



NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Australia in
the space age



ACTIVITY PACK

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Out of This World: Australia in the space age explores Australian society's imaginative response to space research and exploration between the 1950s and 1970s. This Activity pack includes 6 activities to help you explore the exhibition and its content. You'll be asked to consider and respond to people's diverse experiences from the past, share your own perspectives on the present and imagine the future.

INSTRUCTIONS

- The activity sheets will tell you the activity **THEME** and **LOCATION**.
- Look out for the navigation symbol near object labels. This symbol identifies exhibition content that is linked to the activity.
- In your group, take turns to **READ ALOUD** the information on the activity sheet, then **LOOK** at the related exhibition content.
- **DISCUSS** the activity question with your group, then turn the page over and **DO** the related task together.
- Spend around **5 minutes** on each activity – your teacher will inform you when it is time to move to the next activity. You'll have **30 minutes** in total to complete the activities.
- When you have finished, **return to the start** of the exhibition to discuss the activities.



ACTIVITY 1

FIRING ACROSS COUNTRY



THEME

Woomera

LOCATION

Go to the **Firing across country** story and look for the navigation symbol.



READ ALOUD

From the 1950s to 1970s Woomera was the centre of Australia's space research. However, it was initially established as a defence missile testing site in 1947. Woomera village was built on the traditional lands of the Kokatha people and the firing range extended over the Central Australian Aboriginal Reserves, the traditional lands of the Anangu people. *The Rocket Range, Aborigines and War* features a speech by Dr Charles Duguid, who played a lead role in protests against the establishment of the Woomera Rocket Range. Duguid expressed concerns over the cultural impact on and safety of First Nations custodians.

Despite protests, the Australian Government went ahead with the rocket range. Woomera was considered an ideal location owing to its isolation, and national defence was prioritised due to the potential threat of communism during the Cold War period. *Hands Off the Nation's Defences* detailed these priorities and warned Australians not to be misled by communist propaganda that opposed the range.

LOOK

Take a look at *The Rocket Range, Aborigines and War* and the *Hands off the Nation's Defences* booklets.

DISCUSS

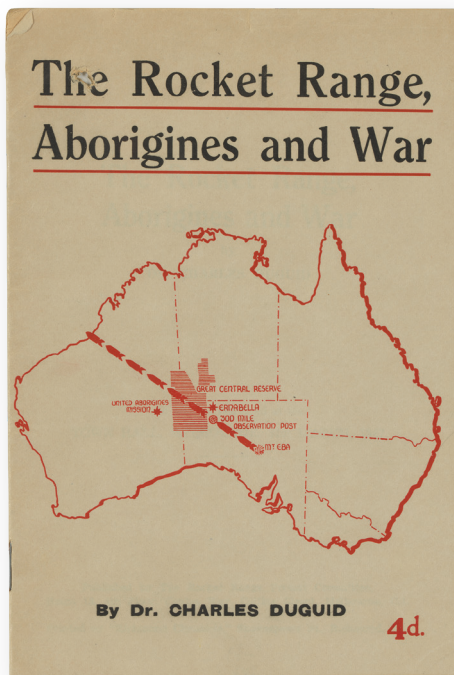
Do you see any similarities between the 1940s Woomera protests and contemporary protests linked to First Nations peoples' rights and freedoms?

Turn the page over.

Booklet, *The Rocket Range, Aborigines and War*, 1947.
NAA: D1918, S1493

Booklet, *Hands Off the Nation's Defences*, 1947.
NAA: D1918, S1493

ACTIVITY 1 FIRING ACROSS COUNTRY



DO

Imagine you are at a Woomera protest rally in 1947. Divide your group so that you are either a protester advocating for First Nations peoples' rights or a member of the Australian Government advocating for national defence. Write down some key points you would like to address. Each group then has 30 seconds to give an inspiring protest speech.

ACTIVITY 2

WOMEN OF WOOMERA



THEME

Woomera

LOCATION

Go to the **Women of Woomera** story and look for the navigation symbol.



READ ALOUD

Woomera was considered a 'morally dangerous place for unattached young women', and up until the 1960s the majority of female residents were housewives with young children, many having relocated from Britain. Social attitudes at the time meant that many married women did not work. Most female job opportunities at Woomera were in health, hospitality and office administration; however, some were employed as human 'computers', processing data and developing mathematical formulae. No dedicated facilities were provided for women on-site until the mid 1950s.

LOOK

Take a look at the image of the four female computers at Woomera.

DISCUSS

Why do you think the women in this photo were required to wear army clothing?

Turn the page over.

