**Venus Transit video news – transcript 19/6/12**

**Narrator:**

La Trobe University recently gave students from senior post grads to primary schools a once in a lifetime chance to watch the Transit of Venus. Linking its new space telescope to its giant screen VisLab, the University also streamed the event on its website for staff, schools, amateur astronomers and the community.

**Hannah Coughlan:**

It’s really important to observe things that we don’t get to see very often, and to see something that’s thousands and thousands of kilometres away, which we’re watching right now. It’s really exciting; it’s really exciting to be in current science.

**Narrator:**

Miss Coughlan is a nanotechnology research student. In her daily work she uses La Trobe’s state of the art VisLab for global experimentation. The VisLab normally links the Melbourne campus to the Australian Synchrotron and similar instruments all over the world.

**Hannah Coughlan:**

It’s used to conduct experiments all over the world as well as in Melbourne at the Australian Synchrotron, so people can remotely watch experiments that aren’t able to be there themselves.

**Narrator:**

Steve Fleming, Lecturer in Astronomy, took the thrills of his discipline off campus using the transit to encourage a future generation of scientists.

**Dr Steve Fleming:**

I’m here to show the children of King Lake West Primary School the Transit of Venus, which is a once in a hundred odd year event. These children won’t get a chance to see this again, neither will I, and it’s an exciting time, there is a fair bit of history involved because Captain Cook came to Tahiti to measure a transit of Venus and then of course, and as we all know went on his journeys to bump into Australia and New Zealand. So it’s a good time to link that bit of history to a bit of science with the students.

**Narrator:**

La Trobe’s two telescopes operated from the Melbourne campus observatory from 8.30am till 2.45pm. Good weather most of the morning helped to provide wonderful images.

**Dr Steve Fleming:**

It’s caught the imagination of school kids all over the world really. We are very fortunate here in Melbourne to be able see the transit for the whole period of the transit. We see it enter the sun, move across, and leave the sun where as a lot of place’s, the sun will either rise with the transit or will set with it still in transit.

**Narrator:**

La Trobe’s new telescope is ten times as powerful as the model it replaces. It not only views with immense detail the planets of our solar system, but also seeks out galaxy’s hundreds of millions of light years away accurately measuring the brightness of stars and where they are in their life cycle.

**Dr Steve Fleming:**

Today they had what’s called a hydrogen alpha filter on that telescope which is a narrow band pass filter that only lets the frequencies that correspond to the first spectra line of hydrogen through. It’s a really, really narrow band pass and with that hydrogen alpha filter you can actually see detail on the sun’s surface, you can see the granulation, you can see flares, prominences and of course sun spots.

**Narrator:**

The Transit of Venus was embraced in school classrooms in subjects from Astronomy and Geometry to History and Zoology.

**Dr Steve Fleming:**

It’s really good to see students getting involved in science and that’s what I love to see and any way that we can enthuse students into science has got to be good. Its one of the things I think we do really well in the faculty at La Trobe.

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