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Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions

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## ITEMS FOR SALE

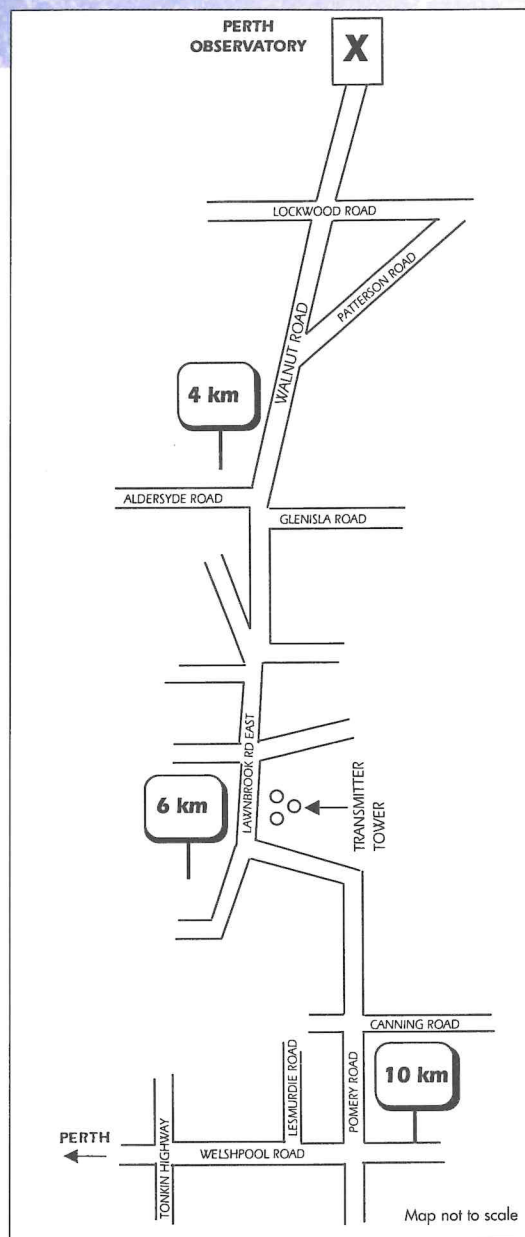
- BOOKS
  - Astronomical Handbook (annual)
  - Astronomy History in WA Vol I, II & III
  - Cooke's Perth Observatory (history)
  - Window to the Southern Skies (history)
  - Stargazing For Fun
- SCHOOL PROJECT KITS (features the Solar System)
- PLANISPHERES (map of the skies)
- POSTCARDS
- POSTERS
  - Moon Phase Chart - many others
- PHOTOGRAPHS (orders taken)
- SLIDE SETS
  - The Southern Sky
  - The Solar System - many others
- T-SHIRTS
- OTHER SOUVENIRS

## SPECIALISED ASTRONOMICAL INFORMATION

- Astronomical and natural lighting information for the legal profession (and others)
- Sunrise/set Tables (any location)
- Moonrise/set Tables (any location)
- Moon Phases (any location)
- Statutory Declarations
- Site Surveys
- Stopwatch Certificates (mechanical or electronic)

