

5/11/2007



International Space Station project update #1B

All systems go on one small step for NASA and one giant leap for St Thomas

In one giant leap toward the school's first close encounter with the International Space Station, the St Thomas ARISS project was launched at assembly this week. ARISS, or Amateur Radio on the International Space Station ISS, is a project run by amateur radio operators and NASA's education division that lets students at schools all over the world talk directly with astronauts on the ISS, orbiting about 340km above earth. An application for the school to take part in the program was prepared by a small but expanding team of volunteer parents and teachers earlier this year. Feedback so far is that this application looks successful, and while final confirmation is usually not received from NASA until about six weeks before the event, it is expected to be some time next year. If we are lucky enough to be selected, it means a handful of boys and girls from St Thomas' will get to represent the school and ask the astronauts questions via a direct radio link with the school. Updates on the St Thomas project will be provided through Thomataalk and Year 7 students will be doing their bit by preparing a page for the school's website. Students wanting to take part in this space adventure should also keep eyes and ears open about a range of other activities planned before the event. These include the start of a radio club for kids to teach them about amateur radio, displays in the library, competitions (including a space trivia contest) and lunchtime demonstrations about the St Thomas Radio Station. So kids, if already have some good questions to ask an astronaut about what it is like to live and work in space, or you think of some in the next few months, write them down and keep them somewhere safe until they are needed. I will also be looking for further parent support to help with a range of specialty jobs needed to make St Thomas contact with the ISS out of this world.

For further information about St Thomas Space Station project contact Morry Clark Ph: 3901 4634 or email morryclark@optusnet.com.au. Messages can also be left at the school office in an envelope marked Attn: international Space Station Project team.