Four female computers at Woomera, 1949.
NAA: D874, NB211

ACTIVITY 2 WOMEN OF WOOMERA



DO

Imagine that you are a woman living at Woomera in the late 1940s. You might be working as a human 'computer' or in hospitality. You might be a housewife and a young mother, recently relocated from Britain. You have the opportunity to make three demands to the Weapons Research Establishment that would improve women's living or working conditions. Work together to decide and write down your three demands.

Do your demands have any relevance to the experiences of women today?

ACTIVITY 3

DESTINATION MOON

THEME

Childhood inspiration

LOCATION

Go to the [Destination Moon](#) story and look for the navigation symbol.



READ ALOUD

Jenny Pettigrove was 10 years old at the time of the Moon landing and was fascinated by news of space exploration. Her scrapbook is filled with newspaper articles documenting the Apollo missions. The scrapbook also has commercial advertisements from the period in which local businesses used space-age concepts to benefit from the public interest in the Moon landing. Some pages are in colour, which was unusual for this time due to printing costs. Newspapers were a key source of information for Jenny until her family purchased a television in 1969.

LOOK

Look at the digital images from 10-year-old Jenny Pettigrove's scrapbook.

DISCUSS

What role did media linked to the Moon landing play in capturing the imagination of Australians?

Turn the page over.

Newspaper clippings from Jenny Pettigrove's scrapbook, 1969–70.
Courtesy Jenny Pettigrove

ACTIVITY 3 DESTINATION MOON



DO

Imagine that today's media and technology existed at the time of the Moon landing, providing us with information ranging from live data through to the daily activities of astronauts in space. Together, choose a social media platform – for example, TikTok, Twitter or Instagram – and re-enact, write or draw your social media post related to the Moon landing.

ACTIVITY 4

AUSTRALIS OSCAR 5



THEME

Citizen scientists

LOCATION

Go to the **Australis OSCAR 5** story and look for the navigation symbol.



READ ALOUD

The Australis OSCAR 5 amateur radio satellite was designed and built in 1966 by undergraduate students at the University of Melbourne. It was launched by NASA in 1970, making it the second Australian satellite to go into orbit. The satellite was built with limited funds using household items such as bed springs and measuring tapes. It continues to orbit the Earth today and can be tracked online.

This citizen scientist project is an example of how students can work with professionals to contribute to scientific projects.

LOOK

Take a look at the photograph of Richard Tonkin with a mock-up of the Australis OSCAR 5.

DISCUSS

What personal characteristics do you think are required to deliver a successful citizen science project?

Turn the page over.

Richard Tonkin with a mock-up of the Australis OSCAR 5, 1966.
NAA: A1200, L54721

ACTIVITY 4 AUSTRALIS OSCAR 5



DO

Imagine that you are taking part in your own citizen science project. What would you like to find out? Write down or draw your example (you may include more than one).

ACTIVITY 5

PRESIDENTIAL GIFTS



THEME

Moon landing

LOCATION

Go to the **Presidential gifts** story and look for the navigation symbol.



READ ALOUD

The 1960s marked an exciting time for space exploration and international collaborations, including Australia's involvement in NASA's Apollo missions. After the success of the Moon landing during the Apollo 11 mission in 1969, United States President Richard Nixon gave gifts of moon rock fragments to 135 'friendly' countries. In 1970 US Vice President Spiro Agnew presented the moon rocks to Australia during a ceremony at Parliament House.

The year 1970 also saw an increase in protests against Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. The Australian Government began sending service personnel to Vietnam in 1962, in support of the US – its key ally – and to stop the spread of communism. The anti-Vietnam War image shown here is not in the exhibition. It was taken outside Parliament House at the same time as the moon rock presentation.

LOOK

Take a look at the image of children viewing moon rock fragments during the 1970 presentation ceremony. Also consider the image shown above of an anti-Vietnam War protest.

DISCUSS

How do you think Australian people in 1970 felt about our country's relationship with the US?

Turn the page over.

Anti-Vietnam War protest, Parliament House, Canberra, 1970.
NAA: A1200, L85635
Children viewing moon rock fragments, Parliament House, Canberra, 1970.
NAA: A1200, L85621

