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P E R T H O B S E R V A T O R Y

MEDIA ALERT

release date: **Thursday, 23 August 2007**

Eclipsed Moon Rises on 28th August

Star viewers are due for an unusual visual treat in the early evening of Tuesday 28 August.

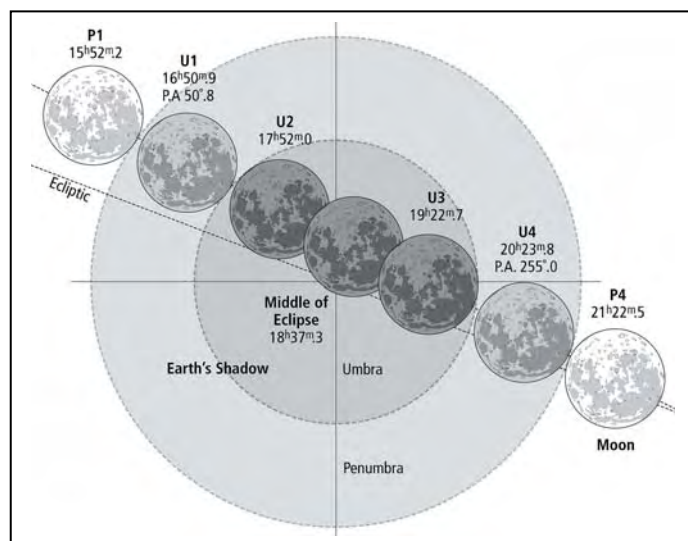
Instead of viewing a Full Moon rising they will see a totally eclipsed Moon rising.

"Rising Moons are typically tinted orange or red because the thick atmosphere close to the horizon preferentially passes red light, however, this Moon will probably be tinted a copper colour and be much fainter than usual", says Government Astronomer for WA, Dr James Biggs.

"Lunar eclipses arise from the alignment of the Sun, Earth and Moon – for this eclipse the alignment is near perfect", continued Dr Biggs.

On Tuesday afternoon, before the Moon has risen in WA, the Moon starts off full and is dimmed as it passes into the Earth's shadow starting around 3:50pm.

"For Perth observers the Moon rises at 5:52pm - the same time it wholly enters the full shadow", said Dr Biggs.



"The Moon will be fainter than normal and, weather permitting, will be a little hard to find - it rises on the eastern horizon and then moves higher to the north-east", continued Dr Biggs.

At 7:23pm the Moon starts to brighten on the side closest to the horizon as it leaves the full Earth shadow, and the usual Full Moon will be visible after 9:22pm when it leaves the shadow entirely.

Observers east of Perth can see more of the earlier stages of the eclipse and those on the east coast of Australia and in the Pacific region see the eclipse in its entirety.

Lunar eclipses have played an important part in history. Some historical battles have been lost because of a belief by one side that a lunar eclipse was a bad omen.

In 413 BCE, the Syracusan navy destroyed an Athenian fleet after its leader delayed a retreat on account of a total lunar eclipse. In 1453 the defenders of Constantinople were so frightened by a partial lunar eclipse that the fall of the city was hastened, and in 1917 Lawrence of Arabia's force was assisted in the capture of Aqaba when the town's superstitious defenders panicked during a lunar eclipse.

"Lunar eclipses are safe to view, and are best viewed with the unaided eye - but solar eclipses (where the Sun is obscured by the Moon) ARE NOT - never look at the Sun with the unaided eye or with an optical instrument", cautions Dr Biggs.

EVENT	TIME (WAST)	
	Hour	Minute
Moon enters penumbra	3	52 pm
Moon enters umbra	4	51 pm
Moon fully in umbra	5	52 pm
Moonrise (Perth)	5	52 pm
mid eclipse	6	37 pm
Moon exits umbra	7	23 pm
Moon exits penumbra	8	24 pm
eclipse ends	9	22 pm

**For further information:
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