

# New Penguin Island Research Centre opened



From left, CALM Marine Operations Manager Peter Dans, WMC Managing Director Hugh Morgan, CALM Executive Director Dr Syd Shea and the Premier Richard Court about to enjoy The Penguin Experience. Photo by Ernie McLintock

**A NEW research centre on Penguin Island will provide an important base for the further development of environmentally sensitive nature-based tourism activities in the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park.**

The WMC Research and Management Centre, is a joint venture between CALM and one of Australia's biggest mining companies, WMC Resources Ltd.

The Centre creates a regional base for marine, island and coastal research, and is an integral part of the Government's plan to create a unique, marine nature-based tourism experience in the area.

Addressing guests at the official opening, Premier Richard Court said Western Australia was fortunate to have some of the world's best coastal and marine environments.

"Most Western Australians lived or worked near the coast and consequently it was a very important part of their lifestyle," Mr Court said.

"There are perhaps few better examples of the sheer beauty of our marine

environment than the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park, with its limestone reefs, seagrass beds, sandy sea floors and numerous islands which provide a diverse assembly of marine wildlife.

"Few capital cities in the world have such a treasure trove on their doorstep."

WMC Resources Ltd contributed \$120,000 towards the project, which is managed by CALM's Swan Region Marine Operations.

"But it is an area that is attracting an increasing number of visitors. Penguin Island alone, has more than 80,000 visitors a year," Mr Court said.

"This presents us with a challenge to ensure that we manage the area for its conservation and recreation values."

Mr Court said the partnership with WMC Resources Ltd would help provide the sound science which was imperative if new management initiatives were to be developed to maintain the ecological integrity of Penguin Island and the surrounding islands and waters.

