1st Circular for APRIM2026

RATIONALE:

We are pleased to invite all astronomers and space and planetary scientists to the **2026 Asia-Pacific Regional IAU Meeting (APRIM 2026)**, which will take place in **Hong Kong** from **May 4 to May 8, 2026**. The venue for this meeting is the iconic **Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC)**, located in the vibrant city of Hong Kong (https://www.hkcec.com/en).

Held every three years, APRIM is a major regional scientific meeting of the **International Astronomical Union (IAU)** and second only to the IAU General Assembly in scale and scope. APRIM is a key platform for astronomers, space scientists and related stakeholders across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond to engage in collaboration, share latest scientific findings, network and discuss pressing and major questions that advance the frontiers of astronomy, astrophysics and space science.

Heritage: The first APRIM was held in New Zealand in 1978, and the meeting series has since been hosted across various Asia-Pacific nations, including Japan, China, and India. The 2023 edition was hosted in Fukushima, Japan. **APRIM2026 marks the first time this esteemed gathering will be hosted in Hong Kong**, a city with five universities ranked in the global top 100 and with a dynamic research culture and growing astrophysics and space science mission presence.

APRIM2026 will offer participants a comprehensive IAU science program that highlights cutting-edge developments and fosters impactful collaborations with a focus on Asia Pacific regional strengths. With awareness of the region's diversity and global context, we aim to make APRIM2026 a respectful, inclusive, and collegiate event that promotes excellence in research and innovation across astrophysical sciences through meaningful partnership, collaboration and cooperation.

We look forward to welcoming a broad spectrum of astronomers of all career stages to engage in scientific exchange, explore future opportunities, and enjoy the unique cultural and scientific atmosphere of Hong Kong.

MORE ABOUT THE VENUE AND HONG KONG – ASIA'S GLOBAL CITY:

The meeting will be held at the **Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC)**, centrally located in Wan Chai, Hong Kong Island (https://www.hkcec.com/en). Overlooking Victoria Harbour and with easy access to public transportation, the HKCEC is one of Asia's premier conference venues. Hong Kong is Asia's Global City. It is one of the world's most significant financial centres and commercial ports and the world's third-ranked global financial centre behind New York City and London. It offers a unique blend of East and West, a rich cultural heritage, world class venues, entertainment, museums, restaurants and nightlife. As host, the **Laboratory for Space Research (LSR)** at **The University of Hong Kong** (www.lsr.hku.hk) will coordinate with regional partners to deliver an exceptional experience.

PLENARY SPEAKERS (in alphabetical order):

We are honoured to announce the following distinguished plenary speakers for APRIM2026:

- **Prof. Matthew Bailes** (Shaw Prize Laureate in Astronomy 2023, Swinburne, Australia) *Honoured for the discovery of fast radio bursts and pioneering contributions in radio astronomy.*
- **Prof. Laura Cadonati** (Bruno Rossi Prize & Physics breakthrough of the year 2017, Gerogia Tech, USA - tbc) *For her fundamental work on Gravitational waves and LIGO*
- **Prof. Reinhard Genzel** (Nobel Laureate, 2020, MPI for extraterrestrial Physics, Germany) *Awarded for the discovery of the supermassive black hole at the centre of our Milky Way.*
- **Prof. Luis C. Ho** (Director, Kavli Institute Astronomy & Astrophysics, Peking University, China) *Renowned Chinese Astronomer and expert in observational astronomy, using the most forefront telescopes on the ground and in space, from radio to X-ray energies.*
- **Prof. Hyesung Kang** (Pusan National University, South Korea) *renowned for her work on Cosmic rays she was also the IAUGA 2022 National Organizing Committee chair*
- **Prof. Shri Kulkarni** (Shaw Prize Laureate in Astronomy 2024, Caltech, USA) *Celebrated for transformative contributions to time-domain astronomy.*
- **Prof. Max Pettini** (Gruber Cosmology Prize Winner 2025, IoA, Cambridge, UK) *Renowned for fundamental measurements of deuterium abundance and the baryon density of the universe.*
- **Dr. Sarah Pearce (**Director of the SKA-Low Telescope, Australia - tbc) *She leads a growing team working on the world's largest low frequency telescope and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering*
- **Prof. Laura Perez** (New horizons prize in Physics 2024, University of Chile - tbc) *For her work on formation and evolution of planetary systems around young stars including proto-planetary disks*
- **Prof. Brian Schmidt** (Shaw Prize Laureate 2006, Nobel Laureate, 2011, ANU, Australia) *Recognized for the discovery of the accelerating expansion of the universe through observations of distant supernovae.*
- **Prof. Lldar Shaikhislamov (**Senior Researcher, Institute of Laser Physics, Russian Academy of Sciences) *A world leader in research of exoplanetary atmospheres*

- These plenary speakers, with a few more planned, will highlight some of the most remarkable achievements in contemporary astronomy, astrophysics, space science and cosmology.

THEMATIC SCIENCE SESSIONS:

APRIM2026 will feature a broad range of scientific sessions covering the following key themes:

1. **Astronomy Public Outreach and Education**
   The latest regional program and schemes for engaging the public and students through outreach programs, public lectures, digital media, and observatory sessions will be explored, with a focus on STEM as inspiration and for science literacy.

2. **Galaxies, AGN and the High Redshift Universe**
   Exploring galaxy formation and evolution in the early universe, some challenges from James Webb Space Telescope results and the epoch of reionization.

3. **High Energy Astrophysics**
   Studying phenomena around black holes, neutron stars, and supernovae, with a focus on X-rays, gamma rays, cosmic rays, neutrinos, and gravitational messengers.

4. **Gravitational Wave Astronomy**
   Presenting results from LIGO and next-generation gravitational wave detectors. This new observational window into compact object mergers and extreme astrophysics will be explored in detail including with latest results.

5. **The Life Cycle of Stars and Their Planets**
   Theoretical and observational advances on planetary nebulae, supernova remnants, stellar evolution, the ISM and importantly, extrasolar planetary systems and prospects for life.

6. **Radio, mm and Sub-mm Astronomy**
   Highlights from facilities like SKA and FAST, recent surveys and interferometric techniques, and breakthroughs across radio wavelengths.

7. **Astronomical Surveys and Time Domain Astronomy**
   Investigation into current wide-field optical surveys, spectroscopic missions and time-variable sky studies, with emphasis on the new LSST era.

8. **Upcoming Astronomical Facilities**
   Future space and ground-based mega-infrastructures including the ELT, GMT, Roman Space Telescope, Xuntian. These facilities and their anticipated scientific impact will be discussed.

9. **Space Sustainability**
   Addressing threats from satellite mega constellations and space debris; discussions on international policy, optical/radio interference, and orbital ecosystem viability.

These sessions reflect the latest scientific priorities and community interests across the Asia-Pacific.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- **October 1, 2025** – Open for Abstract Submission and Registration
- **December 5, 2025** – Abstract Deadline
- **February 25, 2026** – Deadline for Early Registration
- **March 15, 2026** – Deadline for VISA Assistance
- **May 4, 2026** – Meeting Starts

Regular updates, news, session information and speaker lists will be made available on the official website as appropriate. See: https://aprim2026.org for details.

CONTACT:

For any queries, please contact the Local Organizing Committee at **aprim26@hku.hk**

We warmly invite you all to join us in Hong Kong in May 2026 for a landmark celebration of astronomy, astrophysics, space science and international scientific cooperation.

We intend to make it a fascinating, fun and fantastic forum of astrophysical sciences for all.

August 14th 2025
Prof. Quentin A Parker
SOC chair on behalf of the SOC (see https://aprim2026.org/teams/)
