

# Observatory under CALM umbrella



Photographed in the Observatory's display room, are: (rear) Astronomical Assistants Greg Lowe and Tom Smith, Admin Assistant Carmel Borg, Clerical Officer Janet Bell, and Astronomer Ralph Martin. (Front) Technician John Pearse, Astronomer Andrew Williams, Government Astronomer and Director of Perth Observatory James Biggs, and Technical Manager Arie Verveer. Inset: Astronomer Peter Birch. Two part-time staff, not available when the photograph was taken, are gardener David Tiggerdine and cleaner Sheryl Smith, who make up the complement of 12 staff. Photo by Verna Costello

**WHEN** the Perth Observatory became part of CALM's Science and Information Division on January 26, staff were delighted, according to the Government Astronomer and Observatory Director Dr James Biggs—and here they certainly appear to be a happy crew.

"In fact, we've been telling ourselves that the 'A' in CALM now stands for Astronomy, and with a bit of luck, it just might catch on," said James.

James said that Observatory staff were familiar with CALM's community education projects, having occasionally joined forces with The Hills Forest staff

by Verna  
Costello

in its *Go Bush!* program

"Armed with small, easily transportable, but powerful telescopes, Observatory staff have taken community groups on night-time excursions, all of which were enthusiastically received by those taking part," James said.

"We've also enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with CALM's local fire-fighting staff, who do their best to restrict their prescribed burning to times when observation conditions are likely to be at their worst.

"Even better service to

the community is expected to be the outcome of our taking advantage of economies of scale that are possible in a large organisation.

"For example, we hope to tap into the department's marketing expertise, and computer support services, particularly the wide area and local area networks. These are services that a small-scale operation like ours was previously unable to afford.

James said that the Observatory had another reason to celebrate 1996.

"It's our centenary year, when several events, such as public concerts under the stars and historical exhibitions at the old Observatory buildings are

planned to mark its passage," he said.

Director of Science and Information Dr Jim Armstrong said that he welcomed the Perth Observatory into the Division.

"The Observatory will broaden CALM's science profile. The science staff of the Observatory has an international reputation and an enviable publication record," Jim said.

CALM's Science and Information Division has been very successful at involving the volunteer community in its research programs. This experience is readily transferable to the Observatory and will greatly assist the scientists there with their community education programs."

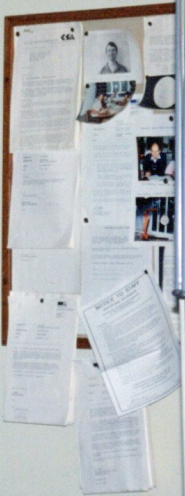
"With the Observatory coming into CALM we'll have to think about changing our logo. I think the inclusion of a quarter moon and the Southern Cross would set off our corporate image perfectly!"

The Perth Observatory is in Walnut Road, Bickley, where guided public tours are conducted at 3.00 p.m. each Sunday. The popular night tours are conducted one week each month with the next six months fully booked. People wishing to enjoy a night tour should make their reservations well ahead by writing to the Observatory. Groups are also most welcome to book weekday tours by phoning (09) 293 8255 between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm.





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