To learn more about the Aurora, visit: www.physics.usyd.edu.au/complex-systems/

SOUTHERN LIGHTS PUBLIC TALK 15 MAY 2008

Professor James Labelle University of Sydney International Visiting Research Fellow and Professor of Physics and Astronomy, Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, will discuss The Southern Lights, or Aurora. These lights dance in the sky above Antarctica, occasionally reaching Tasmania and, on rarer occasions, New South Wales. What causes these flickering lights to appear in the sky and move the way they do? Aside from being fascinating and beautiful Physics, the study of the Aurora has real implications for the reliability of many of our satellite-based communications and GPS systems, as physicists begin to understand and forecast space weather. This fully illustrated public lecture explains what the Aurora is all about from a scientist who flies rockets loaded with scientific instruments through the ionosphere as it glows and shimmers with Auroral activity – see image at left.

Photo credit: Chuck Johnson

WHEN: Thursday 15 May, 6.30pm - 7.30pm
VENUE: Slade Lecture Theatre, School of Physics, University of Sydney
RSVP: outreach@physics.usyd.edu.au or 9351 3383

SECOND FEDERATION FELLOWSHIP AWARDED

Professor Peter Robinson, leader of the Complex Systems Group, has been awarded a second Federation Fellowship. Leading research initiatives in multiple areas of physics and Professor Robinson's pioneering efforts in nonlinear and stochastic plasma dynamics and quantitative brain analysis have led to international recognition and numerous awards. He currently works in areas including brain dynamics, plasma theory, and space physics. He is a member of the STEREO team and one of the founders of Brain Resource Ltd. To learn more about Professor Robinson's research visit: www.physics.usyd.edu.au/complex-systems/

SIR PRIZES

Physics students always look forward to winning scholarships, awards and prizes and the next prize ceremony will take place in the Slade Lecture Theatre on 16 May 2008. This year's winner of the Sir Henry Chamberlain Russell Prize for Astronomy will have an added touch of history as Mr Ted King, Sir Henry's great-grandson, presents the award. Henry Chamberlain Russell (1836-1907) was Australia's first native-born Government Meteorologist, the first graduate of the University of Sydney to be elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and the first President of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science. After his permanent appointment as Government Astronomer and Meteorologist in 1870 he initiated a rapid expansion of the observing networks throughout New South Wales. In 1877 he issued the first synoptic chart published in an Australian newspaper, and in 1879 he convened the first of the inter-colonial meteorological conferences aimed at achieving uniformity in data collection. He wrote extensively on scientific matters and was the first to describe the behaviour of the migratory southern hemisphere anticyclones. Sir Henry (image top left) retired in 1905. * Source Commonwealth Bureau of Meteorology ‘A Hundred Years of Science and Service’. *