



Colour Original

Universe project a star turn

FOR some people, travelling more than 20 minutes for work is too long.

But spare a thought for Dr Kevin Pimblet, who has travelled to the edges of the universe almost every day for the past 10 years.

Dr Pimblet, an astrophysicist with The University of Queensland's School of Physical Sciences, has just finished a decade-long project cataloguing clusters of galaxies that stretch almost three billion light years away.

To give you an idea of how far that is, the nearest star outside our solar system is 4.22 light years away.

And not only was he looking at things a long, long way away, he was also looking at the biggest structures in the universe.

"Clusters of galaxies are

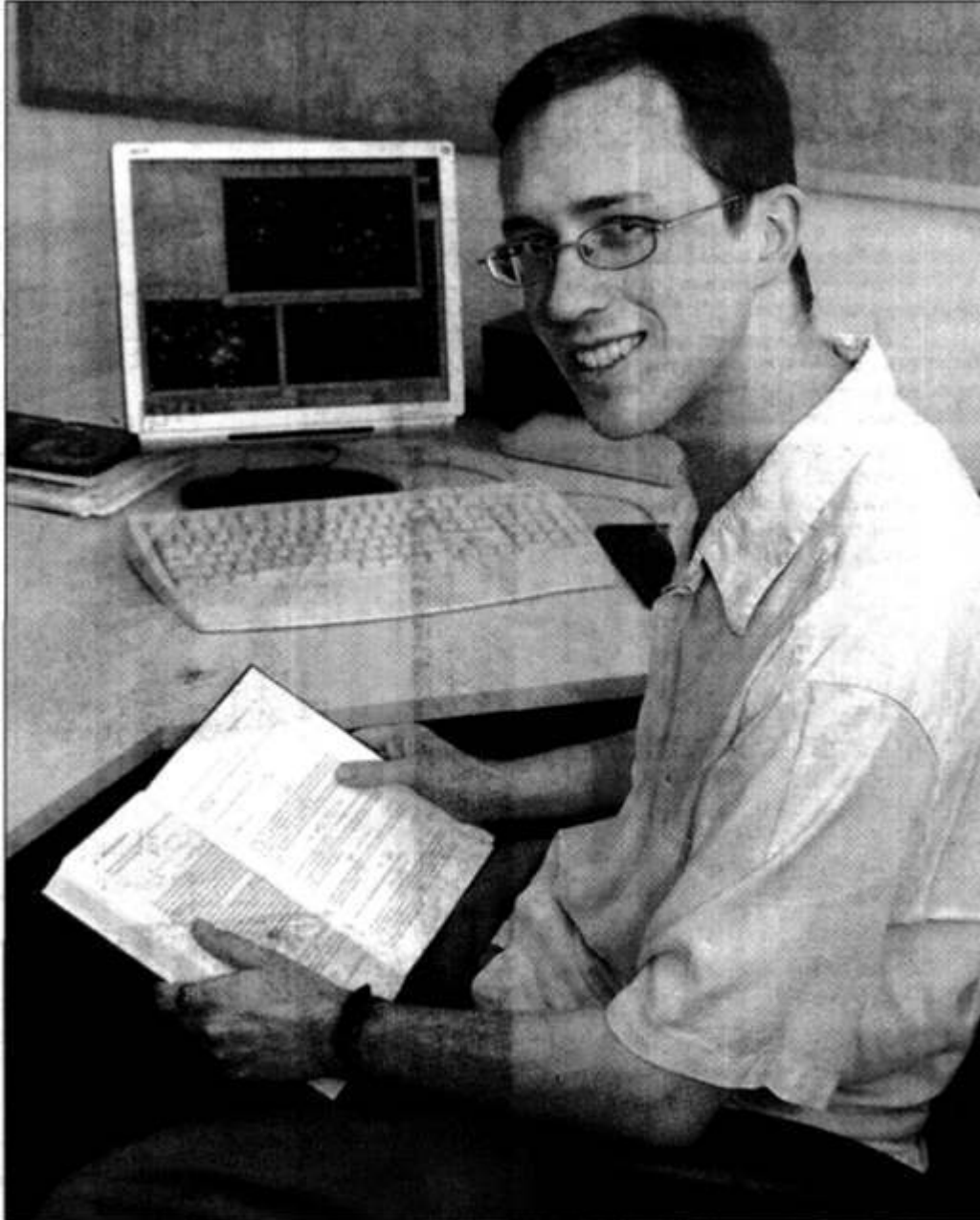
the most massive gravitationally bound objects in the Universe," Dr Pimblet said.

"These are some of the largest structures you will find, with the distance from the core to the edge of the clusters reaching up to 10 megaparsecs, or 32.6 million light years."

Earth's galaxy - The Milky Way - is 100,000 light years across.

Dr Pimblet said apart from cataloguing galaxy clusters in the southern hemisphere for the first time, his work would also help people gain a greater understanding of how our universe evolved.

"If we can't understand how galaxies form and evolve, we can't understand our universe," he said.



■ *Commuting in light years ... astrophysicist Dr Kevin Pimblett*