PRICES/CHARGES ON APPLICATION

4281-0800-10M



### Perth Observatory

337 Walnut Road, Bickley

Phone: (08) 9293 8255

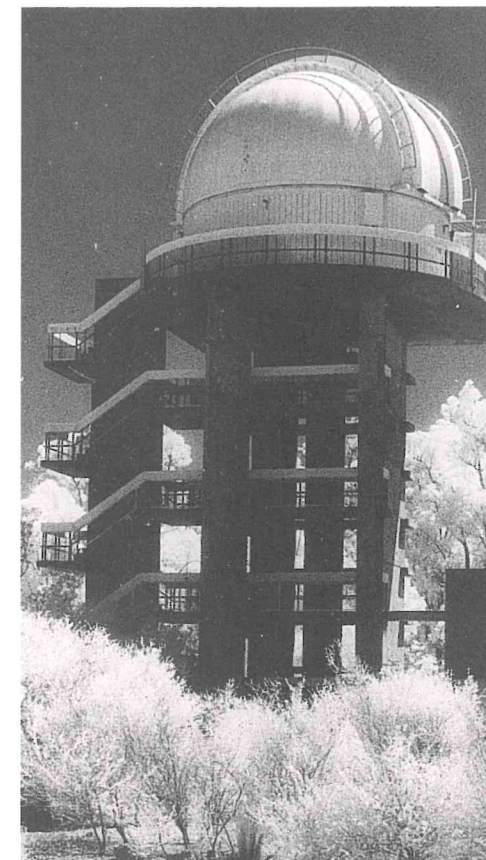
Facsimile: (08) 9293 8138

Information Line: (08) 9293 8109

Email: perthobs@calm.wa.gov.au

Web Site: <http://www.wa.gov.au/perthobs>

# Our Observatory



PAM03645



PERTH OBSERVATORY  
Department of Conservation and Land Management

# PERTH OBSERVATORY

The original Perth Observatory was opened in 1896 by the first Premier of WA, Sir John Forrest, at a site close to the centre of Perth on Mt Eliza near Kings Park. Here, it conducted astronomical research and provided an accurate time service, an accurate latitude and longitude reference point, training for surveyors and public education activities.

In the early 1960s light pollution from the growing city of Perth made a move away to a better site necessary. The old telescope enclosures were demolished, and the original administration building is now the headquarters of the National Trust.

Now into its second century, Australia's only remaining fully-operational state observatory is situated in the locality of Bickley in the Darling Range. This site is adequate for astronomical research, yet it is only 25 kilometres east of the city and conveniently close for the public to attend its educational activities.

Perth has the only significant observatory between South Africa and the Eastern States of Australia. Its importance on the globe is further enhanced by the fact that the centre of our galaxy (the Milky Way) passes almost overhead. Few observatories have such a direct view of this important part of the Milky Way.

## TELESCOPES

Housed in special domed enclosures in the tree-lined grounds are the Observatory's three major telescopes. The largest instrument, the automated Perth-Lowell 61-cm Cassegrain Reflector, is used for CCD (electronic) imaging, photometry and photography.

The 33-cm Astrographic Refractor, the original main instrument, has been in operation since 1901 when it was used to photographically map the southern skies. It is now used to photograph comets and asteroids in order for their orbits to be calculated.

Recently, a 25-cm Robotic Telescope was built in the Observatory's workshop. It is equipped with a CCD camera and is used to track comets and asteroids, and monitor the brightness of stars.

A public viewing facility has also been established among the research buildings and is equipped with several telescopes. The newest building in this facility was funded from visitor entry fees, and houses the largest telescope dedicated to use by visitors—a 40-cm Schmidt-Cassegrain reflector. Arguably the most popular telescope in this facility is the fully restored 32-cm Calver Telescope. It was originally purchased for the public to view Halley's Comet—during the 1910 apparition! A 35-cm Schmidt-Cassegrain reflector is also housed in its own building and, like the other reflector, is used for public viewing as well as teaching.

## OFFICES

The administration building contains various offices and facilities. These include a mechanical workshop, electronics lab, plate-measuring room, photographic darkrooms, lecture theatre, computer network, and a reference library. The library is available during office hours Monday to Friday by appointment.

## MUSEUM

A museum area has been established to inform visitors about the history of the Observatory and to educate them in the science of Astronomy. On display are instruments and artefacts from the Old Observatory, astrophotographs, paintings, meteorites from the WA Museum, and the contents of the time capsule donated at the Observatory's foundation in 1896.

## TOURS

Visitors can view the wonders of the southern skies from the public viewing facility on a star viewing night. These nights are very popular, so booking is essential.

Guided public tours of the Observatory facilities are also conducted every Sunday afternoon at 2:00pm (booking not required).

Weekday tours of the Observatory facilities are available to schools and community groups. Booking is essential.

Telephone the Observatory on (08) 9293 8255 between 9:00am and 4:00pm (working days) to enquire about details and charges.

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Perth Observatory is keen to get the public more involved in its activities. One way to directly participate and assist is to join our volunteer program. Current projects involve assisting permanent staff with the public star-viewing sessions, assisting at open days, and preserving historical documents. Those interested should first telephone the Observatory, and then send a written application to the Government Astronomer in August. The applicant should outline why they wish to become part of the program, what skills, qualifications or experience they possess, provide a realistic estimate of time they can contribute, and anything else that they think is relevant.



Astrographic Telescope. Photo - Robert Garvey  
COVER: 61cm telescope dome. Photo - Vic Lewis