



**High Range 4WD Club of SA Inc**  
**The Adelaide Planetarium**  
**Sunday 21 August 2011**  
**Submitted by Helen**

A planetarium is a room with a dome-shaped ceiling and at the centre of the room is a star projector. The Adelaide Planetarium houses a Zeiss Jena ZPK1 star projector which projects an artificial night sky onto the eight-metre diameter domed ceiling to represent the night sky and can be used to show the position of constellations, stars and planets. The projector presents the relative position and brightness of about 5,000 stars that are visible from the Southern Hemisphere.

This was a day trip planned so members could catch up and interact on a more relaxed level than usually happens on camping trips.

We met at the Planetarium at 10.30am, though some of us were waiting at the wrong entrance! For this day trip, we had 30 members! Great turn out folks!

We were then taken on a very interesting journey around the galaxy by our friendly guide, Mike. We learned how to find south from the Southern Cross, we learned about the sun, and the other constellations as well as the extraordinary information continually gathered about the planets in our Solar System. It was interesting to note that although NASA do not conduct space missions any more, due to prohibitive costs, there is still enough money to be found to send robotic probes into space to collect data from the planets and send the information back to earth. Currently there is a probe on the way to Pluto (sent in 2006 – half way there). The probe is travelling so fast that it will actually fly by Pluto, gather the data and continue out into space past the Solar System, where it will probably fly for millions of years. Another probe is about to be sent to Mars, and there are plans to build the largest telescope on the earth, with Australia as a likely place to build this huge beast. We also discovered that the Sun is about half way through its life, with many millions of years to go, so we are ok! The best bit of information we digested was that our brightest star, Alfa Centauri, would take 25,000 years to travel to! We wondered how many generations this would take and would the generation that arrived there, remember where they were from!! If they didn't kill each other first! Food for thought! There is a lot of enthusiasm in our quest for learning about space, and it was good to be a part of it for one hour.

After our visit, it was time to walk to Primo's for lunch. We caught up with some members we hadn't seen for years (Geoff and Ruth) and wondered where Henry and Helen were! Henry did not disappoint us, turning up late for lunch and expecting to go the Planetarium after lunch! How did he get it so wrong!! Lunch was lovely, good food, good service and great company.

The day was warm and lazy and we took our time over coffee to renew friendships and cement old ones. Thanks to everybody for turning up and I hope that you enjoyed yourselves.