



Courier Mail  
Friday 16/5/2008  
Page: 33  
Section: General News  
Region: Brisbane Circulation: 221,049  
Type: Capital City Daily  
Size: 60.92 sq.cms.  
Published: MTWTFSS-

Index: 1.7  
Brief: SWIN

## Deep space twice as bright as we thought

IF the sky is looking particularly sparkling tonight, it may be because the universe is twice as bright as previously thought.

A team of international researchers says in *Astrophysical Journal Letters* that dust obscures about half the starlight the universe generates.

Astrophysicist Alister Graham, from Melbourne's Swinburne University, said astronomers had known for some time the universe contained small grains of silicate and graphite, but they had underestimated the extent it restricted the amount of light people could see.

"When we look out into

deep space, at the millions of other galaxies, it is as though we are wearing cosmic sunglasses — we're only seeing half the show," Dr Graham said.

His team measured the brightness of thousands of disc-shaped galaxies and matched their observations to computer models.

From this, they were able to determine how much light was obscured.

They discovered that only half the visible starlight got out.

Dr Graham said the discovery meant astronomers could "better understand the effect that all of this dust is having on scientific observations".