into the Concert Hall via the latest in hologram technology. Watch the full clip of *An Evening with Stephen Hawking* [here](#).

Professor Rachel Webster has had a stellar career teaching and researching astronomy for over 20 years. Originally gaining her doctorate thesis at Cambridge University, she has spent productive years honing her skills in Canada at the University of Toronto, both teaching and doing research. In 1992, she returned to The University of Melbourne to take up a position as a teaching and research academic within the School of Physics where she currently leads the Astrophysics research group comprising 18 research students and staff. Her group is varied and diverse and covers both observational and theoretical research areas. Her observational program utilises world class equipment such as the Australia Telescope Compact Array, the Gemini Telescopes, the Hubble Space Telescope and the Chandra X-ray Observatory amongst other instruments. She is a key member of an international consortium involving Australian and American astrophysicists to help design and build a new low frequency radio telescope (Widefield Array) at Mileura in Western Australia. This major project aims to detect the first sources in the universe. Such information is gleaned from her theoretical studies and detection of reionised hydrogen atoms and the structural analysis of neutral hydrogen clouds. Her other interests include quasar emission regions, gravitational lensing and cosmology.

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EVENT PARTNER:

