

## Public Lecture Series

# *Planet Formation in Dense Star Clusters*

**Speaker:** Henry Throop

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Senior Scientist, Planetary Science Institute in Tucson, Arizona, USA

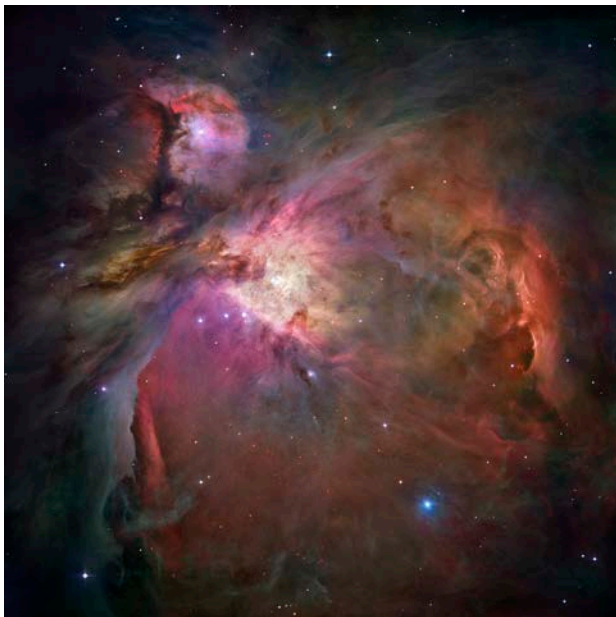
**On:** Wednesday, 13 May 2015

**At:** 17h15 (to 18h15)

**Venue:** Sci-Enza, Main Campus, University of Pretoria

(Note: Please use the Prospect Street entrance. See  
<http://s2a3.up.ac.za/directions.php> for directions and a map.)

Our Solar System's closest stellar neighbours are several light years away, and most models of



The Orion Nebula as photographed by the Hubble Space Telescope.

(By NASA, ESA, M. Robberto (Space Telescope Science Institute/ESA) and the Hubble Space Telescope Orion Treasury Project Team [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons.)

the Solar System's formation assume that we have been isolated from other stars. But a growing body of evidence suggests that most stars and planets form in star clusters far more dense, where tens of thousands of young stars are initially packed into the same volume of space as between us and our closest stellar neighbours. The Orion region is one such nearby dense stellar cluster, where UV radiation, clouds of gas, and encounters with other stars can shape the future of planetary systems. I will discuss our recent observations and modelling of the formation of stars, disks, and planets in dense star clusters such as Orion, and what this says about the formation of stars and planets throughout the galaxy

Dr Throop will also give a brief update on NASA's New Horizons mission to Pluto. New Horizons is scheduled to arrive at its destination after a nine-year cruise on July 14, 2015.

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