

Media Release

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ASG Students Return To Earth From Space Adventure

Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) beneficiaries, Sabine Bellstedt, a year 11 student at Castle Hill High School in New South Wales and Olias Bartel, a year 12 student at Birdwood High School in South Australia have come back to earth and are now settling into their regular study routines following their 'once in a lifetime' trip to 2009 International Space Camp for Students at the International Space and Rocket Center, Alabama (USA).

ASG introduced its International Space Camp promotion for the first time in 2008 for travel in 2009. Open to many thousands of ASG beneficiaries, ASG's Space Camp program was hotly contested. The opportunity attracted outstanding applications, but Sabine and Olias's applications were selected as extraordinary. Both showed exceptional aptitude in their academic and extra-curricular school activities.

ASG's Community Adviser, Ms Michelle Hunder said, "ASG introduced the promotion as a means of encouraging and developing the study of maths and science subjects among its beneficiaries and judging by the response to the sponsorship, it's an opportunity that many students want to pursue".

"Many people dream to travel beyond earth's boundaries into the realms of space, and while very few of us are likely to achieve that dream, International Space Camp provides space-related simulations, demonstrations, activities, and projects to really bring the dream alive.

"International Space Camp is the next best thing to actually being in space," Ms Hunder said.

Sabine and Olias joined 33 other international student delegates from 20 countries and 55 students from the USA at the 'invitation only' 2009 Advanced Space Academy International Space Camp to participate in a comprehensive educational program designed to promote interest in space science and exploration, as well as global cooperation.

When asked for her thoughts on Space Camp and her experience, Sabine Bellstedt explained: "Space Camp proved to be one of the best weeks of my life. Though it was only a week, I learnt so much, not only about space, science, engineering and so much more, but also about places and cultures from all around the world".

Sabine plans to continue her studies in Physics, Chemistry and Biology and aspires to a career as a university lecturer in Science and Cosmology.

In summing up his thoughts on the Space Camp adventure, Olias Bartel said: "The experience of the International Space Camp was an unforgettable one. I made friends with many people from many places. The activities and experiences were well thought out and lots of fun. I think I was extremely lucky to attend this week of Space Camp and am very grateful to ASG and NEiTA for giving me this opportunity".

Olias seeks to study Maths and Physics at university, and hopes to become involved in space-related work in the future, and perhaps even become an astronaut himself one day.

The 2009 International Space Camp aims to innovatively educate and engage with the students on different areas of the space program, as well as provide opportunities for personal development and skill building in areas of teamwork and communication. It is designed to simulate a space course, similar in form to the training Neil Armstrong may have completed before his famous walk on the moon on 20 July 1969.

The ASG student promotion was launched for the first time in 2008 for travel in 2009. Through this program ASG seeks to offer student beneficiaries of ASG Educational programs unique learning opportunities to encourage academic excellence and promote opportunities for innovative and exciting learning opportunities.

NEiTA's 2008 ASG National Teaching Awards recipient Mrs Helen Armstrong, Librarian from Bakewell Primary School in Northern Territory (NT) accompanied the students on the flights to and from Alabama, USA. Among her many contributions to leadership and various projects at the school, Mrs Armstrong encourages a passion for science among her students. She has helped organise and facilitate a school visit by NASA astronaut, Dr James Reilly and her involvement with this project culminated in the establishment of the NT Space School. The school's students now joke that she is "willing to go above and beyond" for them.

ASG's Education Program™ offers a unique, convenient, and proven way for people to plan for their children or grandchildren's future education. The program can be tailored to suit the needs and budgets of most families. ASG recommends that parents and grandparents plan for the future costs of their children's and grandchildren's education. A number of planning tools and tips can be found at ASG's website – www.asg.com.au or by calling 1800 648 945.

Currently ASG is helping more than 208,000 member parents plan for the costs of their children's education. Last year almost 45,000 students had their secondary or post-secondary education costs supported by ASG benefits. In addition, ASG has paid out more than \$867 million in benefits to its members since its inception.

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Image And Further Information Available:



Caption:

From left, Olias Bartel, Sabine Bellstedt - recipients of the 2009 ASG International Space Camp Student promotion. Olias and Sabine spent an unforgettable week at the International Space Camp for Students, Alabama USA.

Images of Olias and Sabine, including high-resolution images and a summary of their experiences, may be found at: www.asg.com.au/_images_spacecamp2009

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