

The Australian

Searching for secrets of the universe

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novation Minister Kim Carr, right, with Professor Gao Yue at the ANU Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics in Canberra. Picture: Ray Strange
Source: The Australian

SCIENTISTS hope a super-sized telescope being built with Australian help will answer some of the biggest questions in astronomy.

The Giant Magellan Telescope, with a primary mirror the equivalent of 24.5 metres in diameter, will produce astronomical images up to 30 times sharper than existing ground-based telescopes.

The Australian National University is developing instrumentation for the \$700 million telescope as part of an international consortium that will build the telescope in the Chilean Andes.

Launching the next stage of the ANU's Advanced Instrumentation and Technology Centre (AITC) at Mount Stromlo in Canberra, Innovation Minister Kim Carr said the GMT promised to produce the answers to some of the biggest issues in astronomy.


“It will tell us about the early universe, including formation of the first stars, and the evolution of galaxies only a few million years after the Big Bang,” Senator Carr said.

Senator Carr said the Gillard government was contributing nearly \$90 million towards the telescope through the Education Investment Fund.

“This is a huge boost for Australia's space industry with engineering and research advances at the AITC flowing on to the sector,” he said.

Senator Carr said Australian funding would buy Australian astronomers time on the telescope once it is operational later this decade.



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