



Astronomers Ralph Martin, left, and Andrew Williams, right, are on hand to help amateur star gazers at the Old Observatory. Photo by Ross Swansborough

Observatory marks its 100 years with timely BANG!

CENTENARY celebrations for the Perth Observatory, which became part of CALM earlier this year, got off to a noisy start recently when the Government Astronomer Jamie Biggs, fired a signal cannon commemorating the 'One O'Clock Gun'—an institution in Perth between 1902 and 1955.

The 'One O'Clock Gun' used to be fired from the old Perth Observatory on Mt Eliza at 1.00 pm each weekday to help locals keep correct time.

by Penny Walsh

It was the brainchild of WA's first Government Astronomer, William E Cooke, long before the advent of radio and telephone time services.

This year, however, the BANG that reverberated around West Perth signalled the beginning of a three-week centenary exhibition and series of free concerts to celebrate 100 years of astronomy in WA.

"The aim of the activ-

ity was to let people know that the Perth Observatory is still alive and kicking," Jamie said.

"We had to get special permission from all sorts of people to fire it, but the end result was worthwhile."

Environment Minister Peter Foss officially opened the exhibition, and congratulated Perth Observatory staff on their continued contribution to WA through education programs, public information services and scientific research.

Perth Observatory is one of the State's oldest continuously operating scientific institutions, and the only totally state-funded observatory left in Australia.

Jamie said the concerts and exhibition were a good way of introducing astronomy to a broad cross-section of the Western Australian community.

"All of the special activities we have planned during our centenary year are designed to increase awareness of the services we provide," he said.



503 No 290/1