ACTIVITY 5 PRESIDENTIAL GIFTS



DO

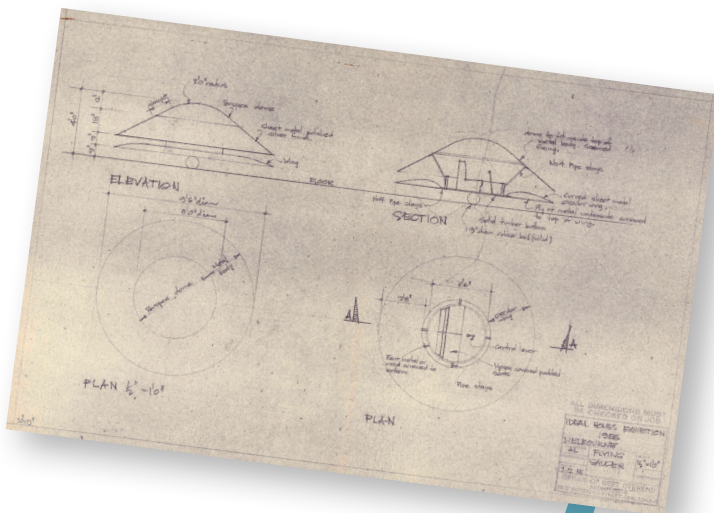
Imagine you are one of the children at the moon rock presentation, whose parent was involved in tracking the Apollo 11 mission. Write a sentence that describes how it feels to see the moon rocks.



Now imagine you are an anti-Vietnam War protester. Write a sentence that describes why you are attending the protest and how it makes you feel.

ACTIVITY 6

FUTURISTIC ARCHITECTURE



THEME

Pop culture

LOCATION

Go to the **Futuristic architecture** story and look for the navigation symbol.



READ ALOUD

The 1950s and 1960s marked a period of space-inspired design that considered imagined futures, planets and extraterrestrial life. Designers and architects combined space-age design elements with natural forms and organic shapes, and advances in technology influenced the use of materials. In 1956 Melbourne architect Acheson Best Overend designed a 'House of the Future', featuring a plastic roof supported by a central core, flat-screen televisions and remote-control technology, and a garage for the occupant's 'flying saucer'. He anticipated that road congestion would make cars obsolete in the future.

LOOK

Take a look at architect Acheson Best Overend's 'flying saucer' design.

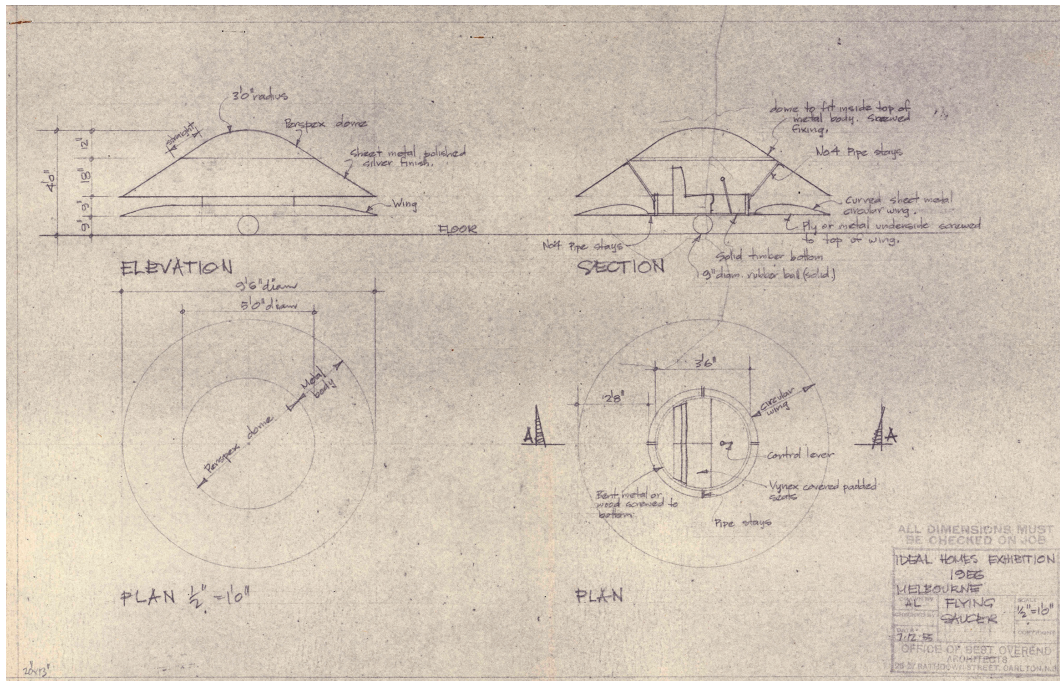
DISCUSS

Why do you think Australian designers and creators during the 1950s and 1960s were so inspired by space exploration?

Turn the page over.

'Flying saucer' design by architect
Acheson Best Overend, 1956.
NAA: A1336, 56130

ACTIVITY 6 FUTURISTIC ARCHITECTURE



DO

Many space-inspired designs of the 1950s and 1960s featured an imagined future. Draw your own space-inspired design that considers how we might live, travel or communicate in the future.